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Wrestling with God: Peer Groups, the "Reformation of Machismo," and the "Restructuring of Latin American Religion" in San Carlos, Costa Rica

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

in

Anthropology

by

William Christopher Dawley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Suzanne A. Brenner, Chair
Professor Joel L. Robbins, Co-Chair
Professor John H. Evans
Professor David E. Pedersen
Professor Nancy G. Postero
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2018

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University of California San Diego

2018

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I base these acknowledgments on two main acknowledgments: first, that at present I doubt whether any text or other human expressions can be wholly "authored" by a single person; and second, that ethnography in particular often tries to arrange knowledge about people's lives in ways that are not only meaningful but drawn from their own senses of meaning.

In the broadest sense, I could not have written this dissertation or come to these conclusions about the transformation of masculinity and religion in Latin America without the people of Ciudad Quesada de San Carlos, "The city of Quesada, of San Carlos county." To varying extents, the inhabitants and their social lives deserve credit for authoring this book alongside me, although I cannot hope or pretend that every analysis I offer will be thought satisfactory to an individual *sancarleño* or *sancarleña*. Even if none of them read the dissertation, I sincerely beg their pardon as outsider wherever I have clumsily misrepresented them or the phenomenon I am describing. I would also have them know that the all-too-brief twenty months that I spent among them over the past decade or more has made their town, and the touchingly beautiful *linda tierra* (as they call it in a popular local song: https://bit.ly/2rURy9U) a little like a "home away from home" for me. So, before thanking the scholars who have helped this work come to fruition, let me enumerate the *sancarleños* to whom I owe debts of gratitude.

In particular, I must thank the support groups, small groups, and churches that allowed me into that hallowed space where they practiced their spiritual *ethos*. I cannot overemphasize what I have learned from these places, although I am troubled by the idea that this manuscript may seem to them a distant, academic representation of their groups. I can only imagine that the popular perception of gringos as "cold" may have been amplified by my notetaking and clinical-

seeming fascination with the groups. I admit that I worried sincerely whether my presence might be “holding back” participants who were quite close to feeling ready to “open up” to their *compañeros*. I would ask them, if I could, to accept my apology for these and other flatfooted missteps I may have made, as well as more numerous thanks for permitting me to participate and observe (“conduct participant observation”) in these spaces. The spirituality and transformative potential of these places was not lost on me, and I hope to do them some justice in this manuscript.

Additional thanks are owed to those thirty-one individuals (mostly members of these groups, though also ex-members, family of members, clergy members, and non-members, etc.) who allowed me to interview them about their life histories (but whom I have renamed throughout the text and in the appendix for anonymity's sake). Despite my clumsy interjections and questions, their willingness to discuss the intimacies of their lives drove my understanding of the groups and showed the power to which they give people access: the power to narrate and make sense of their lives and their world, and to see, and to practice seeing, and to confess, one's shortcomings as well as one's strengths, as a path to growth. Surely this is one of the finer arts a person can learn among these groups. I apologize for anywhere I have misrepresented their intended meanings.

For helping guide my broader understanding of San Carlos, I owe thanks to many, especially: Jonathan Rodriguez Berrocal and his family (“Mom,” Carolina, Edwin, and ¡Copito!), who often hosted me in a room in their home, and became something like family to me, as well as his extended family outside San Carlos and his broad circles of friends around San Carlos, whose numbers alone are a testament to his character; Gabriela Alfaro Rojas and her family – her husband and son, as well as her household of origin, whom I came to know well

enough to be allowed to borrow the car on several occasions (!) and who have offered me such a dear friend and irrepressibly creative soul; Kathy Alvarado and her wonderful mother, father, sister, and brother (as well as her siblings in England whom I never managed to meet), who also hosted me on a couple occasions on short notice, and who have helped me immensely in understanding San Carlos; Yorleny and Luis Carlos Rodriguez and their precocious children, Gabriel and Luciana; Kristhel, who brought her singularly congenial presence and *buena vibra* to bear on many social occasions I attended with these abovementioned friends, as well as her family, for being so friendly to me; my *camarada* Oscar, with his wife and daughter ; and countless other friends who contributed in their own ways to my understanding of San Carlos: Juancho, Oscar, Ana Gabriela, Caro, Heidy, and whomever else I have not mentioned.

I must also thank the members and participants in the three main churches in San Carlos where I first began attending and conducting participant observation, as well as many others which I visited once or twice. I chose these three churches because they represented three faces of the three sorts of religious pluralization in Quesada and in Latin America at large: the diverse evangelical movement, Catholicism in its many forms (which continues to adapt internally to numerous regional trends in religious practices, forms of organization, and lay concerns: see Hartch 2014), and “sectarian” groups (including Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormons/Latter-Day Saints) (cf. Gooren 2001, Steigenga 2001).

As methodical as this choice of churches sounds, my relationship to each church and its members was anything but. I came to know well several members and families in each church, who taught me that lesson I have learned and needed to relearn many times before and since: that no church is simply an instantiation of its denominational genus, that specific social networks and their inertial social dynamics really matter from church to church, from group to group, and

so on. Rather than enumerate each person, let me thank each of these churches for its hospitality and special charm.

Having not been raised neither Catholic nor evangelical (but Methodist, with both liturgical and evangelical elements), and mostly knowing Catholicism through bookishness I was unprepared for the utter beauty of ordinary masses and “the Catholic imagination,” to cite Andrew Greeley. The Cathedral of San Carlos, as it is commonly known, exempifies this permeability of Catholic aesthetics into the public sphere, sitting alongside the physical center of Quesada (on the east side of its plaza), but it may well constitute the social center of the town, even if not all *sancarleños* consider it to be “their” church. Although the Catholics I came to know at Sunday masses were often those I knew from daily life in San Carlos, our mutual attendance at mass (like our mutual attendance of the groups I visited) repeatedly opened up avenues for discussing their religious lives, and I was also fortunate to visit repeatedly with Fr. Juan Carlos and visit several smaller Catholic events, including a daylong retreat, meetings of a local group of charismatics, a small Marian devotional group – either the diversity of Catholic lay life is either deeply underappreciated in most of the ethnographic literature on Latin American religion, or San Carlos is blessed with less of the “underchurched” problem noted in social science and historical literature on Latin America (i.e., the lower clergy:laymen ratio in Latin America than in other regions where Catholics competed in European colonies with other Christian faiths). Since around 80% of Costa Ricans are Catholic, many of the Catholic social networks I came to know best were families (including most of those I have mentioned, minus Kathy Alavarado's family, who was largely Adventist), and even many Catholic lay groups ran along family lines, with some (like the Christian Family Movement) even requiring membership in a local family to join. Likewise, the vast majority of the men I knew in the men's support

groups I studied were Catholic, and through them I came to see Catholic spirituality practiced in everyday life as well. In particular I would like to thank Padre Juan Carlos, who suffered a number of interviews with me, and who pointed me toward not only Alcoholics Anonymous but (the originally Pentecostal) Full Gospel Businessmen's Association as were the sites of religious interest in the town, despite the fact that these were hardly administered by the church (in addition to the Catholic Family Movement, which is administered by the church). Padre Juan Carlos added significantly to my understanding of the spiritual needs and difficulties of people in the community, without once divulging any bit of information that may have been sensitive and may have violated his sacred trust. I can never achieve the level of commitment to the spiritual life of Quesada that Padre Juan Carlos has illustrated, but I hope this manuscript can be some small gesture acknowledging the depth of that spiritual life, to which Padre Juan Carlos has dedicated himself.

Like Eva Keller, I was deeply impressed by the Adventist faith as it was lived by the people I met in San Carlos as I watched them devour scriptural reading guides and exert themselves in Sabbath School (not them, but God! many would object). I was also moved to feel what kind of hospitality this careful cultivation produces, wherever its source. The Seventh-day Adventist church in Quesada has also been a welcoming spiritual home for many in the town, and its hospitality cannot be overstated. From my first six months in San Carlos in 2003 and 2004, the church welcomed me to its services and to its weekly activities, and it first demonstrated to me what others have found to be true of Adventist churches in many places in the world: that it is important site for spiritual and intellectual engagement, and that inside its walls the eager student, with her Bible and her study guide, can explore the biblical text in a way that evangelical and Catholic participants sometimes do not. More importantly, the Adventists I

met matched the intimacy and familiarity for which many evangelical churches are known (unless I am simply describing Costa Ricans' commitments to hospitality, or the relative impoverishment fo my own culture's hospitality). I was certainly treated like family. During those six months as an undergraduate, one Adventist (nuclear) family in particular rented a room to me and introduced me to the members of the congregation. Because I have not asked their permission to include their names in this text, I will not do so here, but I hope they know who they are, and I hope they remember me with as much fondness as I do them, and not for my lesser qualities as a renter or guest. This family and its engagement with the church – including many of their extended family members – have been an invaluable point of departure for understanding what these churches offer to newcomers, what they offer to second-generation participants, and the ways in what their congregations offer, like many Mormon and Jehovah's Witnesses congregations, as "sectarian" alternatives to non-denominational evangelicalism's many representatives in the region.

Finally, there is one evangelical church (under two names, during the time in which I knew it) that opened its doors to me to which I owe a great deal. Knowing the members of Maranatha and Dios es Fiel (originally a single church), I have come to see what the open-hearted search for a direct, personal relationship with God looks like in a community, as evangelicals struggle over the meaning of charismatic practices, holiness, the role of family relationship in a life walked with God – all without depending upon strict institutional hierarchies (as both my Adventist and Catholic informants sometimes acknowledged as distinguishing themselves from evangelicals). In particular, I must thank Pastor Don Jaime, who has allowed me to interview him several times, who has introduced me to his congregation innumerable times, who invited me to his men's group meetings, which eventually "opened up"

to become the transdenominational group, Hombres Íntegros, and which, in turn, led me to understand the value in peer groups and support groups. Each member of that group (Catholic and evangelical), like almost every member of these congregations that I met, of them showed the openness, warmth, and familiarity which are a recognizable part of the evangelical ethos and which have spread to other, non-evangelical congregations. This group and these congregations partly owe this character to the liberatory leadership of Pastor Jaime, who delegates financial questions and practical church question to focus on ministerial needs, and thus becomes a source of spiritual support for so many in the congregation. I also want to thank his late co-pastor, Caché, who passed away a bit before my final visits to Quesada. Caché is the sort of man whom I, having been raised Methodist, would describe as full of the God's Love. He has – it is painful to say “had“ – a grandfatherly, yet brotherly manner about him. It is hardly worth mentioning next to his broad support for the growth of Dios es Fiel in so many ways (even many that others may not have suspected, given the depth of his humility), but Caché also welcomed me into the church, into the men's group, and even once into his biography, as I conducted one of my semi-structured life history interviews with him and got to know a little bit more about him. Many people knew him better than me, and so I do not have to stand in the uncomfortable position of saying alone that he is deeply missed. Finally, I would be deeply remiss if I did not also thank the late Pastor Eduardo and his wife (and current minister of Maranatha fellowship, Norma), who initially allowed me to attend and observe his church Maranatha.

In addition to these individual remarks below, each of these churches, and members of their leadership, allowed me to conduct an in-depth survey of over 140 members total during the summer of 2004; this allowed me to understand some of the relationships between religion and politics in these churches, and eventually these findings both helped me get into graduate school

and convinced me that the politics of these churches were, more than anything, the politics of gender and the family.

After thanking the support groups and churches where I conducted my research, I also want to thank everyone who contributed to my academic career to this point, including many whose contribution was simply to the social networks in which my thinking about my research :

My family and my non-academic friends, whom I have gushed to in my usual fashion many times and who therefore gain nothing from having it restated here, with a few exceptions: my *compañera* Tricia Lantzy, with whom I have learned about real, mutual sacrifice and other-interestedness, who provided me with an immense amount of support throughout this process, accompanied me to the field, and took me along with her in turn as she pursued her graduate studied in Austin. I am sure that, even if it were possible to achieve this without her, it would not and could not be the same achievement, and surely a diminished one, for how can one write about being improved by relationships without experiencing it in one's own life? I owe her more than I can say here, or will submit others to. The same goes in other ways for a great many of my friends and family: my mother and friend, Karen Elizabeth Bourque, whose love and insights have touched and shaped my life and personality more than anyone, maybe, probably more than she knows, and whose own life support groups have touched and through which she has touched the lives of others who have survived or even succumbed to cancer, as well as to my supportive and supremely gracious stepfather, Douglas Richmond Bourque, himself an all-round great model for manhood himself, and my father William Chester Dawley, my earliest model for manhood and with whom I share some of my very earliest memories and glimpses of wisdom, and with whom I like to think I have become closer and closer as I completed this project and became increasingly aware of the wisdom of these groups and persuaded, frankly, of the power

of reconciliation and the violence of refusing reconciliation. I also want to thank my siblings: without the good-spiritedness and expansive musical tastes of Matt, not only my wedding but perhaps my ability to cultivate other parts of me, outside my graduate studies, would not have been possible, and Matt has not only been a good friend to me but has often served as the peaceable social center of our supportive band of siblings; my brother Bryan and I have been uniquely close throughout almost all of my life, despite some regrettable periods of losing contact (for which I surely bear the primary responsibility, as the elder brother, and for which I am deeply sorry), and I consider Bryan another, overlapping self with my own, an important touchstone for myself throughout my move to California, a unique relationship in which we can (from my perspective, least) access our earliest selves and knowing ourselves and one another in singular ways, as a life story; and Kara, my only sister, but the sibling with whom I feel myself resonating most strongly with these days as I finish this manuscript, with whom I seem to share a certain personal tenor, who, despite our difference in age, seems to share with me an interest in others and in their psychological trajectories (as well as in our own), and who, like the members of the groups I studied, seems to radiate a profound desire to help others that, as her older brother (having always thought of her as special *to me*) am only beginning to appreciate. Likewise, I want to thank my friends, with whom I have often strove to developed highly intimate, quasi-confessional relationships, echoing some of the principles I observed in my research: Adam Chenette, with whom I have been friends since one fateful winter bonfire party as sixteen year-olds or so, out in the rural stretches of southeastern Connecticut where he has grown up as the child of adventurous, free-spirited countercultural parents, who showed a bit of his characteristic warmth at a time when I really needed friends (having just moved across the country), and has never stopped showing it since – a warmth akin my brother Matt's which has likewise became

the center of many lifelong networks of friends, all of them linked through Adam's easy laugh, smiling eyes, non-judgmental attitude, and all-around good-naturedness; Peter Rahn, whom I became friends with on the same night, who has often been a kind of alter ego for me, seeing a kinship in and being captivated by what I have often called his philosophical nature and his sense of self-reflection, with whom, from an early age, I have also discussed the many ways of growing up male that we have observed in our different backgrounds (in ways that have shaped this entire project); and other friends, especially Jonathan Elsensohn and Ian Pawluk, whom I have known along with Adam and Peter since high school, but with whom I have recently become closer as I sought out people with whom to cultivate aspects of the spiritual communion and community I was observing in the groups I studied.

I owe similar thanks also to friends I made in California in graduate school: the late John McGraw, who first hosted me in April 2006 for a week as I visited San Diego and settled on attending UCSD, and with whom I only grew closer as the years passed, whose simultaneous broadmindedness and braveheartedness in his sense of calling to intellectual pursuits I deeply admired and identified with, especially as they were developed in certain contexts (he being from Oklahoma, I growing up in Texas) that I strongly identified with, and which produced in both of us an antidualism in our interests resulting from a studied indifference to the oppositional virtue-signaling of Western cultural identifications, those narcissisms of minor differences, manifest, for instance, in our profound interests in the truths of both science and religion, and other frequently non-co-ocurrent interests in many Americans) – in his judgment I found what I often sought in my closest friendships: a sense of fruitful, and not withering critique, which I increasingly sought, especially recently as he had resettled in the States, before leaving us, suddenly, just a day after our last conversation, and entirely too soon; Jedidiah McClure, another person I was

able to get to know deeply and grow a little alongside, starting in graduate school where we became fast friends, and with whom I have increasingly kept in contact on almost a weekly basis for multi-hour conversations, in which I have often felt at ease posing and having posed that difficult question most counseled by Wesley, “How is it with your soul, brother?”; Todd Melnick, who has probably influenced my extracurricular reading more than almost anybody, and who has rekindled (like many named above, if to a much greater degree) my belief in the heroic efforts of even the most broadminded, encyclopedic, nonjudgmental minds to try to systematize their findings into a meaningful whole; Amy Rothschild, one of my most frequent conversation partners, especially in my early years of graduate school; Marisa Peterson, whom I have known throughout graduate school (and through whom I met Todd), the depth of whose thought is only matched by the apparent depth for which she feels for her interlocutors in El Salvador, as for our other mutual friends; Cody Petterson, another early welcomer into the department with whom I have become closer in past several years, sharing (as our early encounters intimated that we would) many political perspectives, interests in politics, and a sense and perspective on popular and elite politics that I like to think of as simply an anthropological and ethnographic stance; and many others whom I cannot enumerate fully.

Though the groups overlap, I must also thank those with whom I interacted as a graduate student, my patrons, and my advisors in my home department and other departments. The anthropology department the University of California, San Diego, has been generous to me in many ways, including funding a portion of my research and studies, along with the University of California regents, the Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies and the Tinker Foundation at UCSD, the Glasscock Center for Humanities Research, the separate bodies of grantees of the Spiro and Graham fellowships, and support from the University of Bergen's GenPent project, the

Lozano Long Institute for Latin American Studies, and the Sigrid Rausig chair at Cambridge University. I also received (but more rarely shared, I fear) immaterial but meaningful support (more specifically) from the other students of Joel Robbins and other anthropologists of Christianity and religion: Naomi Haynes, Jon Bialecki, John Dulin, Brendan Thornton (with whom I have organized conference panels and recently a special journal issue with *Anthropological Quarterly*), Leanne Williams, Nofit Itzhak, Taciana Pontes, Jordan Haug, Yulia Klimova, Ashwin Budden, and others. During my writing, I was also welcomed and supported as a visiting researcher by the Lozano Long Institute for Latin American Studies at the University of Texas, as well as the Religious Studies department (and in particular Thomas Tweed), for well over a year after I returned from research in Costa Rica. The anthropology departments at the University of Cambridge and University of Bergen were also generous hosts during my temporary stays there are a visiting scholar and offered valuable scholarly feedback to talks I was invited to give there as I developed this manuscript. I also owe Brendan Thornton, Marcia Inhorn, and Arsalan Khan special consideration for helping me think through this material, beginning with a panel on religion and masculinities and ending in special section of *Anthropological Quarterly*.

Finally, I thank Professor Joel Robbins, who has been my primary reason for coming to UCSD, my inspiration as an anthropologist (of religion especially, but of the field as a whole), and perhaps my biggest promoter in the social networks I have built. I cannot say much about him as an anthropologist that has not been previously noted, but his students know that his gestures and demeanor of support and his thirst for the juiciest part of an argument has pushed forward our research as well as his own. Suzanne Brenner has also been an enormous source of support, especially regarding my research on gender, and has helped improve my writing at a

finer level than almost anyone. Rupert Stasch also deserves mention on this count, helping me edit and revise numerous drafts of papers and grant applications. Nancy Postero and David Pedersen have both guided different aspects of my Latin Americanist research and, in their distinct ways, have pressed the political-economic questions and questions of history in this manuscript. John Evans has pressed me to think harder about some of the sociological literature I present here, as well as helping me to interpret my earlier data from San Carlos and being a model (along with his advisor, Robert Wuthnow) for thinking about the larger, structural, sociological questions at the heart of religious transformations. Babak Rahimi, since my early class with him on Shi'a Islam and the State, has also pressed me on the historical and sociological questions behind religious movements and to think always of the comparative questions.

Without the people mentioned above, and many others I apologize for leaving out (but who know will know they are to be thanked by the very question in their minds of why they not have been mentioned) – thank you for your support. Anything useful about this research comes from outside me; only the mistakes are mine.

VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Wrestling with God:

Peer Groups, the "Reformation of Machismo," and the "Restructuring of Latin American Religion" in San Carlos, Costa Rica

by

William Christopher Dawley

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California San Diego, 2018

Professor Suzanne Brenner, Chair
Professor Joel Robbins, Co-Chair

For decades scholars and journalists in Latin America have written about a "crisis of the family," often linking it not only to changing economic realities but to a corresponding "crisis of masculinity": an image of male profligacy, domestic and public violence, drug and alcohol addiction and abuse, and male unemployment. This dissertation argues that a number of religious and non-religious movements and institutions have converged upon a particular effort to solve this problem (the all-male peer group, modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous), and that this new

form of social and religious organization is playing a unique role in reshaping religious life in Latin America. To pursue this argument, the dissertation makes use of over thirty extensive, life history interviews with participants in these programs and with other inhabitants of a rapidly urbanizing center in Costa Rica's rural Northern Zone, where the author conducted twenty-two months of participant-observation and comparative research over nearly a decade with three distinct men's groups as well as three churches (Catholic, evangelical, and Adventist). From this research and from the secondary literature, this dissertation argues that the phenomenon described by Elizabeth Brusco as Latin America's Protestant "reformation of machismo" is considerably broader than evangelicalism alone and is having much broader effects on gender and religion than has been previously appreciated. Much as Robert Wuthnow (1988, 1994a-b, 1998) first pointed out that support group culture has initiated a "restructuring of American religion," a turning away from church hierarchies and towards more egalitarian support groups for a model for spirituality and spiritual community, a similar process appears to be taking place in many parts of Latin America, where Alcoholics Anonymous had by the 1990s more than tripled its North American membership rates. Using a comparative and longitudinal lens, the dissertation argues that these groups are not only renewing men's participation in religion and the family in many parts of Latin America, but are in fact transforming the way gender and religion are understood and co-constructed in the region.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation argues that what Elizabeth Brusco (2011[1995]) called the Protestant "reformation of machismo" in Latin America is actually a part of much broader phenomenon—that the concerted effort by evangelicals to convert men to a caring, non-machista masculinity[1] is actually part of an overall "restructuring of Latin American religion" (and "spirituality") that lies at the heart of many religious transformations in the region. I argue that this restructuring pivots, at least in part, around two broader, widely acknowledged social crises: the "crisis of the family" and "crisis of masculinity" (or "crisis of machismo"), as they are frequently described in Latin American popular media and discourses. These crises have become a central focus not only for evangelicals but for a number of religious organizations and for a variety of apparently secular social movements. In many parts of the region, these movements have begun to organize men's groups that are designed to deal with the problem directly (even in areas as far flung as rural, northern Costa Rica, where I conducted two years of research over the course of a decade).

Although this restructuring of Latin American religion has largely been told as the growth of non-Catholic and especially evangelical or pentecostal churches, detailed research has revealed that many of these changes, including the transdenominational "pentecostalization" of religion, are occurring across church or denominational lines and in fact across the lines traditionally separating religious and secular life (e.g., Steigenga 2001, Chesnut 2003, Steigenga

1 See also Willems 1967, or Bernice Martin's (2007) relatively recent and condensed recapitulation of "the Pentecostal gender paradox" as "a cautionary tale" for the study of evangelical and charismatic forms of Christianity.

and Cleary 2008, Gooren 2010a, Hartch 2014). However, this does not mean that there is not a social organizational component to this transformation. My argument here is that the restructuring of Latin American religion is a much broader story in which a number of non-church organizations play an important role. In particular, I argue that the support group movement (and in particular the model provided by Alcoholic Anonymous) has become a primary model not only for transforming masculinity but also for transforming religious life as a whole, much as Robert Wuthnow (1988, 1994a-b, 1998) argued that the support group movement formed the archetype for a kind of spiritual community that had begun restructuring American religion in the late twentieth century (1994a:150, cf. Mercadante 2014:176,174).

The fact that Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) became a popular model of organization for reforming machismo and re-imagining spiritual and religious life is fitting for three reasons. *First*, there is the phenomenal growth of AA in Latin America, where the movement had already achieved a proportional rate of membership three times what it was in North America by the 1990s (Vaillant 1995:268). *Second*, AA groups in Latin America are almost entirely all-male groups (or have been until recently), much as they were in the U.S. in the early twentieth century. This has lent support groups a strong association with men in particular. And *third*, AA has largely grown alongside the similarly dynamic growth of evangelicalism, which has sought during the same period (and in response to the same sense of crisis) to reform machismo. Thus, in this era of religious pluralization and diversification, in which the question of men and masculinity had been made central by the evangelical movement and by society at large, the mutual support group already enjoyed a unique reputation for being capable of transforming men and masculinity. Furthermore, unlike evangelical churches or evangelicalism more broadly, mutual support groups already appeared to elide denominational or religious tensions, and also to

elide divisions between religious and secular life more generally. This made it an appealing model for those, be they evangelicals, Catholics, and any other secular or religious group in the region, who sought to address the sense of crisis that hangs around ideas of gender and the family, and around men in particular, without evoking these tensions. As such, the AA model has been widely adopted by a number of religious and secular movements and institutions to resolve men's violence, addictions, and other behavioral and interpersonal problems (see e.g. Gutmann 1996:198-213 on the latter).

The AA model of “spirituality” has also, in general, come to act as a model for spiritual community and peerhood in Latin America, and not just for men. With its nearly evangelical focus on testimonials and its nearly Catholic focus on the need for regular confession and communion, alongside its ability to appeal to the non-religious (or “spiritual-but-not-religious”) as well, the AA model for spiritual community has been adopted by many peer groups within churches (including men's and women's groups), by a number of transdenominational men's groups and “parachurches” (including some I will discuss below: see Scheitle 2010), and by a variety of support group-style organizations (Twelve Step and otherwise) that share with AA and to a lesser extent evangelical culture a number of discourses and practices. Among the most prominent and non-sectarian of these discourses and practices are a discourse about “spirituality” and about spiritual growth happening primarily through relationships: with God, with others, and with oneself (as opposed to frequent claims by participants that did not “know themselves” before they joined these groups). The narrative practice of “sharing” is the primary practice and expression of this spirituality discourse, and indeed is the primary practice of support groups as a whole (cf. Wuthnow 1994a). Sharing is a narrative genre dealing with one's life and relationships, and it is framed in both spiritual and psychological terms, being part confessional,

or "working through" these issues, and part testimonial or conversion narrative (usually organized by a V-shaped narrative of struggle or despair followed by renewed hope and restored relationships). Sharing is indeed an ethical practice, as it appears to shape identities and subjectivities and to reform moral life—yet as an ethical practice sharing is not "individualizing" at all, as many stereotypes about ethics as "self-cultivation" presume. As George Vaillant (2012:314) quipped about AA, support groups are "as much about self-help as a barn-raising." The practice of sharing is not only ethical for the individual but for the group and its many relationships; it is the primary means by which spiritual relationships are formed, and the entire group and its ethos are organized around this practice.

Despite the attention I pay to discourse and practice throughout my analysis, I want to balance them with two other objects of analysis that complement them: social organization and a particular view of affect as originating in particular places and social groups, which I am calling *ethos* (relying on and elaborating an earlier usage of the term by Gregory Bateson and continued by Brusco: see my discussion in Chapter 6). Using an interdisciplinary body of research, as well as my own, I argue that the social organization and operating principles of support groups are the reason they have been so successful—both at producing changes in men and in local ideas about masculinity, and at being reproduced by different movements and organizations. Because of the egalitarian norms and structure that govern participants' interactions over time, these groups generate an unparalleled evel of mutual support and fraternal affection, which other movements and institutions seek to emulate, especially when seeking to encourage participants to practice and inhabit new models of identity that might be stigmatized elsewhere (for example, among LGBT youths, LGBT Latinos, or Spaniards organizing against being evicted: De Vidas 2000, Rasmussen 2004, Faus 2014, respectively).

The widespread adoption of the discourse, practices, ethos, and organizational form of the support group movement throughout Latin America is comparable to a parallel trend in North America that was described by Robert Wuthnow and which he examined in great detail for over a decade, starting with a sizable study he led[2] that researched small peer groups and support groups across the country, as well as their influence on Americans' religious and spiritual lives. Wuthnow described a "restructuring of American religion" under the "enormous influence" of support group culture. This restructuring of American religion was in many ways the growth of non-church social organization alongside declining rates of church attendance (in a sort of reverse or complement to the Putnam's (1995, 2000) later thesis in *Bowling Alone*). The restructuring, or reorganization, of American religion was affecting not only religious organization but also, Wuthnow and his team observed, the various moods and metaphors used to describe religious lives (which were increasingly expressed in a discourse of "spirituality") (1988, 1994a-b, 1998).

I draw on Wuthnow throughout the dissertation, but I also believe that these groups can be best understood, in Latin America and elsewhere, by using the concept of "the Methodist model" developed by social historians to describe the voluntaristic, egalitarian model of social organization that the Methodist movement pioneered in the English-speaking world. Social

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2

Following Wuthnow's (1988) pioneering study of organizational change in American religious life, *The Restructuring of American Religion... Since World War II* (1988), Wuthnow pursued his analysis of "special purpose groups," overseeing a massive, well-staffed, mixed methods study of small groups and support groups that interviewed almost 2000 group members and conducted fourteen long-term ethnographic studies of small groups and support groups across the U.S. (1994b). His own analysis of the phenomenon analyzed support groups in particular (1994a), analyzing their "enormous influence" on "extra-denominational" developments in American religion and spirituality. At the project's end, Wuthnow wrote a final book the relationship between this "groupification" of American religious life (not his term) and the rise of the spirituality discourse (1998).

historians have, nearly since the inception of the subfield, argued that, according to the historical record, far from merely being a religious movement, the Methodist movement (and its most founder, John Wesley) was a pioneer of forms of egalitarian social forms. Wherever the movement traveled, it was an organizational innovator, reorganizing families and communities (Lawrence 2011) and assembling new, peer-oriented social formations to preserve the revival (while other revivals, one of Wesley's rivals complained, dissolved as if they were "a rope of sand" [George Whitefield, cited in Etheridge 1859:189]). These groups, "voluntary networks for *sharing* and for *mutual support*" as Martin (1990:274, emphasis mine) describes the model, in turn gave rise not only to the vibrant and endlessly proliferating evangelical and holiness-pentecostal-charismatic movements, but also to the inception of a host of non-church and secular voluntary organizations throughout the Anglophonic world, including, notably, unions and mutual aid societies. Moreover, as David Martin (1990) has pointed out, the Methodist model has been recruited repeatedly during the last two centuries to transform men and masculinity throughout the Americas, the West, and in Western spheres of influence.

Before describing my fieldwork in greater detail, allow me here to highlight some major themes of this scholarly literature. Briefly introducing it should help make sense, both of the social crises faced by many in my fieldsite, and of the reasons why the support group model of social organization has been adopted by various, unrelated social movements and institutions across the region. I will outline in brief why the study of the Methodist model's organizational generativity and adaptivity can help account for the tendency for this model to be adopted so widely. I will also reveal why this literature can help account for the fact that the support group movement and the evangelical, pentecostal, and charismatic movements have exploded across the region almost simultaneously, and have shared a laser-like focus on men, masculinity, male

drinking, and machismo for decades[3]—yet in most of these churches, women account for 2 in every 3 congregants, while AA and much of the support group movement have largely "converted" men (Chesnut 2003:43).

David Martin's (1990) history of evangelical and pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in Latin America has completed the work of tracing the Methodist model through to the history of these Latin American movements, and nearly to the support group movement itself (although most historians have long argued that many if not all evangelical and pentecostal-charismatic Christian movements, at least in their earlier, North American context, derived from Methodism: see e.g., Synan 1997[1971]:1-21). Yet, as Martin points out, the Methodist model has a well-known and even foundational role in the field of social history. It was one of the first models of popular social organization traced by social historians in their historiographies of popular culture and popular institutions. As an early model of a voluntaristic, egalitarian social structure that specialized in mutual aid and support, these historians noticed that the growth of Methodism could be in part attributed to how it responded to deeply felt social concerns. Because of this, Methodism was not merely the most important evangelical movement of the nineteenth century in North America and Britain, spreading new forms of religiosity (Martin 1990:41, Robbins 2004b:120). The forms of social organization pioneered by the movements and its founder would produce a number of weighty social institutions of a non-religious nature, including, as I have mentioned, workers unions and mutual aid societies.

What Martin adds to this history are two insights. The first is the Methodist model's

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3 Cf. Bernice Martin 2007 for a global perspective on this focus. Cf. also van Klinken 2011, 2013, and Lindhardt 2015.

enduring influence on Latin American religious change, mentioned above. But the second and often unnoticed point is that the Methodist model *appealed particularly to men* in England and America, and it continues to have this targeted appeal in Latin America. The process of remaking religion and spirituality across the English-speaking world, Martin argues, was a process of remaking gender and the family (cf. Lawrence 2011), which in turn was a process of remaking the institutions through which religious life was lived. Much as Wuthnow argues about support group and small group culture, Martin argues that the egalitarianism, voluntarism, and supportiveness of these groups remade social life by reaching into the family and the men's ideas about gender identity.

The receptivity of men to these messages was based partly on new cultural and economic developments. In the case of Latin America, these have included especially the seeming impossibility of reproducing earlier models of masculinity, both because they are increasingly unattractive to many with whom men share their lives, and because of the disappearance of the material conditions that would have allowed men to reproduce a literally patriarchal model of masculinity, in which a man had legal and economic control over the family unit. The growth of female employment, new ideas about gender and the family from media and popular culture, a number of legal and technological changes, and the restructuring of the economy have all led to a transformed relationship between men, the family, and the economy. Yet the latter restructuring has become deeply linked to this sense of crisis, *la crisis* (and not "depression") being the word used to describe both the "lost decade" of the 1980s and the decades of neoliberal reform that followed. These reforms were felt particularly acutely in Costa Rica, which long boasted one of the most extensive social democratic welfare states and social investment-oriented economic policies in Latin America (Edelman 1999:44-90, cf. Seligson 2000, 2000, Segura-Ubiergo 2007).

Among their impacts on the family was what has been called the “two-income trap”: an increase in family members working alongside a decrease in wages for new jobs and other social democratic programs (Warren and Tyagi 2004; see e.g. Esping-Anderson [1985, 1990, 1996, 1999, 2002] on social democracy in this period). Among the many effects of these reforms on prior forms of social life, both the single-earner family and the family unit of production (often used in rural areas) were rendered increasingly difficult in Costa Rica and elsewhere in Latin America (cf. Mannon and Kemp 2010).

For a number of reasons, both this sense of crisis and its link to masculinity were especially pronounced where I conducted my research in Ciudad Quesada de San Carlos. I will briefly describe my fieldsite here, before continuing to describe the argument of the dissertation.

Ciudad Quesada de San Carlos (literally, the city of Quesada, in San Carlos county), which is the subject of the following chapter, has long been the primary link between Costa Rica's more populous, high Central Valley (the heart of Spanish settlement where over half of Costa Ricans still live), and the Northern Zone (Zona Norte, or Huetar Norte) of Costa Rica. The Northern Zone, which stretches from the mountains of its south to the tropical riverlands of its north, does have access to rivers that run to the Caribbean, but they are not suitable for getting goods to market. As a result, the Northern Zone has long been effectively landlocked, with its connection to the outside world running southward through the mountains to the Central Valley, by way of a long, winding, mountain road that still takes 3 hours to traverse by car, and which only became accessible by weekly public transport starting in the 1960s. Its early, so-called “spontaneous” settlement began in the early twentieth century, as coffee production spread and began to eat up land in the high Central Valley (Sandner 1985, cf. Waibel 1939). After the 1948 revolution, the government began to invest in the road leading to the area and started economic

programs to encourage settlement of the area, particularly for cattle ranching and logging. Together, these lucrative activities led to a much quicker settlement of the area, yet one which was frankly disastrous, ecologically speaking, and which contemporary Costa Ricans, many of whom are proud of their country's ecological inheritance, speak of very little. Yet the area's connection with and identification with cattle ranching culture deepened during this period for a number of reasons. One reason has to do the pan-American romance with cowboys both during the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema (c. 1933-1964) and long after, which was widely enjoyed by Costa Ricans, who had earlier and less expensive access to television (featuring such films) in comparison with most of their neighbors, thanks to the early nationalization and expansion of electricity and telecommunications in the country (e.g., Molina Jiménez 2002:101-102). The older, more pro-social notion of machismo that is present in these films—their *cinema-chismo*, as Sergio de la Mora (2006) has called it—is well known both to scholars and popular culture. To this day, much of the land around Quesada is dedicated to cattle ranching and *sancarleños* know that other Costa Ricans associate the area with cattle ranching and other agricultural activities. Many in Quesada still identify with this past, commemorating and celebrating it in regional and national celebrations, such as the rodeos and *topes* (horse parades) I will describe in the following chapter.

Yet Quesada's economy transitioned so rapidly from an agricultural economy to a service-commercial-clerical economy that it became a case study in other disciplines interested in studying such economic transitions (e.g. Romein 1995). One of the main effects of this transition was a spike in male unemployment, as the economy shifted from an era of mostly male, agricultural employment to sectors in the service economy, especially the commercial and clerical sectors, where women are generally over-represented. (This over-representation of

women, and the gender-segregation of the workplace in general, is actually more pronounced in Latin American than it is in other areas with a comparable economic makeup: see Deutsch *et al* 2002, Atal *et al*. 2009, Enamorado *et al* 2009, Ñopo 2012, cf. Pérez Sáinz 1999).

Both this highly gendered economic transformation and the region's association with a certain kind of cowboy machismo helped shape how the "crisis of machismo" and "crisis of the family" were experienced locally. Likewise, they have both affected how the support group movement's focus on masculinity has been received, although here we can turn again to the Latin American literature to understand these movements and their appeal to men.

Although the gender segregation of these groups forms a great part of their possible appeal to men, it is also true that these groups (AA in particular but also all three of the groups I studied, and many others) focused explicitly on men and masculinity and on cultivating an alternative to machismo, defined in explicit contrast to machista masculinity *on the basis of spirituality*. This spirituality discourse is of course part of the support group movement's discourse more broadly, but it has a special purchase in Latin American ideas about gender identity that may not be apparent from the outside and without a little explication. Here I will briefly explain it and its importance to the restructuring of American religion by groups promoting this notion of spirituality.

Brusco and others have noted that evangelicals tend not to define themselves as "religious," preferring a language of spirituality. But the exact relationship of masculinity to the idea of "religion" per se in Latin America has been somewhat less well understood. It is a complicated relationship that I will explore at greater length in the dissertation, but I hope it will suffice here to point out various threads or logics that will be woven throughout. *First*, in contrast with egalitarian notions of spirituality found in the support group movement (and to

some extent in Latin American evangelicalism, as I will show), there is in many parts of Catholic Latin America an association of religion with submission to hierarchy. Specifically, according to this logic, an orderly or rightly guided spirituality is one which is encompassed by and which submits itself to the guidance of the Church. *Secondly* and relatedly, there is a traditional model of masculinity and femininity that is also represented as a hierarchy—a model acknowledged even, and perhaps especially, by those who oppose it (e.g., Ramírez 2008). Taken together, these two threads of logic have seemed to accord with the experience of many Latin Americans in various points of their history: an experience of a religious hierarchy in which men occupied leadership positions and the most active laity were women. In fact, a certain anti-clericalism and resistance to participation in/submission to the church has been noted across various regions of Latin America and among various classes and demographic groups for some years (see e.g., Willems 1967), and this too may be one reason that men find these "non-religious," egalitarian forms of spiritual community more appealing. And in fact I argue that the implicit ethos and social organization of these groups (just as much as their practices and discourses) helps men draw this distinction between them and "religion" in this traditional hierarchical sense. In contrast with notions that many Latin Americans hold about "traditional" Catholicism (to say nothing of its actual variants), the ethos of support groups appears even more warmly supportive, good-natured, and boisterously expressive even than evangelical churches, and even less organized around any sense of hierarchy to which they must submit themselves than the majority of the evangelical movement (at home or in the church).

There are a third and fourth thread that help to make up the complicated relationship(s) between religion and gender that obtain in much of Latin America, at least as a part of a mythical past or invented tradition. The *third* is an active:passive logic that has been traced extensively

through masculine-feminine gender logics in Latin America and elsewhere, most notably the Mediterraneanist tradition of anthropology (see e.g. Lancaster 1992:235-278 on Nicaragua). In this model, masculinity is fundamentally, even cosmically, associated with activity rather than passivity. The logic of this third thread was often intertwined with the first and second threads: in God's house, the Church should act upon spirituality as the passive element; in the domestic sphere, men should act upon women as the passive element. However, the third thread also exists independent of the others threads, and both Lancaster and the Mediterraneanist tradition more generally have linked this active:passive dichotomy to the honor:shame complex, which views men as the proper actors in certain social contexts, earning honor, while women are the vessels of this honor and, in having it taken from them, are sources of kingroup shame. This active:passive logic thus links both a past, pro-social version of machismo that I have mentioned above ("responsible for providing financially... for his family": Gutmann 1996:221), and the destructive, anti-social machismo of the present, often stereotyped as uncivilized, unevolved, and rural and/or working class, whose destructive actions are likewise responsible for the fate of his family. This leads us to the *fourth* and final thread, which is implied by these three: since the Church hierarchy is in some ways coded as the masculine authority encompassing a congregation that is largely female, women come to be identified with spirituality, and men outside the clergy (and normative masculinity itself, according to Willems [1967] and later studies) come to be associated with carnality. Thus, the destructive quality of machismo is given a spiritual meaning (or an unspiritual one), and the suffering women endure due to men's carnal and violent natures is also given a religious gloss. Whatever positive connotations machismo may once have had, the term, as it is now used in public discourse, is used often, but only to describe the most aggressive (i.e., active) and destructive form of masculinity—a masculinity

which is carnal (and unspiritual, as it was expressed in religious contexts), unable to subordinate himself to God or even to his own will.

Together, these four threads are often woven into a fabric that portrays a "traditional" pair of stereotypes, embodying all four ideas about the relationship between religion and gender. These are the stereotypes of machismo and Marian femininity (or *marianismo*). Marianismo constitutes a self-abnegating, long-suffering, image of feminine spirituality that Stevens (1972:90-91) memorably described as a "cult of feminine spiritual superiority," which stands in opposition to a machismo as a carnal "cult of virility" characterized, in the contemporary era, by its "exaggerated aggressiveness." Anthropologists and other scholars have both described these stereotypes and critiqued what they obscure about Latin American religion, gender, and the family (e.g., Stevens 1972, Lancaster *idem*., Melhuus and Stølen 1996a-b, Jiménez 2004, Mayblin 2010).

Perhaps more importantly for the argument of this dissertation, these stereotypes have also come under intense internal critique within the region by a number of institutions and movements who have sought to unravel this fabric. Unfortunately, sometimes these critiques of machismo have taken the form of a brutal and unfair "punching down" at rural and working class men (see Chapter 7). However, the men's support groups that I studied helped men to practice a self-critique of machismo as part of their long-term project to cultivate a non-machista, spiritually attuned masculinity, both in individual men and in society more broadly. This masculinity in turn found broad support in a number of churches to which they belonged and in much of "secular" society as well (though the notion of spirituality contests the meaningfulness of the division between religion and secularity).

I will describe these groups and the fieldwork I carried out in Quesada in some detail, but

first I want to show the moves by which the men in these groups manage to unravel these threads that make up machismo and this view of a passive, feminine-coded spirituality in order to weave something new. The third thread, this historically profound association between masculinity and activity, is largely preserved in the new picture of masculinity. They pivot, or reweave this third thread, into a portrait of spirituality as properly active, adopting a critique of a "dead" or desiccated spirituality that is also familiar to evangelical critiques that portray "religion" as pacifying. In this way, spirituality is rendered potentially masculine (and the misogynistic image of spirituality as pacified and feminine is discarded). In fact, although there is a great deal of focus on masculinity and how it should be redefined, the positive traits with which the new, spiritual masculinity is associated may also be freely associated with women and contemporary models of femininity. Below, for instance, I will show how this active practice of spirituality is sometimes imagined in ways that may appear traditionally masculine, agonistic images of struggle and perseverance and even of falling back towards machismo; yet other times the images are about nurturance, and they tend to focus around intimate connections in the family that were evoked in Brusco's (1995) argument about evangelicalism's "feminine ethos."

These groups also took up the terms of the first two threads but either obliterated or reversed their implicit hierarchies: either religion and spirituality, masculinity and femininity were portrayed as equal, according to a reigning and explicitly egalitarian language in these groups, or occasionally the values were reversed. Many and perhaps most participants in support groups became more involved in religion, for instance, but they sometimes portrayed religion as an aide to spirituality, with spirituality being the properly encompassing value to which religion should orient itself. Likewise, sometimes a neo-marianista image of feminine spiritual superiority reemerged, and the members of these groups would experience a gendered version of

"holy envy," in which they expressed an admiration and longing for the spirituality of their wives or female *compañeras* (the term meaning "peer" or "partner" that is often used in such groups).

To arrive at these conclusions about how peer support groups are restructuring both religion and gender in Latin America, I carried out twenty-two months of ethnographic research, mostly in Quesada (although I traveled to other parts of Costa Rica as well). I carried out preliminary trips to Quesada in the summers of 2003 and 2004 as an undergraduate, spending six months working each weekend (and much of the week) with three local churches: the town's major Catholic church, whose popular evening masses at 4 and 6 p.m. I attended; a small Seventh-Day Adventist church where between twenty-five and fifty members would regularly congregate on Saturday mornings; and a dynamic pentecostal church named that had up to 500 attendees during the Sunday morning services I attended in 2003 and 2004. This tripartite model of investigation was suggested to me by what I considered some of the most useful work on Latin American religious change as a whole (e.g., Burdick 1993, Gooren 2001, cf. 2008, Steigenga 2001, Chesnut 2003), which examined three or more churches alongside one another in order to ask challenging questions about the pluralizing religious field and about what attracted people to various churches (and new Catholic lay movements) after long family and regional histories bound up with traditional Catholicism. Aside from these weekly visits, I also spent time during the week with church members and church groups and conducted informal and semi-structured interviews with some members and pastors, which ultimately allowed me to distribute and collect over 120 questionnaires asking the congregants of these three churches about themselves and their religious, spiritual, moral, and political lives.

This picture of religious diversity grew even more complicated as I returned to Quesada

as a graduate student in 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2012. The dynamic pentecostal church with which I had studied (named *Maranatha*, Greek for "Our Lord has come," as at the end of 1 Corinthians) was found nearly empty during the first service I attended. The former pastor, Eduardo, whose cancer diagnosis had gripped the congregation in 2004 with passionate prayers and acts invoking God's intercession, had passed in 2005. Before his diagnosis, a schism had already begun to emerge between a comparatively more pentecostal wing, led by the pastor's wife and holding to the "apostolic" doctrine of pentecostals as workers of "miracles and wonders" (as his widow often repeated in our 2011 interview), such as faith healing, and a more biblicist wing, concerned with upholding a "healthy doctrine" (*sana docrtina*), led by then co-pastor Jaime. The former pastor's diagnosis intensified this schism: the pentecostal wing increasingly invoked apostolic powers in efforts to heal him, and, after pastor's death and the apparent failure of this healing to come about, many of the congregants appeared to have left, dispirited either by the loss of the pastor or by the factionalism. To many, the fact that former pastor's widow refused to allow Jaime to take Eduardo's place (reporting in her interview that she felt called to assume Eduardo's mantle) was a sign that this schism could not be repaired.[4][5]

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4 Norma never criticized directly the theology of Jaime. She did express her concern that she wanted to lead neither a "libertine" church nor one of the local churches afflicted by what she called "the spirit of legalism," she may have simply been positioning her church along a spectrum which non-Catholic Christians, or *evangélicos*, differentiate themselves.

5 Those churches' fast growth is rarely treated in ethnographic accounts, and their collapse is even less covered. My observations and questions about this pattern in various churches in Quesada suggest that the same exciting qualities that cause them to grow lead to their subsequent shrinking, as those members of a congregation most attracted to the Spirit's movement there would follow it to an apparently more spirit-filled church later. Anthropologists of Christianity following the congregational approach have yet to fully reckon, to my knowledge, with the difficulty of measuring the stability of church membership in more urban areas with many options available, probably due in some part to the single-major-visit, single church approach of many research designs for doctoral ethnographic. But there are other, additional possible reasons why a simple head count will not do: a church with a relatively stable number of members over two years may still be losing and gaining members, or it may have a stable membership with few fair-weather members and a very mild emphasis on attracting members. Thus, questions about church membership stability or inter-church flow are rarely accounted for in most ethnographic studies of churches, to my knowledge at least.

Although Jaime would later lead a stable evangelical church, *Dios es Fiel* (God is Faithful), which drew the majority of its members from the biblicist wing of this schism and which I would attend during 2011 and 2012, most of what remained of Maranatha during my visits in 2008 and 2009 were a number of small groups and prayer groups from the church, which I had occasionally attended during the week during my first two visits. These included the men's group led by Jaime, which he named *Hombres Íntegros* (meaning "Men of Integrity" or even "Complete/Whole Men," with whole wheat bread being called *pan íntegro*). I describe the story in greater detail in the middle of the dissertation, but here it worth noting that, when I mentioned to Jaime's soon-to-be co-pastor, Caché, that the men's group seemed to run strikingly like an AA group, he praised the AA program and suggested I visit. When this praise was echoed in one of my interviews with the local Catholic priest, Father Juan Miguel, I decided to turn firmly to the question of the reformation of machismo, studying with a number of men's groups and peer support groups and eventually selecting three that represented the flexibility of the spirituality discourse I observed in the support group movements. *Hombres Íntegros* was hosted by Jaime in his church during bimonthly meetings (and elsewhere for retreats), and it would have been judged plainly religious by some, although this religiosity was firmly non-sectarian, as evidence by the several Catholic members among the dozen or so men who attended. Alcoholics Anonymous sat somewhere in the middle of this spectrum, eschewing Bible reading but making God and even Jesus and Mary central to their stories of spiritual struggle against machismo (thought to be intimately related to alcoholism and sin in general). The name of the AA group I studied with on a weekly basis, *Un Milagro en San Martín* (A Miracle in [Barrio] San Martín), makes this religious conceptualization clear. Finally, I studied with a local chapter of *Wë́m*,[6] a

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6 Members claim that originally the term is Bribri, and indigenous language from Costa Rica's Talamanca

men's support group that started in Costa Rica's Central Valley in 1999 and has since spread to three other Central American countries. The Quesada chapter of Wém drew men from around the county to its weekly meetings, sometimes up to 120 at a time, and it often split them up into smaller groups to conduct not only sharing exercises (which formed the bulk of the two hour-long meetings) but also a number of group therapy exercises, sometimes guided by “facilitators,” some of whom were experienced members and others of whom were trained psychologists who volunteered their time and de-emphasized any sense of authority or hierarchy, as I will show.

In addition to studying with these groups during the week at their meetings and visiting the many other men's groups that had sprung up throughout the area,[7] I conducted a number of interviews with their members, with ex-members, and with those who had declined to

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region. However, I never heard the word defined for me by a bilingual indigenous person in Costa Rica. As I will show below, each meeting starts with one man volunteering to recite a definition of the word Wḗm, in which they list all the roles men have as family members and members of society, saying “Wém means all the best of a man: the best son, the best father, the best friend, the best husband, the best brother...” and so on. One psychologist who sometimes volunteered with the group said, in an interview, it represents the ideal of “all of the masculine universe,” and listed these same roles.

In terms of its spelling, the word Wḗm, when fully transliterated, has both an umlaut (ë) and an acute accent (é) in Bribri (an indigenous people whose language is more closely related to South American languages in Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela than other Mesoamerican ones). The umlaut (not a diaeresis) over the 'e' indicates the vowel's pronunciation being more like the “i” in “bit” (as it in the group's logo: https://www.institutowemcr.org/). The acute accent indicates a low tone in the dual tone language of the Bribri. However, the alt-code for this character (with both the umlaut and the acute accent) is hard to find and in many places the men's group simply uses the acute accent mark (é), as I have done throughout. For non-peer-reviewed but easily accessible sources, see e.g. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bribri_language, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chibchan_languages, and http://www.native-languages.org/bribri_guide.htm.

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For example, Quesada had a large local men's groups called *La Fraternidad*, which was a chapter of a transdenominational parachurch for men that began among neo-pentecostals in California called the Full Gospel Businessmen's Association. Like the groups I have described, and like many pentecostal and evangelical qualities themselves), it has succeeded in Latin America by eschewing the idea that their charismatic religious practices are necessarily markers of religious identity, thus attracting many Catholic members by eschewing any sectarianism and focusing on shared spiritual practices like the testimonial (cf. Bartkowski 2004 on the Promise Keepers). In addition to other non-sectarian men's groups like AA and various other Twelve Step groups, and of course purportedly non-religious men's support groups like Wém, there were numerous evangelical and Catholic men's groups, the former often belonging to particular congregations (a key attraction of certain churches like Cielos Abiertos) while the latter were often associated with the Catholic Family Movement (MFC), on which I have more to say throughout the dissertation. The chart of interviews in the appendix also specifies the multiple groups to which men have gone and/or currently belong.

participate.[8] These included extensive, semi-structured life history interviews I carried out with over thirty individuals, including twenty-seven male members of these groups, many of which were well over two hours long. My interviews covered a wide variety of questions about men's lives and their trajectories, mapping out their families, some demographic information, and their important relationships past and present, and trying to develop a detailed, descriptive account of their religious and spiritual histories, the social changes they perceived, their identities as men, and the way their lives have been shaped by participation in these groups and in other spiritual and social activities.

In conducting these life history interviews and carrying out participant-observation in this comparative fashion, studying three men's groups and three churches, what I sought was an understanding of men's lives that was comparative and longitudinal enough to avoid some of the essentialisms with which the literature on machismo has been charged (although some of this is unavoidable, since the term is itself a kind of folk essentialism, as I will discuss in the dissertation). More importantly, I wanted to do some justice to the biographical and developmental quality of the ethnographic material, and of much of the anthropology of religion and of Christianity in particular (with its interest in biographical change). Many of their narratives described contemporary events in their lives, but most described a struggle with machismo stretching back to their youth, spanning decades, and remaining (for some) a regular

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Please see the appendix for a chart of the interviewees, the groups to which they belonged, some basic information about their lives, and the interviews' lengths and topics. I interviewed two non-group members who had struggled with these issues for comparison as well. Finally, in addition to a great many impromptu, unstructured interviews throughout my fieldwork (and regular recordings of all church services), I was also able to interview four religious leaders at length: the most prominent and well-loved local Catholic priest, Padre Juan Miguel, an evangelical pastor (Jaime, see footnote 3), his co-pastor (Caché), and another evangelical pastor who led marriage and family counseling (Norma, see footnote 3).

challenge in what they now understood as their spiritual lives. I wanted to trace the contours of that story and understand its pivotal moments and defining events, as well the more mundane facts of their lives and the lives of their families. Moreover, much of the sharing I had witnessed in these groups (and many of my conversations with congregants in various churches, for that matter) included stories of a “conversion history” during which time they tried several churches and/or men's groups before finding the right group at the right time, so I wanted to have some sense for the range of possibilities men faced in terms of the churches and groups available to them, and to understand what they might have appreciated or failed to appreciate about each kind of group or church (cf. Gooren 2006, 2008, 2010b).

What most of the men described caused me to turn to the literature on support group organization's transformation of religious life in North America and the question of the Methodist model. Almost all of my interviewees had come to attend religious services since becoming involved in these groups. However, they (like many men in Costa Rican society) described having avoided active participation in religion before they had participated in these groups, seeing the new appeal of religion as following from their spiritual transformation. Many of the reasons they were able to enjoy these groups before they were able to appreciate church services reminded me of Martin's accounts of men who were persuaded precisely by those aspects of Methodist spirituality and social organization that seemed least like traditional religion: its boisterous, expressive ethos and its egalitarian organizational structure. In both these respects, support groups were clearly distinguished from all the hierarchical associations of “religion” and from the solemn ethos that was thought proper to religion (with the evangelical ethos standing somewhere between the ethos and organization of the support group and those of traditional Catholicism). While evangelicals may have had some success in arguing that they are

not “religious” but are instead “spiritual” and encourage a “relationship with God,” the persuasiveness of this message among non-evangelicals is mixed at best, with many seeing evangelicals as quite religious indeed. On the other hand, AA and the support group movement have been somewhat more successful at portraying themselves as distinct from religion—even complementary to religion, and frequently recommended by religious leaders. Part of this success lies in the movement's organization: as a non-church, the support group has avoided a reputation as a competitor with religion, trying to draw men away from traditional Catholicism, or as a suspicious religious innovator.

Likewise, the support group movement's discourses and practices seemed to offer it distinct advantages in warding off many of the prejudices that men might hold against religious participation, with which many men I interviewed were afflicted, according to their own accounts. For instance, the support group movement's use of the language of “spirituality” dovetails with evangelicalism's use of the term in some ways (a fact which may attract evangelical participants). However, AA and the support group movement have expanded the appeal of the spirituality discourse to others—especially the Catholic members of these groups, who make up a majority of the AA group and Wém, as with most of the large men's groups. Moreover, AA lives up to this reputation as being complementary to rather than competitive with religion among Catholics. My interviews revealed that many participants in these groups often not only remain Catholic but increase their participation in the Church considerably over the course of their participation in these groups (a finding that is also true of evangelical participants in these groups, who reported higher church attendance since participating in them). For members of Wém and the AA group I observed, it was much less common for the reverse to be the case, for a man to report attending a church regularly and then joining one of these groups.

One member of Hombres Íntegros told me how he had been to the church Dios es Fiel a few times before, but that he only began attending the church regularly after he had begun attending Hombres Íntegros; now, he said, he attended "as a participant." Another interviewee who belonged to Wém, Nestor, told a similar story of his participation as a Catholic: he had only started attending or appreciating masses actively after attending another transdenominational Christian men's group I will discuss, *La Fraternidad* (a chapter of the international parachurch Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship, which has pentecostal roots). In fact, two of my interviewees cited La Fraternidad (which I could not attend, because of time constraints) as having caused them to attend church regularly where before they had not. Without these life history interviews or this comparative research across churches and groups, I could not have appreciated this fuller picture of the restructuring of religion in Latin America—of support groups guiding men to religious services—nor its relationship with the crises of masculinity and the family, nor the way that this fuller picture of social change articulates with the lives of individual men or men as a group.

In the secondary research I used, I also trace the Methodist model further into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, showing how it gave rise to a number of subsequent religious and social movements, including transdenominational lay organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which in turn gave rise to the parent-movement to the Twelve Step movement (the Oxford Group, originally called "A First-Century Christian Fellowship"). Tracing this genealogy allows me to focus on the organization of the Methodist model and the reasons this organization has been revived and adapted multiple times throughout history in collective efforts to transform men and masculinity (and not only in the Latin American evangelical movement). By bringing this historical data on the multiple adaptations of

the Methodist model together with research on support groups in other contexts (especially from the fields of psychology and other social sciences), I try to flesh out the argument I have only sketched out here: namely, that it is the leaderless organization and supportive, egalitarian ethos of these all-male groups which has allowed them to find some success (despite their somewhat variable cultural content). What seems not to vary, in terms the discourses or practices of these groups, is the narrative practice of sharing, which is only rendered safe in these "protective social capsules" (as Martin [1990:284] described the Methodist model). The psychological literature, to which I cannot do justice in this dissertation (except to draw on it for some data and inspiration), has also paid close attention to the organizational and affective qualities of these groups, to the variety of issues and identities that these groups address, and to the ability of support groups to help people make great strides in changing their behaviors, attitudes, and even their sense of identity. In spite of the divergent topics that these groups broach and diverse practices that they carry out, what unites them and appears to account for their success in this literature is that fact that these groups provide participants with alternative social networks and new sources of social support (and accountability). I will also focus on theological and historical data to make a similar point, but I will try to weave these together into a whole that shows how and why these movements are focused on transforming men, masculinity, and the family in places like San Carlos, and why they have made use of this new understanding of "spirituality" to do it.

For both the anthropology of religion and the anthropology of gender, this analysis raises a number of questions. The reader may choose to skim or skip them here, but they suggest the possible import of projects like this for the field and for related fields.

Some of these questions arise from the ways I have chosen to frame this project. For instance, to restate what I have asked above, what is gained or lost by viewing gender and

religion as mutually co-constructing cultural systems (Dawley and Thornton 2018), which change together along with changes to the family and its place in larger economies? More narrowly, what is gained by applying this gender-and-religion approach to Latin America and by asking questions about how gendered religious stereotypes, like machismo and marianismo, are made explicit? Or what is gained by noting how these stereotypes are often made explicit by contemporary movements and institutions that either seek to reproduce the ideals they may embody (as in the case of positive stereotypes, exemplars, or moral narratives) or to contest those gendered religious stereotypes, as have evangelicalism, the support groups movement, or a number of contemporary movements and organizations who want to change aspects of religious culture or of gender? Also, how might an attention to social organization and ethos form a complement to approaches that focus on discourses and/or practices? Throughout the dissertation I hope I make clear that I, like many anthropologists, find myself implicitly guided by the legacy of the belief-practice debates; when analyzing my field, I found myself alternating between two ways of looking at social life: focusing sometimes on questions of meaning, on beliefs, discourses, ideologies, and conceptual frameworks, and at other times focusing upon the behaviors, practices, actions, and the exercise of agency (however imperfect or undertheorized this way of grouping these concepts may be). I also found myself trying to combine these views, seeing discourse and practice as usually appearing together (whether they were harmonized or dissonant) and as related (even if they did not form a complete and untroubled whole). Nonetheless, I often found that analyses of these groups that focused on their discourses or their practices as primary objects often failed to express what appeared most significant about the groups to my interlocutors, to other researchers, or to me. Too often, I found myself misunderstanding my informants, or unable to focus on the right aspect of what some secondary

literature was saying about these groups. However, I will not delve much into the theoretical literature on the debates over belief and practice, or discourse and practice, despite the fertile tension that has existed between these objects of study. Nor will I revisit how social organization as a primary object of study was diminished somewhat by debates over kinship, or how affect and experience have become primary objects of study. Instead, I try to explain throughout the dissertation my reasons for choosing to focus on social organization and ethos (which I unpack later), and why I think they complement my analysis of the discourses and practices that animate these groups. The analysis by Martin (1990) of the Methodist model and its role in driving evangelical-pentecostal-charismatic growth in Latin America is just one example of the uses to which such an organizational view can be put, in Latin America or elsewhere (e.g., Bartkowski 2004, Bielo 2009, O'Neill 2010:60-86, cf. Chong 2011). Nonetheless, both the Methodist model and Wuthnow's analysis of how support groups have restructured American religion and spirituality are examples of how organizational analyses can open anthropologists of religion up to the findings of historians, sociologists, and scholars from a number of other disciplines working on similar issues. Might future analyses not also show, as these works have, that some religious or spiritual phenomenon is being driven by an unexamined organizational form or social network? Or that the transformations of gender that I have shown happening in these support groups are in fact influenced by a number of earlier group-based social movements, such as the consciousness-raising groups popular in Latin American feminist movements (and feminism in general, as these groups surely were) (see Gutmann 1996:93-100,198-213,239, Peris 2003, cf. Baer *et al* 2003, Ramírez Solórzano 2003, Duncan 2013)? Beyond bringing different fields into conversation, an analysis that begins with social organization, or with the affect that a certain style of organization generates, can bring into focus new objects of study that were

difficult to perceive before they were made to stand out against a different analytical background. For instance, it is notable that the support group movement has been studied somewhat better by sociologists and psychologists but has remained largely understudied by the anthropology of religion and the anthropology of Christianity more narrowly, despite the movement's rather obviously Christian characteristics and origins and its tendency to flourish in regions with Christian backgrounds. Surely this is due in part to the fact that this movement does not see itself as religious, and that its discourse of spirituality intentionally de-centers religion and any division between religious and secular spheres of concern. This discourse of spirituality and its de-centering religion may have driven the support group movement's growth, but it has also led scholars working on religion to overlook the profound impact of the movement on the structure of American spirituality, as Wuthnow and more recently others, such as Mercadante (2013) have argued. Conversely, the explicitly religious discourse of Methodism caused earlier historians to ignore its secular import, and earlier scholars of the Methodist movement like Semmel (and Halévy before him) had to take great pains to make the *non*-religious effects of Methodist social organization clear to their peers. And this raises a question about the relationship between "religion" and "not-religion" to which many anthropologists are already sensitive, as evidenced by the field's frequent references to Talal Asad (e.g., 1993, 2003) in its discussions of making religion an object of study. Usually, though, this nod to Asad and others[9] precedes a project that does not presume that the category of religion really poses a methodological challenge or presents new object of study. However, my project asks, how can one seek to understand

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9 See e.g., Smith 1978, 1982, McCutcheon 1997, Masuzawa 2005.

religious changes in Latin America by making the problem of religion a starting point for the analysis, and not just a point made at the start? As a starting point, may the problematization or de-centering of "religion," especially by our interlocutors, not provoke closer comparisons between apparently religious and apparently non-religious subjects of study? Would it be truer to this critique of the object of religion, which is at the heart of religious studies, to make not only secularism but alternatives to the religious-secular paradigm, like the notion of spirituality, central to anthropological investigation, as Ann Taves and Courtney Bender (2012:5-9) have argued?

My organizationally-focused analysis of this social movement, based on a new kind of social organization, also raises numerous other anthropological questions that are either part of their own disciplinary history or which allow for greater interdisciplinary work on how social organization can transform individuals and drives social transformation. For instance, what parallels or contrasts might be drawn between the unique social environments created by peer groups to transform participants' gender identities and other ritual settings the field has studied, such as those associated with age-grades and rites of passage, which are also organized to transform participants' gender(ed) identity? What analogies might be drawn between these ritual settings, which also segregate and isolate peers and perform rituals to set apart the space as unique, and gender-segregated support groups? Alternatively, in what ways are these groups like other, more enduring religious societies built around gender segregation, like men's and women's houses or cults, and how might a reexamination of ethos (as I've presented it) tell us about the way affect is attached to place and to the ethical formation of groups and individuals? What parallels might be drawn between the peer support groups in my study and other contemporary groups where peerhood is based on sexual identity, such as LGBT "safe spaces," which cultivate

mutual support and norms of confidentiality? What links exist historically and in the present between the support group movement and these latter groups, which also generate a sense of privacy/anonymity to allow for intimate forms of disclosure, so that identities can be performed and lived out in this space before "coming out" in one's other relationships (see Herdt 1992, 1998c, Davies 2003[1992], Jennes 2003[1992], Weston 1995, Barry 2000, De Vidas 2000)? What is to be made of the regionally typical pattern whereby groups tend to segregate according to gender, not only for men but, as other anthropologists have noted, in the development of Al-Anon as a "women's AA" in Latin America and in the regional development of women's "Neurotics Anonymous" groups? Does this gender-segregation as an organizational fact also serve to mark these groups as not-churches, as practicing something other than liturgical religion? And if so, might this gender-segregation, by framing these groups as not-religion, make them hidden conduits for the spread of cultural material, including evangelicalism's "transposable messages" and "portable practices," between churches (Csordas 2007a), especially given that many of my interviewees reported joining or recommitting to churches *after* joining these groups (and often because of them)? What might we learn about the growth of religious institutions and other social movements by examining the cross-cutting ties between them, not only for the study of evangelicalism (where conversion outside the church has long been shown to have a role: e.g., Smilde 2007), but in Latin America more generally (where gender has long organized religious participation as in, for example, Catholic confraternities)? What might these cross-cutting ties between churches and social movements tell us about social movements more broadly? In my research, it appeared to me that there was some mutual influence between religious communities and gender-based social movements like those I studied (and others I could not), and one of the grounds for this mutual influence appeared to be a shared sense of the

“crisis of the family” in the region, but I was only able to sketch out, in the life history interviews I conducted, some preliminary notes on these threads of influence. For example, I was unable to explore the growth of the Catholic Church's Christian Family Movement (MFC) in the area, which also speaks rather plainly to this sense of the family in crisis, but I found it fascinating that the organization, in addressing these basic family and identity issues, often not only gathered families together (encouraging peer relationships between parents and youths of similar ages), but sometimes subdivided them into women's groups, men's groups, various youth groups, etc., at big gatherings.

There are some more straightforward interdisciplinary questions that my research might address, and which I touch on throughout the dissertation when they arise (which is not too distracting, I hope). For instance, how might the changes in personal identity and behavior that are sought by participants in support groups and religious movements relate to variables of social life that might be more commonly acknowledged by other fields? For instance, what might we learn from the social support and accountability that these groups provide, and often speak openly about (blending psychological and spiritual language as these groups do)? Both of these are variables psychologists have found uniquely worthy of study in relation to the question of personal transformation, and those who have studied support groups have often focused on social support and accountability in their accounts of how the groups seem to help not only addicts, but those dealing with illness, the death of a loved one, or any of a number of life's difficulties. Likewise, psychologists have paid close attention to what sociologists often call network effects, since participation in these groups often involves rending some old ties and integrating the individual into new ones (and quite tight-knit networks, in some cases). Both sociologists and psychologists often expect these kinds of reorganization of social ties to be fundamental to

identity transformation. What might anthropologists interested in conversion, changes in personal identity, or rupture more generally gain by trying on these lenses for understanding conversion, by paying as close attention as some sociologists have (e.g., Smilde 2007, 2013) to how small groups and peer groups remake an individual's social network? Anthropologists of Christianity have long struggled, for instance, with questions of how, when, and how regularly men's initial "conversions" may eventually be held to herald genuine, durable changes in their lives and in the lives of their families and communities (cf. Smilde 2007:157-208). For my research, models such as that of a "conversion career" (Gooren 2008) or of examining the process of "continuous conversion" (Coleman 2003) have been helpful in conceptualizing conversion in more longitudinal and relational terms. Unfortunately, questions about the durability of conversion are often not easily captured by the design of traditional fieldwork (much like questions about the stability of congregational membership) (cf. Howell and Talle 2012). As a result, the ethnographic literature on men's conversion, though it has become rather well fleshed out in a number of ways, for a long time drew on data concerning conversions that was somewhat synchronous and individualized. In recent years, however, a number of scholars have written critiques and developed projects that sought to correct for these earlier biases and methodological blind spots—critiques and projects that have developed more longitudinal views of conversion that follow individuals well outside the church,[10] that have examined Christian communal life and organization on units of analysis other than that of the congregation,[11] and

10 See e.g. Gooren 2006, 2007, 2008, Lindhardt 2009, 2010, and Smilde 2007, 2008.

11 See e.g. Burdick 1993, Steigenga 2001, Chesnut 2003, and Steigenga and Cleary 2008, Bialecki 2014, 2017, Handman 2014.

that have taken more complicated views of men's conversion narratives in particular.[12]

I also make brief mention in my dissertation of some issues which are of interest to those working on these social issues in applied ways, or to anthropologists working inside and outside academia on these issues around the globe (e.g., Chant and Gutmann 2002). Ethnographic techniques and anthropological thinking may bolster or contest the claims that other scholars make about these groups, including claims about the importance of social support and changes in social network in the efficacy of such groups (as Wuthnow's early research on support groups in the US) or claims by psychologists about why peer support groups might be expected to have long-term promise—not only for *individuals*, as decades of longitudinal research from George Vaillant's (e.g. 2015, esp. pp. 292-397) Grant Study at Harvard has shown, but for *communities*, who can reproduce them with few resources. What might the low cost of instituting such groups and their record of success in some places mean for development workers working according to the Gender in Development paradigm, which, having been influenced both by anthropological findings and by local feminisms, has sought to mainstream (and "men-stream") gender issues in government and non-governmental organization (NGO) programs, often securing communal support and men's participation for programs that have shown success in improving the lives of women, children, and the family as a whole (e.g. Ferguson 1995, Sangtin 2007)? Certainly in my own research, I saw these men's groups partner with a number of women's groups, and I attended public or semi-public events for all three groups in which women took the floor to announce their support for the work these men's groups were doing to change, not only their own lives, but

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12 See e.g., Austin-Broos 2003, Brandes 2002, Lindhardt 2009, Van Klinken 2012, respectively.

the lives of local communities affected by the social ills and family suffering that are glossed by the phrase "crisis of machismo."

Speaking of questions of civil society and its relationship with government, I try at various points throughout the dissertation to bring anthropological thinking to bear on the apparent dovetailing that some may perceive between support group discourse and certain neoliberal "responsibilization" discourses. In Part I especially, I examine the development of family law in Costa Rica and make use of some political-economic and feminist critiques to evaluate the consequences of a shifting legal logic around men and the family—in particular a shift from a social-democratic focus on the State's duties to the well-being of women, children, and families, towards a logic of the State enforcing men's duties to their families, but not materially securing the interests of these protected groups by provisioning for these needs directly. I explore this shifting logic not only in terms of the neoliberal retreat of the State (or, rather, the reorganization of the State around "security" or military/policing functions), but also in terms of feminist critiques of "governance feminism" and "carceral feminism" (Halley 2006; Bernstein 2010, Sandbeck 2012). Ultimately, however, I hope to show how these groups operate around a different logic which seeks collective support for social problems, an escape from the atomization and individualization (and the fear of coercive state power) that runs through neoliberal governance.

In a much more hopeful vein, I try to ask at various points how might the kinds of changes promoted by peer support groups go further than helping to transform gender identity or forms of religion in Latin America—just as the Methodist model has repeatedly been adapted to novel and even seemingly unrelated ends. What signs would we look for to indicate whether the support group represents, like the Methodist model, a major transnational advance in forms of

social life, with a seemingly endless variety of uses and benefits, acknowledged even by many "non-converts," from fields as diverse as psychology (e.g., Vaillant 2015:292-397, Mäkelä et al 1998, Kelly and Beresin 2014, DuPont 2014, also Andronico 1996, Addis and Mahalik 2003), sociology (Wuthnow 1988, 1994a-b, Mercadante 2013), theology and ministry (Rohr 2011, Keating 2011), and anthropology (Brandes 2002, Christensen 2014)? Might the peer support group model of voluntarism and mutual support represent a new, far-reaching way of organizing people? Certainly many participants seem to think so—many of whom have used the model of support group to offer critical support for those struggling with less "responsibilized" struggles, such as those faced by young LGBT people (De Vidas 2000, Rasmussen 2004) and sufferers of cancer (Docherty 2004, Ussher et al 2006, and Winzelberg *et al* 2003). Might there are also be political ramifications, as earlier studies of the Methodist model have shown? A recent Spanish-language documentary (Faus 2014),[13] covering a direct-action movement to defend people in Barcelona from a wave of foreclosures after the economic collapse of 2008, suggests one possible political application of the support group. The documentary shows how an organization (led by a woman who would become Barcelona's mayor, Ada Colau) used support groups to integrate new members in a mere seven days (the subtitle of the film). In these groups, they shared stories, wept together, and came to see that (as Colau says in the film) "you are never alone." From this emotional bond, they constructed a strong enough sense of solidarity and mutual identification not only to help one another in their protracted legal cases but to engage also in civil disobedience aimed at stopping evictions. This is not far from the argument social

13 Available with English subtitles at http://www.paufaus.net/comandovideo/SISEPUEDE-Film-English.mp4

historians made about the development of the mutual aid society and the workers union out of the experience of Methodist small groups. If the support group model of social organization can save the lives of those struggling with illness and addiction, and if it can build the solidarity necessary to challenge governments and financial institutions, what else might the support group model be capable of?

The chapters below are grouped into two parts, plus a conclusion. Part I, "Being a man in San Carlos," contains four chapters (2-5). Chapter 2 includes a brief introduction to the area, its cultural background and place in Costa Rica, and the specific economic and social transformations that are intensifying the so-called crises of masculinity and the family. It also features a discussion about the local identity of San Carlos with an older resident that illustrates how these economic and cultural changes are understood by men who have long lived in the area but who nonetheless share ties to the metropolitan region and to other ranching areas in Costa Rica. Finally, it introduces the main logics and discourses that are at work in naming and resolving the "crisis of masculinity" and "crisis of the family." Chapter 3 examines one of these logics, looking at the broadly spatial and moral terms "casa" and "calle" (home and street) and at the way that the once-strong gendering of this public/private divide is in decline (somewhat more quickly than the decline of the spheres' moral associations). This decline, of course, includes the decline of "work" (i.e., paid labor outside the home) as a gendered space, although with the caveat that Latin America experiences a great deal of gender segregation in the workplace and according to economic sector. (In practical terms, this gender segregation of workplaces and economic sectors has meant that male unemployment has climbed even higher than the shift towards a service economy alone might suggest in other regions.) In Chapter 4, I examine the

legal and technological circumstances in Costa Rica that have contributed to a crisis of the family that looks to many like a crisis of masculinity. Chapter 5 synthesizes the findings from Part I by examining how these same gender logics are being used to produce new gender identities that respond to this sense of crisis and the changing circumstances around work, marriage, and the family. The various gender logics are laid out in their relationship to the stereotypes of machismo and to other models of gender identity. I explain the discursive move by which the support group movement and other movements have pivoted from a gender logic that associates masculinity with activity (also visible in machismo) to a discourse that portrays true spirituality as an active struggle. This move, signaling back to a masculinity-activity association, would seem to make men receptive to the model of (recognizably masculine) spirituality exemplified by the group's more experienced members. Chapter 5 also offers three in-depth illustrations of what this crisis and its resolution look like in Costa Rica, including the development of media narratives about a recently fired laborer who knowingly dove into a den of crocodiles, as well as two extended examinations of life history interviews from Catholic men who had been brought back from the brink of their own crises and transformed by their participation in these groups.

Part II, "From the calle to the grupo," examines in detail how these groups have come to play an important role not only in what it means to be a man in San Carlos but in the restructuring of religion and gender in Latin America as a whole. In particular, it asks how the organization of the support group movement and the atmosphere it creates are producing broader religious and cultural transformations in the region and how to understand these transformations using existing theoretical and historical models. Chapter 6 introduces Part II by offering an analysis of the concept of *ethos*, suggesting what the term might still offer anthropological

analysis by uniting the study of social organization and affect in a specific way that asks about the culturally transformative capacities of certain social environments. The chapter also considers the role of humor in the support group movement, introducing three vignettes from the three men's groups that show humor's role in generating an egalitarian, supportive sociality and in marking the movement's style of spirituality as both distinct from liturgical spirituality and as welcoming to men. The chapter then examines some popular stereotypes and understandings of support groups, some of which are barriers that these groups must overcome to attract men, but which reveal some truly helpful understandings of support groups and their public images. This part of the chapter offers highlights from discussions with a skeptical non-member, with the co-pastor of an evangelical church, and with a Catholic priest in Quesada to illustrate some local views of support groups and their role in men's lives. Chapters 7 and 8 take an extended look at the history of the support group model of spirituality through the lens of the Methodist model, examining the initial development of the Methodist model, the cultural and religious dynamics to which it responds, and the way in which it continued to be reformed into the twentieth century through the support group movement and its precursors. Chapter 9 reveals how the support group model of spirituality is presently used in Quesada, expanding upon the three vignettes from Chapter 6 to show how these groups cultivate this spiritual model of masculinity in practice. Chapter 10 concludes the dissertation by suggesting what its analysis might contribute to an understanding of cultural transformation and to the transformation of religion and gender in Latin America.

PART ONE: Being a man in San Carlos

Chapter 2: Understanding (gender and religion in) Ciudad Quesada de San Carlos

In this dissertation, I will explore how a number of social movements and institutions in Latin America (including churches and "parachurches," as well as completely non-religious groups) are adopting a model of organization drawn from support group culture in their efforts to address what many in the region call a "crisis of masculinity" or a "crisis of machismo" (linked to a "crisis of the family"). In Part I, starting with Chapter 1, I will describe my fieldsite and place it within the larger context of Costa Rica and Latin America, focusing especially on some of the cultural, economic, legal, and technological changes that have produced this sense of crisis throughout the region—a sense of crisis that these movements (and a great many social actors) seem eager to address. Both these ways of expressing this sense of crisis (as a crisis of the family or a crisis of masculinity/machismo) will be explored in Part I, culminating in a final, lengthy chapter on the gender logics that are used to frame and understand these social changes. In this first chapter, however, I introduce some of the specific qualities that make Quesada de San Carlos an excellent place to examine both the sense of crisis that these changes produce as well as the social movements that grapple with it (and which persuaded me to spend nearly two years conducting ethnographic there, described in the Chapter 1). In part, as I will show, this is because some of these changes have taken place in San Carlos at such a velocity as to provoke those working in other fields (geography, sociology, etc.) to study San Carlos for some time.

2.1 The Place of Quesada de San Carlos in Costa Rica and Latin America

The people of Quesada de San Carlos have been trying for the last three or four decades

to adapt to the rapid growth of Quesada as a rural “city” in the midst of Costa Rica's vast, largely rural Northern Zone (Zona Norte, or Huetar Norte). At present, the city of Quesada serves as the commercial and service center for the Northern Zone, and it has been among the fastest growing areas in the country throughout the latter half of the twentieth century (first, and mostly, with migrants from other parts of San Carlos and surrounding counties, and then from *Joséfinos*—Costa Ricans from San José and urban Central Valley: see I. Quesada 2001). Yet Quesada's small-town charm and sense of local pride are embraced, discussed openly, and promoted by many of its locals, in spite of (and perhaps in part because of) its ongoing growth and integration into larger economic systems (see Romein 1995).

At around 42,000 inhabitants, and more during the workday, Quesada (often simply called “San Carlos,” conflating it with the county[14]) easily constitutes the most significant urban center in the Northern Zone. A mere 275,000 Costa Ricans (1 in 17) live in the Northern Zone, which is landlocked but large and agriculturally productive (measuring around 3,000 square kilometers, with San Carlos being the largest county in the Zone and in Costa Rica as a whole). Located between the Atlantic and Pacific Zones, the Northern Zone stretches in the north from the sea-level, riverine border with Nicaragua to south, where the land rises up to meet the mountain ranges that form Costa Rica's high-altitude Central Valley—where the slight majority of Costa Ricans live. The road through Quesada is a winding, tortuous affair, connecting (like Quesada itself) the Northern Zone to the Central Valley and its lifeways, passing through towns

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San Carlos county is the biggest is Alajuela province, which roughly overlaps with Huetar/Zona Norte (although the province reaches further south into the Central Valley). The fact that the county reaches north to the Nicaraguan border, while “San Carlos” (i.e., Quesada) is in the south of the county, can lead to a certain amount of confusion among Costa Ricans, who therefore seem to be increasingly specifying “Quesada” when speaking of the town.

between long stretches that hug mountainside escarpments. Locals have both feared and hoped it would be replaced with a safer, more direct route that would cut driving time to the city from three hours to one.[15]

The Spanish-speaking history of the Northern Zone has been brief, with Quesada's role as an urban intermediary between the Central Valley and the Northern Zone developing slowly. The so-called "spontaneous colonization" of the region only began in earnest during the last years of the nineteenth century. As the Dutch geographer Arie Romein (1995:493) notes,

> Modern colonisation of the northern lowlands region of Costa Rica began at the end of the 19th century, when small coffee farmers were evicted from their land in the Central Valley, Costa Rica's small but densely populated core region, and started to cross the mountain range separating this valley from the northern lowlands. *Without decent road connections to the main domestic market in the Central Valley*, these early colonists produced mainly for subsistence. In the 1930s, the colonisation of the northern lowlands accelerated considerably. Up to the 1960s, peasants, supplemented with some cattle ranchers producing for the domestic market, occupied an increasing area of the region's territory (emphasis added).

Because the main route connecting the Northern Zone to the populous Central Valley passed through Quesada, the town emerged as an early agricultural depot for the region. The first cathedral was constructed in 1912, ten years after the first primary school in the zone opened. Nevertheless, earlier export crops, such as coffee (which required higher altitudes found further south) and bananas (which were grown in the flatter coastal plains to the east, mostly by North American fruit companies), failed to impact the area initially, other than to provide settlers for

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15 See e.g. G. Quesada 2008a, 2008b, 2011a for information on this four decade-plus project. Its numerous delays are due, in part, to its being a casualty of a diplomatic shift by the Costa Rican government, in which it went from recognizing Taiwan to recognizing mainland China, after which the Taiwanese road builders abandoned the project. The unfinished portions of the effort are still visible from the existing road in one part of the drive.

the Northern Zone when those export crops experienced downturns or pushed people from their lands. Sugarcane had some initial success, and it is still grown locally (as I discuss in the following chapter). However, it was a ranching boom, encouraged by the central government, which led to the region's most significant population growth during the 1960s and early 1970s (Williams 1987). It was only during this era that paved roads were established and automotive traffic began to flow back and forth to San José, although the rainy seasons still caused mudslides and prevented travel.

Even today, Quesada remains deeply identified with cattle ranching (although some who live there will point out how it began by deforesting huge tracts of primary growth rainforest, and the soaring inequalities it produced).[16] Quesada continues to boast the area's densest concentration of large animal veterinarians, agricultural supplies, and saddlemakers (more on which later). San Carlos's cowboy culture and love of horsemanship is well known throughout Costa Rica, and especially in the "GAM" ("greater metropolitan area") of the Central Valley—second only, perhaps, to the reputation of Guanacaste (another, drier cattle-ranching region to its west). Several towns in and surrounding the county host *topes*[17] (elaborate horse parades that

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A certain level of "eco-consciousness" has become a part of the Costa Rican self-understanding, but these claims are more than claims about Costa Rican self-identity. Ecologically, the rate of deforestation was disastrous for the Northern Zone and the rest of Central America. Williams (1986:115-116) noted that Costa Rica's forest coverage had shrunk from 75% to 33% forest from the 1960s to the 1980s, and in Central America as a whole, two-thirds of primary forests were cleared during the cattle boom, mostly through massive burnings, but also through logging.
Economically, the process drove the polarization of wealth in the region, creating of "a land-owning aristocracy" buoyed by easy credit terms that made it "easier to get a loan for cattle than for a house" (Romein 1995:493, Biesanz *et al.*1999:46, cf. Aguilar and Solís 1988) and a landless class of peons, so that by 1990 there were so few agricultural jobs with good incomes that *un*employment surpassed *agricultural* employment in Quesada (Romein 1995:493-494). In part this is because of the relatively capital- (rather than labor-) intensive nature of contemporary cattle ranching: "Per hectare of grassland... the labour input is 6 working days annually. To put this latter figure in perspective, the annual labour input per hectare of rice land is 49 working days, sugar cane 76 days, coffee 178 and bananas 206" (*ibid*:494).

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The term comes from the verb "to drive [cattle]," *topar* (lit. to bump into), and supposedly arose during the

mix elements of dressage hoofwork and Western-style wear and decoration) as well as rodeos (including the famous Costa Rican-style “bullfight,” in which a mass of unarmed men enter the ring and show their bravery by smacking the hide of a bull and running as it turns on them, with varing success). The area's reputation for machismo (important for the purposes of this dissertation) may also be derived somewhat for the historical impact of ranching, given that cattle ranching culture has long been associated with machismo in Latin America, thanks, among other things, to the widespread popularity of the Golden Age of Mexican Cinema (c. 1933-1969), when Mexican westerns (and especially the three actors known as the *Tres Gallos Mexicanos*—Three Mexican Roosters) imbued ranching culture with a sense of romance and machismo throughout much of Latin America (albeit an earlier, more pro-social version of machismo: see Monsiváis 1992, de la Mora 2006, cf. Gutmann 1996:ch.9, Paredes 1971). This close association between ranching culture and machismo deeply affected Costa Rica starting in the 1960s (Molina 2002a:101), and it still seems to form a part of both understandings of the area, both for inhabitants of San Carlos and inhabitants of the GAM. Yet increasingly, as I have noted, other inhabitants of the Northern Zone have come to see San Carlos as representing the portal to the economic and cultural realities of the Central Valley.

Living in Quesada has many attractions, and some of its inhabitants have arrived from the Central Valley relatively recently (Quesada 2001),[18] hoping to take advantage of not only its

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beginning of the twentieth century, when the United Fruit Company needed cattlemen to drive horses from the Caribbean coast into the Central Valley, starting a tradition of coming out to see the cattle drive and observe the skills of the cowboys.

18 However, as I. Quesada (2001) reveals, immigrants from the Central Valley only outpaced earlier migration from other areas in the Northern Zone in the last quarter of the twentieth century, when cattle ranching markets were better developed. Cf. Golley *et al*. 1971. on this first wave of immigrants from the rural counties in the Northern Zone.

growing economy but also the sense among some Costa Ricans that living in San Carlos means access to natural beauty and an apparently wholesome environment: its clean air and access to fresh mountain water, its natural hot springs, its montane vistas and pastoral scenery, and its easygoing lifestyle. These attractions, which have drawn in inhabitants from the Central Valley, add to the sense that some of the population is acculturated to the Central Valley. However, there are other, more regular flows of people between Quesada and the Central Valley, including many in the Central Valley or those in Quesada who must commute to the GAM regularly to study or work, among whom are many young people and students.

However, many people in Quesada and San Carlos more widely have not participated in the life of the Central Valley—except inasmuch as local economics have been upended by the changing economic structure of San Carlos. Young men in the region, for their part, have watched the agricultural economy of their fathers industrialize, while the wages plummet for what manual labor remains. By 1990, there were so few agricultural jobs with good incomes that *un*employment surpassed *agricultural* employment in Quesada (*ibid*.:493-494). The growing economic sectors in Quesada, most especially the commercial, service, and clerical sectors, preferentially hire women—and pay them less. This is the case in many parts of the world, but some data suggests that is even more true in Latin America than in other comparable regions (e.g., Deutsch *et al* 2002, Pérez Sáinz 1999). This pattern of "economic restructuring" has contributed in important ways, as Sylvia Chant, José Olavarría, and Mara Viveros Vigoya and others have noted, to a "crisis of masculinity" that has become nearly synonymous with the contemporary term *machismo* (see also Mannon and Kemp 2010, cf. Amuyunzu-Nyamongo and Francis 2006).

All of this will be explained in greater detail below. First, however, I will use an

ethnographic vignette to frame how life in San Carlos is exemplary of the larger crisis of masculinity in Latin America.

2.2 Javier on San Carlos's rurality: "A farmer people"

To give an impression of what it means to be a man in contemporary San Carlos, I will lean on one of my older male informants, a retiree whom I will call Don Javier, and whom I met in Quesada's Adventist church.[19] Luckily for me, Javier seemed to delight in depicting local life in San Carlos, and his opinions on San Carlos were based upon enough experience (of the town and of other regions in Costa Rica) to make them compelling on a number of levels.

Javier had been raised in Alajuela, one of the major cities in the Central Valley around San José that makes up the GAM. He had also spent a lot of time as a young person with his family in Guanacaste, a rural area to the west of San Carlos about which Marc Edelman (1999), Sylvia Chant (2001, 2002a, 2002b), Karen Stocker (2005), and others have written. Though Javier's retirement was not as comfortable as he had hoped,[20] he did enjoy certain advantages and privileges that had allowed him to adapt successfully to life in Quesada, or at least it seemed so to me. Yet, for reasons I elaborate on below, Don Javier took a certain joy in telling me, often in comical terms, how San Carlos is seen by Costa Ricans who come from outside the area.

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Names have been changed and specific identifying information has been changed and omitted throughout the text.

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Javier explained that his pension had been reduced to a smaller percentage of his salary than he was promised—and he never forgave the ruling party for this (the now-institutionalized but once-revolutionary Partido de Liberación Nacional [PLN]). See Edelman 1999 for this history; cf. the overall development of PRI in Mexico.

I offer here some statements he made in one of our interactions because in it, Javier "triangulates" San Carlos, so to speak (in the nautical, not the political sense), characterizing its social "location" vis-à-vis other places in the Costa Rican imagination. His depiction of San Carlos here may be seen as a parallel to my own efforts in this chapter to explain what it means to be a man in San Carlos, oriented not only by essentialized ideas about masculinity, but by the articulation of changing ideas about gender with the legal, technological, familial, and otherwise social and cultural lives that are lived, not only by *sancarleños*, but by many men in Latin America.

"Here, in San Carlos—William, you have to understand. *These* people—" Don Javier paused, chuckling to himself as he considered how best to contrast "these people," *los sancarleños*, with the residents of the city of Alajuela where he was raised (see Fig. 1). He wanted the contrast to be illustrative of the difference between the Central Valley and San Carlos, for he had been trying to impress upon me the relative sophistication of Seventh Day Adventism—the cosmopolitan image of Adventist doctors and health-conscious vegetarians that he felt was obscured by the humble, rural character of Seventh Day Adventist congregations in San Carlos, including the one his family attended, where I spent most Saturday mornings.

Don Javier's grin widened as he seemed to seize upon the right words. Within earshot of his entire family (*sancarleños* all!), Javier, in English, blurted out, "These—these are a *farmer* people, William!" He laughed heartily, and I reciprocated by chuckling with him a bit, but I stifled my reaction when I caught sight of his wife rolling her eyes in the other room.

I was unsure what more colorful Spanish word he might have chosen to express "farmer people," especially to convey the pejorative implications he appeared to relish. Nearly all of local

options I know[21] are at least somewhat insulting, ranging from a word usually translated as "peasant" (at best) to "yokel" or "hick" (at worst).

"Do you understand?" he asked, as he stopped chuckling, reading my face for clearer signs that I understood.

The Seventh Day Adventist church, whose rurality Javier had been describing—and which served as a platform for this bit of fun-making of San Carlos more generally—was one Javier attended somewhat infrequently, although I was lucky enough to have been present for his adult baptism as an Adventist. In part, I think his infrequent attendance may have been because, like many urban transplants to San Carlos, Javier still found it difficult (and perhaps even undesirable) to integrate himself into Quesada's small town social life, despite his fairly sociable and genial disposition.

Many transplants to San Carlos had complained to me that, although they admired much about the familial and friendly aspects of local social life in the area, they found it difficult to feel at home there. In more sociologically minded terms, I might say that transplants to San Carlos often seemed to admire how tight-knit and long-lasting the social networks were in San Carlos, the way that these networks linked both extended families and classmates from childhood into a broader, more complex web of social belonging. Finding one's place in this dense network, however, without inheriting such temporally deep ties, was often difficult and not without its

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21 Both the universal *campesino* (roughly "peasant") and the more regional *maicero ("the corn[-grow/eat]er") are commonly used in San Carlos as insults, and the slang adjective polo (tacky) is also used a derogatory noun meaning "a poor, rural person."* (See the entry at the website Así Hablamos for examples: http://www.asihablamos.com/significado/palabra/polo).

costs. Longtime locals themselves are quite aware of some of these costs, and they often offer transplants (and long-term interlopers, like myself) fair warning of this, cautioning that “here everyone knows everybody and everything,” sometimes followed up with the well-known refrain “Small town, big hell” (referring to the damning potential of small-town *chismes*, or gossip).[22]

Although Don Javier was retired from a career in law and might have been expected to enjoy a relatively high status in the town, even other Costa Ricans find it challenging to find their place in Quesada's social networks. Even Costa Ricans from other rural areas, or with experience living in rural areas where they have family (like Don Javier), say that if one did not at least move to the area while still attending school, it was basically impossible to feel at home. This was true even for someone as gregarious and outgoing as Don Javier. In fact, I strongly suspect that Javier may have been kidding about *sancarleños* partly for my sake, to sympathize with my own, truly outsider status.

“I think I understand,” I responded, but I did so a little waveringly, hoping Don Javier would indulge me a little more. Mustering all the wide-eyed naïveté I could manage, I steered the conversation toward what I knew to be more dangerous terrain. “I've noted that there are a lot of cattle (*ganado*) here, as well as a lot of sugarcane (*caña*).”

That much was indisputable. Any pass up and down the roads near Don Javier's home reflected the dominance of these two forms of agriculture.

However, cattle ranching and sugarcane growing have quite different associations to

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On pages 131 of *The Meanings of Macho*, Gutmann (1995) includes a photograph of a woman holding a finger to her eye, in a gesture of “I'm watching you,” to illustrate how neighbors think about the absence of privacy in small towns or close-knit neighborhoods.

locals, as in much of Latin America (even if, as in the US, views of what agriculture consists of in Costa Rica are increasingly estranged from the contemporary realities of export agriculture). In part these different associations are due to the different kinds of labor thought to be involved in working with cattle versus working with sugarcane. In brief, the prestige of working with cattle far exceeds that associated with working with sugarcane. There are several reasons for this prestige. These include the popularity of the cowboy image throughout Latin America (mentioned above),[23] the perception of cowboys as "skilled" workers, the historical association of a facility on horseback with gentility (a flourish which is on display in the nation's aforementioned topes), and the local understanding of cattle as a smart financial investment in recent history. By contrast, as Javier would soon point out, the image of sugarcane laborers is one of "unskilled," exploited, immigrant laborers from Nicaragua (see e.g. Sandoval 1997:130-140, 2004:xviii-xix).

Javier conceded that both cattle-ranching and sugarcane were common uses of land in the area, but downplayed any connection between the two, pointing to a number of crops in San Carlos: from the high mountainous area in the south to the tropical plains of the north, San Carlos also produced tubers and fruit, and, in its far southern reaches, some coffee (once the country's national pride, "the grain of gold"/*el grano de oro*). Among these fruits were pineapples, which had been recently introduced in the hotter, northern climes and had in fact come to represent the most lucrative crop with the exception of bananas, although the crop has

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23 A deep history of this traces to Spanish notions of nobility as fundamentally distinguished by their equine skills, as captured in the Spanish term *caballero*, which is usually translated "gentlemen" (as in "ladies and gentlemen," *damas y caballeros*), but which literally means a "horseback rider" from *caballo*, meaning "horse." Likewise, the most expensive Spanish breeds on display in *topes* are *de pura raza español*, (i.e., "of pure Spanish race/breed"), costing from two to four times as much as the *criollo* (creole/American-born) breeds.

earned the ire of environmentalists in Costa Rica and internationally for the heavy levels of pesticides associated with its cultivation (e.g., L. Arias 2017).[24]

I pressed on: "That's true. But aren't there sugarcane and cattle all the way north into Nicaragua?"

Earlier I had casually ignored the associations of prestige and region that separated cattle ranching and sugar cane farming. Now I had blurred commonly highlighted distinctions between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. These distinctions might be thought to be important to Javier for a number of reasons: first, because Don Javier's family was from originally from Guanacaste, a region to the west of San Carlos that prides itself, like San Carlos, on its cowboy traditions; and second, because many Costa Ricans of all classes explicitly *dis*-identify with Nicaragua, and many, in their less guarded moments, portray both the country and its nationals as backwards, violent, and poor (see especially Sandoval 2004a, 2004b). I was interested to see how Don Javier would correct me and redraw those conceptual boundaries.

"Ah, well, yes, there are cattle and sugarcane here, *Wilian*,[25] and in Nicaragua as well.

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The UN's FAO website allows you to access the comparative data showing where pineapples surpass bananas, long the number one cash crop in Costa Rica, in tonnage (http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QC) and in net value (http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QV), in 2009.

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If this were further nativized, the "W" would probably just be replaced with a "Gu," as in the Spanish equivalent Guillermo (or *Guau*/"Wow"). However, few Costa Ricans made this connection and called me by a Spanish name, more often making some joke about the American invader and *filibustero* ("pirate" in Spanish), William Walker, who tried to carve out a Central American slave state from 1856-1857 in Nicaragua (and northern Costa Rica), briefly ruling in Nicaragua.

Future US efforts to occupy Nicaragua (which it did from 1909-1933) would be much better funded. Most of the appeal of the non-Sandinista candidate in Nicaragua's 1990 election was the US promise that it would stop funding the anti-Sandinista *contras* in its "dirty war" against the Sandinista government (see also Lancaster 1992). The Sandinistas were named in turn for the leader of the forces who finally ejected US occupation from Nicaragua the first time in 1933, before being killed by the US-supported general-dictator, Somoza, whose family would rule with US support until 1979, when the Sandinistas finally toppled their rule. Summarizing the tenor of the US occupations and wars in Central America, retired Marine general Smedley Butler offered this account of his own participation in these efforts since the Spanish-American War:

> I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I

And it's true: there are cattle in *many* places," confirmed Don Javier, having switched back into Spanish again.

Here he grew emphatic. "But here—*vea*, *Wilian* (look, William)—here we Costa Ricans don't *cut* the sugarcane! The Nicaraguans, okay, they come each year and they cut the cane. But *nosotros los ticos*[26] *no… cortamos… la caña*! (we Costa Ricans don't... cut... the cane!)" His voice boomed as he drove the final words home, and he gestured emphatically, waving his index finger back and forth with the rhythm of his speech.

Don Javier thus triangulated San Carlos (and implicitly the region's men) on the social landscape, locating it with respect to commonly used points of reference. Yes, as Don Javier had joked, *los sancarleños* are "a farmer people," lacking in the kind of sophistication that sets apart Alajuela's Adventist congregation (which he had attended when he lived in the urban Central Valley) from the modest one there in San Carlos. But he certainly couldn't have me thinking that rural San Carlos was "basically Nicaragua," nor that *los sancarleños* were "basically Nicaraguans"![27]

> was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested. Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents... (cited in Schmidt 1998:7).

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A casual demonym most Costa Ricans use for themselves. It is derived from their frequent use of diminutives, as when "a moment" (*un momento*) becomes *un momentillo*, *un momentito*—or *un momentico*.

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Although all Costa Ricans make these strong distinctions, San Carlos's distance from the Central Valley and its border with Nicaragua make this an especially sensitive issue. Additionally, the town of San Carlos shares a name with a well-known town just across the border with *Nicaragua.*

The cutting of sugarcane is often cited locally as an archetype of the *obra negra* ("black work") that supposedly sets *los nicas* apart from *los ticos* (though such in practice some Costa Ricans do perform such work: see Sandoval Garcia 1997:82). More specifically, it sets Costa Rican men apart from Nicaraguan men. Cutting sugarcane is tough, unpleasant work (e.g., Mintz 1986:ch.2, Scheper-Hughes 1992:ch.1). As Don Javier explained, the sugarcane in San Carlos is mostly cut by hand—usually the hand of a migrant worker from Nicaragua. The sweet, sticky spray from cutting the stalks soaks the skin and hair of laborers and bakes hard throughout the day, forming a layer of sugary residue that resists being washed clean. The plant's leaves are sharp and sturdy enough to slice through skin and even thinner fabrics. Therefore, laborers must dress in thick, long-sleeved clothing while cutting cane, despite the hot tropical climate, and frequently in rubber. More punishingly, cane in the region is usually cut during a hot spell because the cane fields are inhabited by poisonous insects and small animals that attract poisonous snakes, and therefore large-scale burnings of the fields are common before harvest, and these burnings are usually carried out whenever long heat waves dry the cane fields sufficiently. In practice, this means that the difficult job of manually hacking through hardy cane is often carried out in staggering temperatures, by laborers covered head to toe in the heaviest, most protective clothing they can stand. (And, since a thorough burn is still difficult to achieve in Costa Rica's wetter climates laborers still often end up confronting poisonous snakes and other hazards even despite these efforts.)

This is what Don Javier meant by emphasizing that "we, *los ticos*, do not... cut... the cane." The labor, he explains, is *durísimo* (very difficult), and most Costa Ricans (and implicitly, he meant most Costa Rican *men*) would simply not do it.[28]

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Comments like these are exceedingly common. See Biesanz *et al* 1999:56.

Acknowledging the reluctance of Costa Rican men to do such *obra negra* raised yet another issue commonly discussed in places like San Carlos: the way that the combination of growing male unemployment and falling wages has led to a set of insecurities about masculinity, as previous, breadwinner models becomes increasingly impossible (cf. Mannon and Kemp 2010 on masculinity and male employment in the GAM). Turning to this topic, and probably eager to avoid seeming as if he were denigrating Nicaraguans, Don Javier went on to invert the judgments inherent in the popular understanding he had just laid out, reframing the question of sugarcane labor issue as a generational and cultural rather than national one, with young Costa Rican men lacking the work ethic of young Nicaraguan men. He went on to reflect upon the laziness of today's youth, which he contrasted with his own "progressive sounding discourse" that Nicaraguan men do indeed work very, very hard (see Hale 1999, cf. Calhoun 2003a, 2003b, Hale 2006)—a discourse that managed to link male labor once again to notions of masculinity.

2.3 Toward an understanding of gender identity, religion, and the "crisis of masculinity"/"crisis of the family"

The above conversation with Don Javier is meant to highlight some of the major elements of the local identity of San Carlos, particularly as they bear on what it means to be a man there. It is meant to point out how, in practical conversations about the local identity of different places (and the inhabitants of those places), claims about personal or local identity are often made as claims about dis-identification. Sometimes this dis identification is more explicit than a direct identification, a direct naming of the qualities that mark a place, person, or group. Even when this dis-identification is less explicit, it is nearly always implicit in naming or describing the qualities of anything, somewhat like how an object in our visual field is only perceived as an

object by perceiving it as distinct from a background, or how color is always relative, experienced depending on the other colors nearby it. In the case of claims about masculinity or male *identity* (literally, claims about the "sameness" men have with themselves, or with other men), such claims about identity can be seen as implicit or explicit claims about an *alterity*, some otherness or difference. The specific claims about male identity may not only be a claim about masculine and feminine essences, as I will show in the rest of Part I, although such essentializations are sometimes available. The relevant contrast may also between other kinds or types of masculinities (or femininities). Furthermore, some claims about male identity appear to be concerned primarily with characteristics that may not otherwise be thought of as gendered: it is not always easy to make explicit sense out of claims about men's identity or alterity with places, qualities, social classes, ethnic and/or racial identity, age, and many other measures of difference and distinction.

I raise this somewhat abstract point about how identity claims are at least implicitly a claim about alterity, or difference, because these implicit contrasts will be particularly salient in the rest of Part I in my discussion of gender and religion, and how together they constitute part of what it means to be a man in San Carlos, in Costa Rica, in Central America, and in Latin America.

In particular, two gendered contrasts should be kept in mind throughout the following chapters, for they are central to how the social movements with which I studied manage to construct an alternative masculinity. *First*, there is a contrast between an emergent form of masculinity that I will call "spiritual masculinity" and the better-known concept of machismo (and the figure of the *machista*, which can be a noun or an adjective referring to the person afflicted with machismo). This spiritual masculinity/machismo distinction is crucial, for I will

argue that this emergent masculinity is only possible because of the ready availability of contemporary discourses about *machismo* in Latin America (which are, to be clear, largely anti-*machismo* discourses at this point: see Gutmann 1996:221-222, 1997b:842, Ramírez 2008). As I saw it constructed in support groups, small groups, and churches in San Carlos (and in accordance with the literature about such groups in Latin America and elsewhere), spiritual masculinity so challenged the assumptions behind machismo that it could only be constructed in contrast with the better-known concept of machismo, much as Brusco has argued about evangelical masculinity. This is part of what renders masculinity such a central, hypercognized topic. *Second*, the contrast between spiritual masculinity and other types of femininities, such as marianismo, was actually somewhat more muted and indirect. In fact, this is also the argument about marianismo: the term itself is not widely known except among a certain class of person in Costa Rica, yet this image of femininity is understood by almost everyone as "traditional," and it is often invoked (like spiritual masculinity) in contrasts with the better known, "source domain" of machismo, or the machista, and sinful and destructive. More often, the Marian image was described using a common set of adjectives: *sumisa* (submissive) or *pasiva* (passive), which are usually intoned perjoratively, or the more neutral *tradicional* (traditional), or the two terms *maternal* (maternal) and *abnegada* (selfless), both of which can sometimes be deployed as a compliment.

The point here is that the stereotypical *marianismo-machismo* discourses are highly relevant, but the discourse about machismo is far more explicit and easy to name, while other models or stereotypes of gender identity, such as Marian femininty, or an emergent, spiritual masculinity, are often constructed in an explicit contrast with machismo. The contrast between spiritual masculinity and machismo is probably the most relevant one, but spiritual masculinity is

conceptualized partly by unmaking some assumptions about religion and spirituality that are inherent both to machismo and to the marianista image of femininity. In particular, marianismo is implicit in the machismo discourse, but the Marian image of spirituality mostly comes into play in constructing a more "active" and egalitarian looking version of spirituality, in contrast with than an image of passive submissiveness or passivity (as marianista spirituality is sometimes stereotyped. However, as I will show, the critique of this image of spirituality is not really ever aimed at marianismo. If anything, this anti-hierarchical model of spirituality can be argued to reveal the survival of anti-clerical discourses, which survive not only in the image of machismo itself, but in critiques of machismo and in kinds of evangelical discourse about religion and about Catholic images of gender. The question of evangelical femininity, by contrast, will not be discussed in much detail until the end of the dissertation.

All this explanation is meant to prevent my approach here from being misread as a straightforward study of gender binaries or essentialisms, and to emphasize how identity, and gender—and gender identity in particular—will be treated from a more holistic and relational perspective. Discussing these locally salient essentialisms is crucial to understanding how emergent masculinities and femininities are emerging in San Carlos and elsewhere in Latin America. However, these essentialisms are treated as not only *dynamic* rather than static (with the moral meaning of machismo, for instance, changing quite rapidly in two generations), but also as *deconstructive*, wielded by social movements and by their participants to argue for new ways of arranging these categories, or for new terms of identification.

The most striking example of this is the way that some of the gender logics that constitute machismo (particularly those that portray masculinity as active) are used to construct a spiritual masculinity that, in turn, argues *against* many of the other logics that make up machismo, such

as the logic that portrays masculinity as irremediably carnal and destructive, or as fit only for the *calle* and unfit to inhabit spiritual spaces, such as the home or the church.

In the following two chapters, I will attend to the other way in which identity and gender are constructed in relation to broader political, economic, social, and cultural realities. Chapter 3 shows how an idealized, gendered distinction between the casa (house/private) and the calle (street/public) has been reorganized and reworked, thanks in no small part to the changing role of paid labor in the lives of men and women, as well as the changing kinds of labor and what they pay. Chapter 4 will examine a series of legal and technological changes that have (in concert with a number of other social, cultural, and economic changes) restructured not only the home, or the public sphere alone, but the holistic relationship between the home and the broader society, especially the way that men and women use gender and gender identity to navigate these legal and technological changes to the home and the family. In Chapter 5, I bring the discussion to a conclusion, drawing some conclusions about the cultural logics that constitute not just the stereotypes of machismo and marianismo, but ideas about gender and religion in general, and which are both unraveling and being repurposed to constitute new ideas about gender and spirituality in a moment of intense social change.

So striking is the rapidity of this change in Quesada to many *sancarleños*, young and old, that they commonly describe themselves as living through *una crisis*. The term *crisis* has even more semantic breadth than in it often has in English. It is commonly used both to describe economic crises (and specifically financial "depressions," which are called "crises" as they were called "panics" in the U.S. prior to the Great Depression, the most commonly referenced of which is the "the lost decade" of Latin America, the 1980s, to which all subsequent economic problems tend to be dated) and to link personal and interpersonal crises to economic conditions

(cf. Barbieri 1992). Furthermore, two social crises are associated with these personal crises and economic ones and frequently spoken of by many Latin Americans themselves (and Latin Americanists): the "crisis of masculinity" and the "crisis of the family" (e.g., Chant 2001, 2001a-b, Viveros 2003:28).

Each of these senses of the word *crisis* will be salient in Chapter 3 that follow and in the story I will recount of the death of a man named Omar in Chapter 5. Here it is enough to keep in mind that the sense that there is a general crisis in masculinity and in the family is linked in the popular imagination not only to men's personal and interpersonal crises, but to economic changes and a changing social fabric. Each of these layers of meaning are central to how evangelical and support group movements tackle the crisis of masculinity, particularly through their use of peer groups to transform men's sense of gender identity.

Throughout this discussion, I will frequently have to "scale up" or "zoom out"from Quesada to speak of research that examines San Carlos, or Costa Rica, or Latin America as a historical and cultural region,[29] or trends that affect many parts of the world, given that some of

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Most texts of the past decade that have struggled to make sense of gender and social phenomena in Latin America have asked important questions about the meaningfulness of "Latin America" as a cultural area—and all the issues raised by any use of culture area-type concepts in a field where their use has been hotly contested, as has long been the case in the Mediterranean (e.g., Herzfeld 1987 onward) and in the case of the New Guinea Highlands (Hays 1993). These texts have largely concluded that, in addition to sharing broad historical patterns, some politic trends and even political institutions, economic institutions and orientations, languages, etc., the shared media networks of Latin America and a self-conscious identification with Latin America continue to be meaningful grounds on which something like "Latin America" exists in the minds of its inhabitants and has broad cultural effects (see e.g., Gutmann 2003a:16-18, Melhuus and Stølen 1996a:5-9). In the former citation, the field of "Latin America" is only examined with some difficulty, due to the commitment of Matthew Gutmann and his colleagues to particularism and local context, as he writes: "Despite our efforts to accentuate historical particularism *and* global contextualism at the LASA panel in 1998 [where the present edited volume book originated] I was struck by the creeping suspicion—and I do not think I was alone in this feeling—that despite differences of class, ethnic group, region, and generation, it was not just in the popular imagination that Latin America was seen as constituting in some palpable sense a coherent area of historical and cultural commonalities with respect to certain aspects of gender and sexuality" (16). The solution he proposes, which I follow here, is an examination of how pan-Latin American gender logics (like active/passive, machismo/marianismo, carnality/spirituality: 16-18) "pan out" (if the reader will pardon the pun)—how they are resolved in specific local contexts (like the peer groups I examine here).

the changes affecting what it means to be a man in San Carlos are transcontinental or global in scope. For instance, the growth of employment in the service sector coinciding with downturns in construction and agricultural employment, and the strongly gendered nature of these changes in employment, can be discussed not only in Quesada but also among Latin American countries more broadly (e.g., Deutsch *et al* 2002, 2005) or in the global context (Bosch and Lehndorff 2005). I will also "zoom in" to an ethnographic scale that examines the lives of individual men, including three men I discuss in Chapter 5, including Omar, whose death was first attributed to machismo by the Costa Rican press, and then, more sympathetically, to the crises of masculinity and the family). As I hope the reader will see in that chapter, the form of V-shaped, conversion-style narrative I discussed in Chapter 1 has the advantage of speaking to the downward mobility facing many Latin Americans, allowing it to cross not only denominational lines, but the lines supposedly separating religious from secular life. This allows the major narrative practice of support groups to appeal not only to many evangelicals and Catholics, but to the non-religious. In fact, many have argued that it is becoming central to the way that the contemporary, biographical sense of identity "hangs together" (Wuthnow 1994a, Zock 2013a-b).

Chapter 3: The casa and the calle: the decline of gendered public/private divides like the "home," the "street"—and "work"

The "crisis of masculinity"—the sense that men's gender identity is in crisis and that this crisis is linked to other forms of crisis, involving the family and the economy—is a widespread and commonly discussed phrase in Latin America. In fact, as I will eventually demonstrate in the story of Omar, and in the stories of Zaca and Isaac, the very existence and usage of the phrase, as with the term machismo, represents an understanding that male behavior (and misbehavior) are the result of changing conditions for the practice of masculinity, and not some expression of an essential, timeless masculinity. The phrase so historicizes and relativizes ideas about masculinity that Latin Americanists are often at pains to point out that they are not, in fact, coining the phrase themselves.

So, for instance, Mara Viveros Vigoya, author of an important text on contemporary models of masculinity in Colombia, *De quebradores y cumplidores: sobre hombres, masculinidades y relaciones de género en Colombia* (Of promise-breakers and promise-keepers: on men, masculinities, and gender relations in Colombia) (2002), makes sure to point out, in her introductory essay for Matthew Gutmann's edited volume on *Changing men and masculinities* in Latin America, that:

> In a sense it is already commonplace to refer to the so-called crisis of masculinity in Latin America, [which is] an expression of the clash between the attributes culturally assigned to men and subjective reactions on the part of men to important social, economic, and ideological changes that produce this gap (Viveros 2003:28).

This "clash" between attributes culturally ascribed to men in Latin America (in the past, presumably, and into the present) and men's "reactions... to important social, economic, and

ideological changes," has been described by a number of scholars in discussions of what constitutes the crisis of masculinity. Most notably, Sylvia Chant has described this clash at various scales useful here: she has examined the question internationally (having conducted research in The Gambia and the Philippines as well as Costa Rica and Mexico), in Latin America as a whole, in Costa Rica more specifically, and in rural Costa Rica in particular, using both aggregate, quantitative methods and ethnographic, qualitative ones (2001, 2002a-c, 2007, cf. Burin *et al* 2007, Gomensoro *et al* 1998, Viveros *ibid*., Rivera and Ceciliano 2004, or Bannon and Correia 2006, esp. Amuyunzu-Nyamono 2006)

On a global, comparative scale, Chant was an early figure in describing and encouraging an international shift toward including men in Gender and Development programs. Four years after the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women issued its milestone Platform for Action, which expressly sought to engage men in projects dealing with gender and the family, Chant published a report for the UN with Matthew Gutmann (1999, also 2002) on the process of "men-streaming gender" and the difficulties encountered as the "Women in Development" (WID) perspective slowly gave way to the more gender-systemic, "Gender and Development" (GAD) perspective (cf. Rathgeber 1990, Razavi and Miller 1995, Sangtin Writers and Richa Nagar 2006). In that paper, she and Gutmann pointed to early research showing that GAD perspectives made for more effective interventions, even for women, as the intended beneficiaries of WID programs (2002:275-277). In part, she argued, this was because a number of economic, educational, and sociocultural shifts that were, variably, affecting men all over the globe and resulting in men being at the center of, or sometimes one of the causes of, many social crises (271-275, cf. 2007), just as the pairing of the "crisis of masculinity" and "crisis of the family" discourses would suggest. Moreover, Chant points out that this shift toward including men in

projects focused on gender in fact grew from intersectional questions around gender that were being raised by locals in the areas where these development projects were being carried out. These questions sometimes developed into clashes between alternate ways of understanding gender problems, with, on the one hand, the priorities and feminisms of Western development workers, and on the other hand, local concerns about the way gender interacted with other forms of difference and inequality (cf. Bannon and Correia 2006b, Sangtin 2007, especially pp. 116, 142-143, 147, and Ferguson 1990:135-166).

Interestingly, Wém (one of the three groups I studied, introduced in Chapter 1) appears to have emerged during the early GAD era in just this way: as an NGO founded on the principle that gender problems were systemic and that NGOs in turn needed to be founded and funded to respond to locally identified needs. In two interviews with Fran Araya, one of the psychologists who sometimes volunteered to act as a facilitator at Wém, he described the founding of Wém, part of a story of psychologists and professors who were working with women's support groups coming together in an effort to better respond to the needs of these women, many of whom were victims of domestic violence (a common origin for these groups: see Gutmann 1996:198-213 on CAVI in Mexico City). Inspired by this gap in the resources for addressing problems with gender and the family, and based on their knowledge of men's groups internationally (with Fran citing his work in Canada and Switzerland, as well as examples in France that were drawn upon by the founders), Wém's first chapter began near the University of Costa Rica. Actually, it first began as a support line for men and shortly thereafter grew into a full-fledged support group, slowly adopting more and testimonial-style “sharing practices,” but continuing to include a number of group therapeutic exercises designed to intensify the sense of mutual identification between men and thus move along the process of creating an alternative model for male gender identity. As

with the origin of many other men's groups, and as with the growth of AA and evangelicalism in Latin America, Wém grew out of a growing recognition by local women and by international feminisms that the problems of women, and of the broader family, could not be fully addressed without addressing men's role in those problems.

Within Costa Rica, Chant has detailed the many factors involved in what has increasingly been understood as “the feminization of poverty” in much of the world—the underside of the entrance of women into the paid work force throughout the world, to varying extents (cf. 2007). At the same time that Chant was working on global GAD issues, she published a series of essays about her research in Guanacaste, Costa Rica, using both qualitative and quantitative data to illuminate the close connection between the so-called “crisis of the family” and the “crisis of masculinity,” with provocative titles like “Men in crisis?” “Families on the verge of breakdown?” and “Whose crisis?” (2001, 2002a, 2002b).

During the same period, she authored a regional perspective on “Researching gender, families and households in Latin America... in the twenty first century” (2002c). There she offered a brief summary of the “crisis of masculinity” and the “crisis of the family” resulting from the same “clash” between ongoing developments at home and at work and earlier cultural ideals and stereotypes about gender and the family:

> Stereotypical depictions of familial gender patterns in Latin America throughout most of the 20th century emphasized the dominance of a patriarchal model. Men were the primary (if not sole) breadwinners, the arbiters of decision-making, and pillars of authority within household units. Women, alternatively, were portrayed as mothers and housewives, dependent on men financially and possessing limited autonomy.
>
> *Gender divisions* in labor, power and resources within the home were commonly linked with *dichotomies in morality, sexuality and social conduc*t. [e.g., embodied in marianismo and machismo]. In terms of dominant imagery, men’s domain was the public realm of the street (*calle*), whereas women’s sphere was the secluded, private world of the house (*casa*)...
>
> While some argue that such patterns continue to obtain in many parts of Latin

> America today... others argue that significant erosion is underway. Two prominent signs of the latter are the rise in female-headed units, and, within conjugal households, *a shift from authoritarian to more egalitarian arrangements* (549, emphasis mine).

Most important here is the way that the "stereotypical depictions" of gender and the family are linked to (a) a number of "dichotomies in morality, sexuality, and social conduct," (b) male breadwinnership, and (c) a division of space into public/private (or "street/house"). The latter elements, the strictly gendered division of labor and social space, and men's headship/breadwinnership in relation to the home, have "eroded" much more quickly than the stereotypes and dichotomies in question. These stereotypes include machismo and marianismo, which I examine below, but they also include stereotypes and understandings of the street and home. The well-known division of social space into two, gendered social realms that Chant describes—the (public) street (*calle*, cf. *rua* in Portuguese in Brazil) and the (private) home (*casa*)—was itself an ideal borne of the movement of labor outside the household. This ideal has in turn collapsed almost entirely under the weight of urban industries and women's employment (cf. also Pérez Sáinz 1999).

Chant notes that a growing number of female-headed households and "a shift from authoritarian to more egalitarian arrangements" may signal the erosion of these gendered logics. I delve into these gendered logics more fully in the chapters to come, but here our focus is on these "stereotypical depictions" of public and private, and how they appear in Costa Rica. What do these ideals look like, and to what extent have they eroded (at least in practice)?

The *calle*/*casa* distinction has been one important way that gender has been structured in Latin America, dividing public spaces and concerns into masculinized and feminized spheres, and being reshaped and contested in processes of urbanization. No discussion of Latin American gender transformations is complete without a discussion of the role that *gendered spaces* have

played in shaping rural and urban life in Latin America.

As the passage above suggests, the *casa*, the home, has often been coded as feminine, yet as encapsulated within male authority (much as the image of feminine spirituality encapsulated within masculine religious authority, discussed in Chapter 1 and 5). As the passage from Chant suggests, men are envisaged as "pillars of authority" in the household, and as "breadwinners," but only lastly (or in the last instance) as "arbiters of decision-making." This is because *la casa* as a whole was gendered feminine and held to be the proper realm of women, who made the primary decisions.

Chant notes that, in Costa Rica and in the rest of Latin America, research suggests that men's authority or ability to subsume the home as a feminine space under their authority is rapidly being eroded by changing legal, cultural, technological, and economic norms. On the one hand, it is true these ideals of female domesticity may have never been as completely actualized in early urban Latin America as the stereotype suggests (e.g., Caulfield 2000, Hutchinson 2001) or in Costa Rica in particular (e.g., Rodríguez 1999, see Chant 2002a:137-138n2). But on the other hand, the literature does clearly demonstrate that, despite women's long *de facto* decision-making in the house, women are increasingly registering as the official heads of households (e.g., Arriagada 2001). Even in countries like Costa Rica, where female headship may have already been slightly more common than in other parts of Latin America, the trend is clear: an increasing proportion of men either have abandoned, have never headed, or have been ejected from households, and the proportion of female-headed households is rising.

In Costa Rica, national statistics show that the rate of female-headed households has *nearly doubled* over the past forty years, from 16 percent in 1973 to 29 percent in 2011 (Chant 2002a:110; INEC 2011a, Estadísticas Sociales, C19). They also show an increasing number of

households (around 7.2 seven percent at present) registering as having "shared headship"—surely indicative of the kinds of "more egalitarian [family] arrangements" Chant mentions above.

These national numbers are fairly representative for the area where I did my research, as well. Although the county of San Carlos as a whole has a slightly lower rate of female headship than the national average (24 percent, rather than 29), the town (or "city") of Quesada actually has a (negligibly) higher rate than the national average, at 30 percent. The rate of shared headship for the county is 7.5 percent for the county and 8.3 percent for the town of Quesada, both slightly higher than the national average of 7.2. These patterns are not strictly decipherable as urban/rural differences: San José proper had a slightly lower rate of *shared* headship than Costa Rica as a whole, about 6.8%, but a somewhat higher rate of *female* headship, about 38% versus 30 in Quesada, 24 in San Carlos country, and 29 nationally; while Escazú, an area of the GAM associated with wealthier and elite inhabitants, has a rated of shared headship of 8.6% but a female headship rate of about the same as Quesada but less than San José proper: 31%).

While the numbers on female headship may speak more to the so-called "crisis of masculinity" and a number of changes in family law (discussed below), the growth of shared headship may speak to the "shift from authoritarian to more egalitarian arrangements" that Chant describes. In Quesada, as throughout Costa Rica, these changes appear to be due in no small part to women increasingly playing the role of breadwinner, decision maker, and pillar of authority in the household, either alongside men or in the absence of them. In Quesada as in much of Costa Rica, these changes are talked about in conjunction with the crises of the family and masculinity and the responses to those crises.

Unlike the home, the *calle* comprises both the realm of work and the broader "public sphere," spatially defined, where not only work but many forms of non-domestic leisure take

place. For this reason, the calle is doubly associated with *egoismo*, egotism or individual self-interest (a term which is often used interchangeably or alongside the term machismo, especially in the groups I observed). Although a man's interest in the family may logically be thought of as a form of self-interest, the term egoismo is rarely heard this way in common usage, just as an earlier, pro-social image of machismo, as entering the competitive public sphere to fend for his family, is rarely heard. Instead, the calle has become increasingly associated with an *egoismo* that is understood as atomized and destructive—even self-destructive quite different from a rational actor sort of self-interest. Likewise, the associations with leisure have come, for some, to predominate the associations with work. On the whole, the association of calle with self-interest persists, even while the gendered associations of the calle weaken in an era when women are increasingly involved in paid employment and in the leisure it sometimes affords them.

Urbanization itself (and not only the changing types of employment that may be associated with urbanization) has also led to a change in the gendered meaning of the term calle. As the Latin American population increasingly settles in cities, the concept of calle (as "public space") increasingly circumscribes the casa, since the casa no longer includes a plot of land surrounding the *domicilio* (the house). The process of urbanization and rural-to-urban migration in Latin America is often shown in the literature to lead to two countervailing social trends: first, a short-term reinforcement and extension of the *casa*/*calle* distinction and its restrictions on women's movements; then, a long-term erosion of the gendering of this spatial distinction (and of its power to spatialize gender) (e.g., Caulfield 2000, Hutchinson 2001, cf. Chatty 1978, 1997:ch.7).

Nonetheless, the distinct *moral* associations of each of these spheres linger, even while their strict gender associations fade and spatial divisions change. The opening up of the public

sphere to women has not meant the death of the idealized image of the casa as a place more spiritual than carnal, more other-interested than self-interested (e.g., Brusco 2011[1995], cf. Bellah *et al* 1985). Likewise, the term calle still has plenty of moral relevance in religious and secular discourses, commonly serving as a shorthand to the more carnal, dissolute, self-absorbed side of social life. Tellingly, *la calle* is sometimes used interchangeably with *la fiesta*. As a result, either calle or fiesta can be intoned moralistically, and AA members, evangelicals, and other moral reformers have little trouble using either to conjure up images of the *discoteca* (dancehall), the *cantina* (bar), and the *putera* (brothel), as well as street corners and park benches, in the minds of their listeners—all tied together by the sense of their describing a social sphere that is simultaneously self-interested and destructive to oneself and to others (cf. Bourgois 1995). As I will argue, this moral discourse is so readily available because of an older, Pauline-inflected discourse in which the calle is linked to carnality and worldliness, while the casa is linked to what is spiritual.

In sum neither the calle and its association with self-interest have necessarily changed, even if the way self-interest and the work/leisure is understood may have changed. Nor has the association of the home with care for others been displaced. Yet treating these spatial and moral distinctions as gendered no longer accords with lives or norms of many Latin Americans.

Chant's ethnographic research just to San Carlos's west reveals a dynamic quite close (both geographically and economically) to what is happening in San Carlos. In the region of Guanacaste (see also Edelman 1999, Stocker 2005), which is also deeply associate with cattle ranching, agricultural labor is rapidly diminishing, while much of the commercial and service sectors have grown in urban areas and in the rural areas where tourism helps fuel the economy. Across Costa Rica and much of Latin America, women are often hired preferentially in these

industries and usually paid significantly less (Chant 2002a:111-112, cf. Deutsch *et al* 2002 for Latin America, Mannon and Kemp 2010 for the GAM of Costa Rica).

In Quesada, it is worth considering just how rapidly both senses of "urbanization" have taken place: the economic shift away from the agricultural sector that still predominates in the Northern Zone, and the cultural shift towards gendered realities that are more common to cities (or, instead, perhaps just more commonly associated with cities, as the Costa Rican tourist economy reminds us) (Portes and Roberts 2005, Schifter-Sikora 2007, Vandegrift 2008, Vivanco 2007, cf. e.g. Sinclair 1997a-c). The "village" of Quesada *(Villa Quesada*) was only founded in 1890, when the entire county of San Carlos had a mere 2,400 inhabitants (Waibel 1939:535). Older residents still speak of attending the "first chapel," not built until 1912. Only beginning in the early sixties did the first bus (the first motorized vehicle, really) that connected Quesada to the Central Valley begin making the trip, periodically and transporting people back and forth when the roads permitted.

I described in Chapter 1 how and why the process of settling the area, before the government incentivized cattle ranching, has usually been described as one of "spontaneous colonization" (Sandner 1985), one that took place throughout various parts of the country but, for Quesada, proceeded initially along the mountain pass leading out of the Central Valley (named Tapezco) (Waibel 1939:551-552). Thus the founding and initial development of Quesada actually took place more slowly than settlements closer to the Central Valley like Zarcero, which are now much less than a tenth its size (at a bit over 4,000 inhabitants). For the first half of the twentieth century, Quesada remained "the center of a purely agricultural region" that was not linked to broader agricultural markets (Waibel 1939:535, Romein 1995:493).[30]

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30 Export agriculture in coffee was important in the Central Valley between 2,500 and 5,000 feet above sea

Starting in the 1960s, Quesada grew thanks to government investments in export agricultural markets, including tax credits to local producers, government investments all along the production chain, and infrastructure investments. These government investments were part of an overall program of *desarrollismo* (a development-oriented strategy, or “development-ism”) that the government backed for the next couple decades, sometimes known as the era of the *estado empresario* (entrepreneurial state), during which Keynesian principles underpinned much of US-led international lending. The terms and interest rates on the loans that the World Bank and others lent the country worsened after the oil shocks of the 1970s, when interest rates skyrocketed, and the “lost decade” of the 1980s and its “structural adjustments” followed. Costa Rica actually defaulted on its foreign debt one year before Mexico's famous default in 1982, and before other Latin American countries. Many Costa Ricans (and Latin Americans in general) use the term *neoliberalismo*, or neoliberalism, to describe the present economic era, starting with the lost decade, perceiving (not wrongly) the term as a sort of polar opposite to *desarrollismo* (Edelman 1999, cf. Williams 1985).

Thus, although ranching is sometimes seen as lending San Carlos and neighboring Guanacaste its sense of regional identity, the ranching economy is quite new and was driven by fiscal policy prior to becoming part of the local character. Another irony is that, as cattle ranching expanded (increasing its land usage by 230 percent to take up 83 of the county's agricultural lands in the twenty years since the first bus trip to San José), it mostly displaced men from the rural landscape (Romein 1995:493-494). As the image of ranching came to be identified with

level, driving Costa Rica's growth in that region, but Quesada's altitude (at around 1,600 feet above sea level) and the vast majority of the Northern Zone (below it, to the north) was too low and its connection to the Central Valley (and thus to ports) too indirect for San Carlos to take part in that market (cf. Paige 1997).

local models of masculinity, ranching itself was pushing more and more men towards city centers, toward urban lifestyles and unemployment, and in turn contributing to their loss of headship in many homes. By 1990, a mere 5.5 percent of working-age inhabitants of Quesada worked in agricultural jobs—a smaller number than those unemployed (at 8.5 percent), and far smaller than the vast majority (86 percent of residents) who work in non-agricultural sectors.[31] Nearly three-quarters of sancarleños working in non-agricultural sectors already worked in the service and commercial sectors (Romein 1995:499), where women, as I have noted, are proportionally even more over-represented than in places with similar economic profiles (Deutsch *et al*. 2002).

Meanwhile, although women have entered the workplace and the calle more generally, many men still seem to have struggled to find their place in the casa or to adopt models of masculinity that are both comfortable in the home *and* easily attainable, given their economic constraints (e.g., Mannon and Kemp 2010). Men's anxieties about domesticity are reflected in the titles of much of the recent scholarship on Latin American men in the home with the family. "Men at home?" puzzled the title of Olavarría's (2003) essay on Chilean working-class men. "Neither *macho* nor *mandilón*," asserted the Spanish language title of Gutmann's (2000) book on Mexico City's working-class masculinity—a title taken from an interlocutor, who showed how anxieties about machismo in the 1980s had to be balanced against anxieties about "submission" to domesticity, as symbolized by the apron (with *mandilón* meaning literally "big apron," but

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31 I am unaware how this type of statistical work captures migrant workers. If they were included as residents in the town for the portions of the year they were present, the numbers might be a bit different. Likewise, if we were to count man-hours rather than residents, the total number of hours worked in agriculture by people residing (temporarily or permanently) in Quesada might be proprtionally higher than represented here, in this discussion on local identity and gender.

figuratively a "domesticated man"). Many of my interlocutors, and most of my alcoholic informants, described their withdrawal from machista all-male social environments as painful precisely because they faced the accusations of their old friends, who often teased them by claiming that that their change of heart was merely submission to a wife *que manda en la casa*—who was in charge of them and the home.

Surely male employment, which has fallen in Latin America even as female rates of employment have risen, also plays a role in this insecurity. As agricultural livelihoods decrease, and as growing economic sectors in urban settings offer low wages and preferably hire women, men have become both "economically marginalized" outside the home and marginalized within the household (O. Arias 2001, and Chant 2002a:111-112), thanks to these same economic changes and to legal and cultural changes that have accompanied them, which I treat in Chapter 4.

As Mannon and Kemp (2010) have shown in the GAM, this means that many positive, non-machista models of male identity are out of reach, perpetuating the anxieties that men in Mexico City in the 1980s felt, according to Gutmann. Mannon and Kemp note how men in Costa Rica face competing pressures, themselves embodied in a new pair of stereotypes: in the image of "(wo)manly men," men struggling to occupy the breadwinner role face the threat of feeling feminized by office culture and often find that their wages demand two earners anyway; while in the image of the "do-nothing macho," men acknowledge the unlikelihood of either breadwinnership or any kind of prosperity, instead idealizing rural life and seeking out the privileges of a bygone era. In this impossible bind, many men not only "fail [to achieve] their traditional role as household breadwinners, [they] lack an alternative model of manhood that is reasonably attainable for their economic status" (Mannon and Kemp 2010:485). Thus Mannon

and Kemp demonstrate the importance of typologies and models of masculinity in what is called the crisis of masculinity, as well as the opportunity for institutions and social movements to step in and imagine, elaborate, organize, and put into practice new forms of masculinity that might be better adapted to these conditions.

In Chapter 5, I will deal in greater detail with the question of machismo and how it is confusingly portrayed both as a "traditional" masculinity and as a contemporary masculine maladaptation. First, in Chapter 4, I will describe some of the *legal* and *technological* changes that have redefined men's relationship to family and the home in Costa Rica.

Chapter 4: The impact of changes in family law and family planning technologies on gender and the family

4.1 Introduction

Mannon and Kemp's analysis of the contemporary challenges to existing models of masculinity in urban Costa Rica includes a story that hints at a *legal* link between men's fortunes at work and at home. The authors offer the example of José Luis. Since the 1990s, a number of legal changes have given women the means to try to enforce their claims to a portion of men's income if they share children with these men, as well as to have men banned from a home, regardless of ownership, if they allege that the man poses a domestic abuse threat to them or the children. (I say "allege" in the technical sense, not to cast doubt or aspersion on such allegations but simply to point out that, because there is no requirement for evidence of abuse, presumably because many abuses may not leave clear evidence, an obvious potential exists for the misuse of this process of ejecting men from a home even in non-abusive relationships, leaving men no way to defend themselves from accusations.) Many of the men I interviewed who mentioned these laws were quick to point out that they supported these legal efforts to protect women and children wholeheartedly, repeating a refrain about earlier times—"Darkness in the house, lightness (*claridad*) in the street." However, four men I interviewed who reported being kicked out of their homes in a fashion similar to what happened to José Luis. Despite the fact that many of these interviewees admitted to violence, only one of the four evictees was a man who had admitted to committing domestic violence. In the other three cases, the men reported being kicked out maliciously by partners who were angry because of other relationship problems. In all three cases, the threat of being accused of domestic violence, of being taken off in handcuffs in

front of their neighbors and/or children, was enough to convince the men to leave willingly and avoid the experience of being humiliated in front of their families and neighbors. One of these man, who had only recently been estranged, involuntarily, from his children, wept hard as he recounted leaving under the cloud of this threat, still unsure at the time of the interview when or if he would next see them. In the case of José Luis, when he "returned home from work to find his belongings thrown out of their apartment window onto the street below... a not-so-subtle message from his wife that he did not control her or their household" (Mannon and Kemp 2010:484), he was probably aware of this range of legal possibilities. Similarly, several of my interviewees noted that the child support law could be used to jail men on a near-monthly basis if they were out of work and unable to pay, since the law made no provisions for an inability to pay. This too was the subject of a tearful interview, as one man recounted for me how his wife would appear with the police outside his door on a monthly basis while he was out of work.

To explain these legal changes, I rely in part on Roy Rivera Araya and Yajaira Ceciliano Navarro's (2004) elaborate, multimodal analysis of masculinity and men's roles in the family in contemporary Costa Rica. Though their study fully elaborates the "representations, values, and attitudes" related to men and masculinity (39), the authors argue effectively that such cultural realities "cannot be understood without taking into consideration the... changes in... the law" that have transformed men's place in the family in Costa Rica (16; cf. Chant 2002a:122-127).

Rivera and Ceciliano note that such legal changes arose through the cooperation of the current governments and a number of "important social actors" who aimed to "transform... a situation understood to negatively affect the family" (46). Advocates of women and children's interests were successful in pressuring Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly to act on behalf of these interests at various points throughout the late twentieth and early twenty first century, and

the most important of these actions are reviewed below. Notable for this dissertation is that these advocates often framed their arguments in terms of a "crisis of the family" that they linked implicitly and explicitly to a "crisis of masculinity" and its popular gloss, machismo (*idem*. and 52-59, see also Chant 2001, 2002a:114-116, 129-132, 2002b, Viveros 2002, Burin et al. 2007). The legal changes that were instituted, as well as their precedents and their relevant effects, are described here.

4.2 The 1949 constitution and subsequent amendments[32]

The 1949 constitution was composed following a brief civil war that resulted from a disputed election in 1948 (see Edelman 1999:151-156). Since 1949, Costa Rica's constitution has been amended (*reformada*) various times, although many of these amendments were simply changes in diction (in which more restrictive terms were exchanged for more inclusive ones), or other efforts to specify and extend the application of a legal principle, act, program, etc. In one pertinent example, Article 33, there were two reforms, in 1968 and in 1999, so that the article now reads that "all persons are equal before the law," and are protected against discrimination, rather than "all men," as in the language prior to these amendments.

Articles 51-56, in Title V of the constitution ("Social Rights and Guarantees"), describe the family and the legal obligations associated with it. Article 51 defines "the family" as "the natural, fundamental unit of society" and says that it "has a right to the special protection of the

32 For copies of the Constitution that show the earlier and later reforms, respectively, visit the Constitution Society portal's copy of the constitution (http://www.constitution.org/cons/costaric.htm) and the Costa Rican government's website (http://www.asamblea.go.cr/centro_de_informacion/biblioteca/Paginas/Constituci%C3%B3n%20Pol%C3%ADtica%20de%20Costa%20Rica.aspx).

State." The second and final sentence says that "equally, mothers, children, the elderly and the incapacitated shall have a right to this protection."

This statement in Article 51 may be interpreted in terms of the themes above, where the home is encapsulated within male authority but is itself portrayed paternally, as the object of male protection. Thus, in the second statement, although fathers are presumably part of (and heads of) the family, they are not enumerated directly in Article 51 in the way that mothers, children, the elderly, and the incapacitated are. Presumably this is an affirmation that, absent this male head, the protection of the family will be transferred directly to these protected classes of individuals.[33] Mother and minors are likewise given a specific government organ to look after their interests in Article 55.

Article 53 states that fathers (or "parents," since the word is the same) bear the same obligations toward children born in or out of wedlock. Lastly, and importantly for future laws on "responsible paternity" and child support, the article guarantees the right of every person to know his or her parents. Article 54 extends these claims to the legal realm, assuring there will be no distinction made between children born in or out of wedlock. Both follow on Article 52, claiming that marriage is the "essential basis" for the family and that it "rests upon the equality of rights of [both] spouses."

4.3 The Family Law Code (*El Código de la Familia*), 1973

In 1973, almost a quarter century after the constitution was drafted, the Legislative

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33 This failure to include men in early gender- or family-related projects is perhaps comparable both to the WID-to-GAD shift described above and to a general shift in gender theorization to be discussed later in the dissertation, as well as to the literature on carceral feminism, also discussed below.

Assembly of Costa Rica passed the Family Law Code (*el Código de la Familia*). At over fifty pages long, the Family Law Code restates the constitutional duties of the state to protect the family and guarantees the rights of children to know their parents, but it also elaborates upon some of these rights and duties rather more explicitly—elaborating, for instance, on the process by which children can determine who their parents are.

The state's protection of children is expressly extended to include administering to their needs, including offering them legal representation and special guardianship when their interests conflict with those of their parents. “That is to say,” Rivera and Ceciliano (2004:47) write, that the Family Law Code “establishes the possibility that the children might gain autonomy with respect to parental authority.” This legal autonomy from one's parents was a change commented upon by Chant's (2002a) interviewees and by six of my own as well, though it was far outnumbered by mentions of male neglect of children, which featured in a clear majority of accounts (about others if not about themselves), especially in relation to the crises of masculinity and the family.

The reader will soon see how this law prefigured the Code on Childhood and Adolescence passed a quarter century later in 1998. Yet it is perhaps also noteworthy that the Family Law Code expanded upon the constitution's explicit mention of the family, of parents, and of “mothers”—but not women *per se*. Women in Costa Rica would wait until the 1990s to see this omission rectified.

4.4 The Law on Woman's Social Equality (*La Ley de la Igualdad Social de la Mujer*), 1990

Nearly two decades after the Family Law Code was passed, the Legislative Assembly

passed the Law on Woman's Social Equality (*la Ley de la Igualdad Social de la Mujer*). Social guarantees had first been made to the family and to certain protected, presumably dependent classes of people (mothers and infants, the elderly and the disabled). Then those guarantees were linked to children. Only lastly were they linked to women as a group, rather than to mothers.

The first article of the Law on Woman's Social Equality puts forth the State's obligation to promote and guarantee an equality of rights between men and women in a number of explicitly enumerated fields: political, economic, social, and cultural. Article 3 states that the State should promote the creation and development of programs and services aimed at facilitating the full participation of women, under equal conditions, in those fields.

Separately, but relatedly, at the end of the 1990s, the aforementioned Article 33 of the constitution was amended to include more explicitly gender-neutral terms, and thus to apply implicitly to women. A 1999 amendment edited this line to read "All persons are equal before the law and no discrimination whatsoever may be practiced [that is] contrary to human dignity" (*Toda persona es igual ante la ley y no podrá practicarse discriminación alguna contraria a la dignidad humana*), instead of "All men...".

4.5 The Law on Nursery Schools and Day Cares (*La Ley de las Guarderías*), 1994

The 1990s would be a major decade for transforming the legal and institutional frameworks in which men, women, children, and families as a whole operated. In 1994, the Law on Nursery Schools and Day Cares (*La Ley de las Guarderías*) was passed and its effects went well beyond nursery schools and day cares to the legal status and protection of minors in general.

Article 1 states that the law applied to all Costa Rican children in any such institutions

(be they public, private, and mixed), and it stipulates that nursery schools and day cares have as their primary goal attending to the comprehensive needs of the child in several areas. Interestingly, this enumeration of children's needs echoed the comprehensive language used to define women's needs in the first article of The Law on Woman's Social Equality (1990). These included psycho-social needs, health and nutritional needs, and educational needs.

Article 4 also states that the nursery schools and day cares are "complementary to the home" and to the family. This article also obliges nursery schools attending to children's comprehensive needs to work to prevent abandonment, mistreatment, and sexual abuse in children's lives.

While this law does not necessarily play heavily into constructions of manhood or masculinity, it does provides an example of the state's changing relationship to children, to the family, and to other private institutions that handle young children (to say nothing of its relationship to schools, which largely fall under a similar legal logic). Although the institutions like schools, prisons, and medicine have not been examined here, these all constitute important grounds for establishing gender identity and important places to examine, not only to understand how the discourses and practices that constitute norms and models of masculinity circulate and articulate there, but to find out how the organization and ethos of these sites are their shaping of male identity and gender more broadly.

4.6 The Law against Domestic Violence (*La Ley contra la Violencia Doméstica*), 1996

This law aims to protect the family from various kinds of domestic violence, enumerated to include physical violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and violence against

property. Here as in the constitution the family is defined as not inclusive of men, and as in fact protected from them by the State. It is among the most relevant laws to this study.

The Law against Domestic Violence provides directives for police and the judicial system to handle accusations of domestic violence. It privileges providing immediate protection for claimants of such violence. Specifically, it allows police to enforce the immediate ejection of the accused from the home for up to a year and to issue a restraining order against the accused party. These measures are, for the safety of the family, not able to be appealed. Furthermore, the accused is required to register a new residence within 24 hours of this ejection or face further legal penalties, cementing the ejection of the accused from the home.

Because the threat of the law is often enough to eject men from the home, it is unclear just how broadly the law has been used. Without a doubt the Law against Domestic Violence has provided immediate relief for many abused women and children, which is its aim. In the case of my study, it is also relevant that, for those who are accused but insist upon their innocence, however, no appeal is possible. Men that I interviewed who mentioned the law tended to either praise it or condemn it according to whether or not they admitted committing abuses: those who claimed to have committed them thought it was well-designed, while those who had not ranged from supportive to critical, based in part on whether they felt that they had been unfairly affected. For the reader, it is sufficient for now to know that what has resulted is a clear-cut legal circumstance in which men can be ejected from a house and temporarily incarcerated without recourse to appeal.

4.7 The Law on Child Support (*La Ley de Pensiones Alimentarias*), 1997

Like the The Law on Nursery Schools and Day Cares, The Law on Child Support (*La Ley*

de Pensiones Alimentarias) guarantees children's rights to have their basic needs met. In this case, parents (or fathers, since the word is the same in Spanish) are obligated to meet the economic needs of their children.

"Child support" is comprehensively defined by the law to include "sustenance, room-and-board, clothing, medical assistance, education, entertainment, and the transportation; of male and female children." That is, child support is defined according to children's needs rather than by parents' resources.

Although Article 17 of the law says that the (initial) level of support shall be determined in part by "the possibilities of the liable party," Article 27 goes on to specify that "the excuse that the liable party does not have work, a salary, or an income will not be worthy of legal consideration (*no será excusa atendible que el obligado no tenga trabajo, sueldo ni ingresos*)." This means, as Rivera and Ceciliano (2004:49) affirm, that "in the majority of the cases the payment is obligatory," regardless of whether or not parents have such resources to make payments.

For the purposes of this study, the reader should know that this law has a similar set of effects as the laws that were put in place earlier. In many cases, as which Rivera and Cecliano (2004) note, it provides economic support for a great number of children and families. From my interviews, many men reported that the lack of any appeals process placed them in a somewhat Kafkaesque legal process. Out-of-work fathers are sometimes picked up by police and jailed briefly when monthly child support payments come due, in a somewhat literal example of what some feminist critiques have labeled a "carceral feminism" (e.g., Bernstein 2010). From the perspective of neoliberal reform, it is worth noting that the needs of children, previously guaranteed by the State, are in fact not provisioned directly and are instead devolved to fathers,

with the State's main function being to enforce the surrender of these resources when fathers possess them.

4.8 The Code on Childhood and Adolescence (*El Código de la Niñez y la Adolescencia*), 1998

The very next year in 1998 a law was passed extending the rights of children to include the "protection" from the State found in Article 51 of the Costa Rican constitution. The Code on Childhood and Adolescence (*El Código de la Niñez y la Adolescencia*) recognizes infants and children as full subjects under the law, rather than possessing these rights through the family or only in the absence of a male head, as Article 51 might be read to imply.

The 1998 law reiterates earlier legislation guaranteeing a child's right to know his parents and enumerating the "physical, intellectual, moral, social, spiritual needs" needs parents are obligated to meet (Articles 29 and 30). However, the law also place an obligation on the State to guarantee children's basic rights. Article 4 states that "it will be the obligation of the State to adopt administrative, legislative, budgetary and any other kind of means to guarantee fully and effectively the fundamental rights of minors." However, these rights are not guaranteed directly through universal programs like a Universal Basic Income. Instead, the State largely enforces punitive measures, enforcing the payment of child support when it can be paid and arresting men when it cannot.

Together these laws make the State the ultimate guarantor of rights for minors and women, proposing that the State should act in the realm of childrearing and the family to protect them and their interests. But it was not until the twenty-first century that men in particular would be addressed by this growing body of family and gender-based law.

4.9 The Law against Sexual Harassment in Employment and in the Classroom (*La Ley contra el hostigamiento sexual en el empleo y la docencia*), 1995

Although presented here somewhat out of order, The Law against Sexual Harassment in Employment and in the Classroom is worth considering since it extends state protection to protect individuals at work and in the classroom (thus presumably protecting both women and minors as protected groups). Inasmuch as this law has been implemented and enforced, it provides for improving the conditions under which women work and receive an education, which in turn affects the choices they make about their families and the framework in which they make those choices.

The law draws from familiar constitutional guarantees sanctifying liberty, human dignity and the principle of equality before the law (as in The Law on Woman's Social Equality and the subsequent amendment to Article 33). The latter principle, the law states, obligates the State to establish policies to eradicate discrimination. The law cites a UN treaty on discrimination against women and an Inter-American treaty on violence against Women, to which Costa Rica is a signatory.

4.10 Laws concerning reproductive management

The 1999 Decree on Sexual and Reproductive Health (*el Decreto Sobre Salud Sexual y Reproductiva*) recognizes the rights of adult men and women to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, including birth control, which is in turn defined as a fundamental part of basic health services, to be provided free of charge (along with condoms) by the Costa

Rica's *Caja*,[34] and also available over-the-counter without a prescription in multiple forms, including injections (which many Costa Rican pharmacies are licensed to give). In this section, I will show how a series of legal and technological factors have interacted to change the way that decisions are made concerning family planning.

Before dealing with the consequences of this ruling on gender and the family in Costa Rica, it is worth acknowledging here the influence of three forces on laws concerning reproduction in Latin America: the Catholic Church, popular Catholicism, and the U.S. government. The latter story is long and complicated, but can be briefly summarized as following the unwillingness of U.S. administrations (particularly Bush 43) to fund any reproductive health programs that facilitate or teach about medical abortion, or which fail to include "abstinence-only" programs that have little support from researchers.[35] What is important here is to note how this dovetailed with the influence of the first two forces: both the direct relationship of the Church with the Costa Rican government and the role that popular Catholicism plays in political life, especially electoral and legislative life, to which I limit myself

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The Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social, or Costa Rican Social Security Department, provides a wide array of social services related to health: not only preventative, healing, and emergency healthcare, but broader efforts like fumigation and public health efforts. They are even in charge of pensions. As such, the struggle against neoliberalism in Costa Rica is often framed as a defense of the Caja and of other nationalized industries and their unions, such as the teachers unions that (with the nationalized telecommunication company, ICE—Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad) helped lead the anti-CAFTA protests against a NAFTA-like trade union incorporating Central America (and the Dominican Republic).

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The U.S. Government during the Bush administration (2000-2008) limited reproductive aid to Latin America to "abstinence only" programs—that is, limiting it to very few programs at all. Famously, that administration joined Iraq (under Hussein), Iran (under Khamenei), Syria (under Assad), then-united Sudan), and the Vatican in opposing non-abstinence-only, comprehensive sexual education and services during the 2002 UN Special Session on the Child, and from 2004 onward it opposed and lobbied against the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), at the ECLAC Latin American and Caribbean regional meeting in Puerto Rico in June 2004.

here.

The Roman Catholic Church has long opposed many artificial reproductive technologies. This includes not only abortion but contraception of any kind (even, except in recent softened statements around Francis I, when intended to prevent the spread of various infections), as well as in vitro fertilization (IVF).

Only Costa Rica and Argentina have maintained such strong, official, and exclusive state-church relationships with Roman Catholicism in Latin America, constitutionally protecting the Church as constituting the official state religion. Article 75 of the Costa Rican constitution states that “The Roman Catholic and Apostolic Religion is the religion of the State, which contributes to its maintenance, without preventing the free exercise in the Republic of other forms of worship that are not opposed to universal morality or good customs.”

This relationship does not interfere with the exercise of most religious rights in Costa Rica. The U.S. State Department's 2013 Religious Freedom Report on Costa Rica said that no instances of religious discrimination were reported during talks with religious leaders from a number of faiths (1).[36] However, the same report describes unequal treatment of religions in the way in which the State manages its relationships with all religions through Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Religion, which in turns budgets for the maintenance and repairs only of Roman Catholic churches. The Roman Catholic Church also enjoys exemptions from income and property taxes that are not extended to other churches and it receives lands from the State (2).

In the realm of reproductive rights, though, the relationship between the State and the Roman Catholic Church has periodically been called into question. During moments of protest,

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Protestant pastors do complain, however, that they are not given certain authorities by the State that are extended to Catholic clergy, such as the right to perform marriages.

proponents of greater reproductive rights frequently call for *¡un estado laico ya!* (a secular state now!).[37] Although I will turn shortly to the question of contraception and the 1999 Decree on Sexual and Reproductive Health, understanding how impactful this law has been can only be appreciated by paying attention to how much protest and legal contestation has gone into moving Costa Rican away from Catholic doctrine on these two other issues—abortion and IVF.

IVF has received plenty attention in the country, for Costa Rica long remained the only country in the Western Hemisphere that disallowed the procedure, spending years in a legal limbo because of its ban. The relationship to the Catholic Church and its attitudes to IVF are significant here, even at the level of national elections.

In 2000 the Supreme Court of Costa Rica banned IVF universally, claiming that the process "violated[38] life," suggesting the affinity with Catholic discourse about a "culture of life" during John Paul II's papacy, at the height of their influence after 1995's *Evangelium Vitae*, which addressed abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, and other Catholic teachings on the sanctity of human life and God's proper role in its creation.[39]

In June 2011, then-president Laura Chinchilla quietly sent a bill to the legislature to

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In 2010, then-presidential candidate Laura Chinchilla promised to maintain the Catholic Church as the state religion, reigniting passions and re-polarizing Costa Ricans around the issue.

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The wording is of course significant to a discussion of gender and power, given that the word "to violate" is equivalent to the verb "to rape" in Spanish.

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Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* first addressed this issue in its rejection of birth control as acceptable among Catholics (a classic case of final papal authority in recent history, with the pope choosing to reject the findings of the Pontifical Commission on Birth Control, established by his predecessor, Pope John XXIII, in 1963). After John Paul II, Benedict VI reiterated Catholic opposition to IVF in 2008 and 2012, urging childless couples to accept the logic taught by the church on this matter since 1968's encyclicals regarding God's proper role in ordaining conception through the sexual act.

permit IVF but it was voted down in the legislature. From 2012 onward, Costa Rica remained the only country in the world with an outright ban on IVF (although it has been restricted in a number of countries around the world, and inaccessible in many others, as Marcia Inhorn's work on ART and Islam shows (e.g., Inhorn 2012).

Finally, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights struck down that decision in December of 2012, and the Costa Rican government conceded and agreed to allow IVF. However, the deadline given by the court in December 2013 was missed by the legislature (New York Times 2012, Dyer 2013).

The 2014 election featured the issue prominently, with the candidate from the institutional party (PLN) decrying (and linking) same-sex marriage, in vitro fertilization, and abortion in one oft-cited speech (Dyer 2014, Lehring 2014).

Non-PLN politicians and evangelical leaders in Costa Rica have not tended to oppose IVF and few still oppose contraceptives *per se*, so that now-president Luis Guillermo Solís and his party (PAN—distinct from PLN) sounded hopeful in April 2014, just after the elections, that they could strike a deal with the conservative evangelical National Restoration (NR) party. However, the latter party expressed concern with some of the details of the proposed bill and sounded its usual opposition to the new vice president's previously stated support for same-sex unions and some forms of abortion (Dyer 2014, Sancho 2014).

Although Solís went on to win the presidency, the Legislative Assembly had not succeeded in legalizing the procedure throughout the rest of 2014 (Hoy 2014). In late 2015, Solís finally signed an executive decree to allow IVF in the country, starting in March 2016. A year and a week later, on March 8, 2017, María José Barana Garbanzo, Costa Rica's first baby born through in vitro fertilization, was born.

Abortion (i.e., medically induced abortion, not "spontaneous abortions" or miscarriages, which occur in around a quarter of all conceptions)[40] remain illegal in Costa Rica in all cases except where the woman's life or health is determined to be in danger. Costa Rica is *not* one of the seven countries where abortion is officially illegal even in life-threatening circumstances (five of which are predominantly Catholic Caribbean and Latin American countries[41]: Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic). However, neither is it one of those rare spots in the region known for allowing legal abortion during the first trimester (Cuba, Mexico City, and Uruguay).

However, the medical approval that allows for abortions when it endangers a woman's life or health can be quite hard to acquire from doctors who are often unwilling to do provide it. It is unavailable for victims of incest or rape or of mothers with children who will not survive the year because of serious birth defects. A record of complaints from women who were denied abortions, including the famous case of a 9-year old (given the pseudonym Ana) who was abused and impregnated and forced to seek an abortion in neighboring Nicaragua after her Costa Rican doctor outrageously claimed the abortion would have put her at greater risk than carrying the pregnancy to term. Ana was merely the most shocking in a series of cases of victims of abuse and carriers of nonviable fetuses that posed grave risks to their health, and which advocates for women's health compiled to file complaints before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

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40 See e.g., Wang et al. 2003, Wilcox et al. 1999.

41 Despite Latin America's restrictive abortion laws, advocates like the Guttmacher Institute, working with the World Health Organization, report that in 2008, 4.4 million abortions (some 260% more per pregnancy than in the U.S. and Western Europe), with 95% of those (around 4 million) being unsafe (Sedgh *et al* 2012, WHO 2011).

(IACHR) on behalf of Costa Rican women in 2008 and as recently as August 2013. Despite these hardships faced by many Costa Rican women and those who care for them, the lack of broader public support for therapeutic abortion may be registered by the fact that the two candidates in the second round of the 2014 presidential election were both on the record as opposing major legal changes in abortion law. In early 2015, Costa Rica missed an initial deadline to respond to the court, and the court took up complaints against it in January 2016. The zika outbreak outraged opponents of these strict laws and many others as health officials, and in February 2016 the UN urged Costa Rica to offer abortions to zika carriers. In April of the same year, the UN Commission on Human Rights urged Costa Rica to revisit legislation, allowing for abortion in cases of rape, incest, or when the fetus is not viable outside the womb, as in many of the cases brought before the UNCHR. At the time of writing this, nothing had changed in Costa Rica in terms of the unavailability of abortion, even under these extenuating circumstances.

Contraception, on the other hand, has transformed family planning in Latin America, thanks especially to the 1999 Decree on Sexual and Reproductive Health. The decree not only made contraception widely available; it also established two organs of government, the Interinstitutional Commission and the Ministry of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, charged with supplying information to men and women about available methods of contraception. Through availability and education, the decree has deepened a trend in many if not most parts of the region thanks to support for it by governments and publics in the region. Women with easy access to birth control can often free themselves from models of the household that would qualify as either “patriarchal” or “machista” (depending on whom one asked), in which husbands determine to a greater or lesser degree the course and the reproductive outcome of sexual activity.

The change in family style and size has been dramatic. The incidence of birth control use by couples has risen steadily since around 1960. During the beginning of that period, Central America as a region had the highest birthrates in the world, and Costa Rica may have had the highest birth rate internationally as late as the mid-1960s (see e.g. Tietze 1958, Thein 1971). Yet the use of birth control had risen steadily. A 2015 report by the UN Population Division reported that Costa Ricans reported using contraception at a higher even than in North America being used by nearly 80 percent of reproductive age Costa Ricans (78.9 compared to 73.3 and 75.1 for the U.S. and Canada, respectively). Each decade, use has grown: in 2000 nearly three quarters of reproductive age couples use contraceptives in 2000, a prevalence up ten percent since 1990). The Church has been either unwilling or unable to persuade the Costa Rican government or many other governments to outlaw birth control as it has with abortion. As research by Andrew Greeley (2005:36-39,92-96) has suggested, many lay Catholics worldwide do not find it particularly troubling to ignore the Church when it comes to the use of birth control.

However, to the growing use of birth control must be added one final caveat. Although there are signs that this is changing, the pattern of female contraceptive use in Latin America has until recently been more like the pattern that predominates in Asia than that which obtains in Western Europe and North America (and sub-Saharan Africa, incidentally). That is, in the West and sub-Saharan Africa, the long-standing trend was that up to three quarters of female contraception users are women who are seeking to remain childless a while longer. Women in Latin America and Asia, by contrast, were more likely on the whole to often use female contraception somewhat differently in the lifecourse: approximately three quarters of Latin American and Asian users of female contraception are already mothers to three or more children and are seeking to limit the size of the household (e.g., Singh *et al* 2003).

Although younger women are gradually finding it easier to access birth control, both external shame and the internalized variety have been found to prevent many young women from accessing female contraception or from foreseeing the need for its use by a number of studies (Geldstein *et al* 2000, Ali and Cleland 2005, Sharma, Gribble, and Menotti 2005, Gribble, Sharma, and Menotti 2007; cf. Rani et al. 2003, Santiso-Galvez and Bertrand 2004, Sikos 2000). By contrast, studies on youth sexuality continue to find that the use of condoms depends on men in the majority of cases and is associated among many young people with noncommittal sexuality (Ali and Cleland *ibid*., Villegas 2014).

Nonetheless, the direction of the change that the 1999 Decree on Sexual and Reproductive Health reinforces is clear. Women are slowly managing not only the maintenance of and authority over the household, but its very composition, both in terms of men and minors.

4.11 The Law on Responsible Paternity (*La Ley de Paternidad Responsable*), 2001: Securing the gains of the Law on Child Support

This is perhaps most immediately salient law, written specifically to define men and their economic role in the family and deepening the interposition of men in relation to the State's guarantees for children's multifaceted needs, legally defined. It reinforces the Law on Child Support by placing on men the burden to disprove paternity, through genetic testing, and making it easier for women to designate men as fathers upon the birth of a child.

Before analyzing the law's specifics, it is worth noting that call for “responsibility” suggests two, complementary angles of analysis through which I view this law, its origins, and its effects. First, I suggest an analysis of the *governmentality* of the law, the way in which subjects are imagined through legal logics well outside of legal institutions. Both the logic of

"responsibilization" and the security state's carceral and otherwise punitive responses to insufficient responsibilization are relevant. Second, I suggest an analysis of *ethics* and those efforts by men in this study, it would seem, to evade this kind of governmentality through conscious projects of ethical subject formation. (This will form an important subject of the following chapter.)

In the case of the subject of this dissertation, I have made use of two guides for thinking through the relationship between ethics and governmentality, both of whom have been of interest to anthropologists working the anthropology of ethics and morality. First, it is worth mentioning the enduring influence of Foucault. Just as the trajectory of his career traveled from an interest in penal-carceral studies of power to the development of ethical systems, so too did many of the men whom I met in support groups and interviewed experience this trajectory and experience a concomitant interest in ethics. Many found themselves first facing the penal-carceral logic of the State, as I have mentioned, and they also experienced firsthand its relationship to medical forms of governmentality as they woke up in hospitals or were hospitalized after injuring or being classified as a danger to themselves, or as they were placed in rehabilitation centers. Only later, and in some cases after repeated top-down interventions, did some members of these groups seek to undergo the kinds of ethical exercises I describe in the following chapter should be noted. And, I will show in Part II, this shift, in which men want to change "for themselves," while acknowledging that they cannot change "by themselves," is considered a key part of the "process" in such groups.

The second guide, which I actually find, as Faubion (2001:85) suggests, "more felicitous in some respects" is the renewed interest in an Aristotelean approach to ethics among anthropologists (e.g., Lambek 2000, 2008, Faubion 2001, 2011 Mattingly 2012, Laidlaw

2014:47-91). There is a good deal of overlap here, in that anthropologists drawing on Foucault and Aristotle were seeking to create a focus in anthropology on virtue ethics, the cultivation of ethical subjects, rather than the deontological/duty-oriented views of morality (but see Mattingly 2012). This has in turn coincided with a larger project by many anthropologists who sought make room for a study of morality and ethics that acknowledges the complexity of the choice-making and systems of morality and ethics that ethnographers and ethnologists encounter (e.g., see the sources above, plus Laidlaw 2002, Lambek 2010, Robbins 2004a, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012). Also of note here is how Aristotle likewise studied ethics in a way that was linked fundamentally to questions of governance, with *Politics* apparently written to be read alongside *Ethics*. Ethics will be discussed at length in the following chapter, but here I deal primarily with questions of governance and governmentality.

Before Costa Rica's legislative assembly passed the Law on Responsible Paternity (*La Ley de Paternidad Responsable*) in 2001, representatives of the assembly were presented with a number of findings on paternity and child support.[42] Among these were:

- In 1999, a slight majority of children born in Costa Rica were "out-of-wedlock" (51% of nearly 79,000 births).
- Nearly a third of these births had no father's name registered at their birth (30%, or 23,845 infants).
- In 1999, the number of men contesting their registration as a child's legal father was 68% higher than in 1995 (338 in 1995, 568 in 1999).
- There had been a 262% increase in number of trials *investigating* paternity in the same period (503 in 1995, 1,319 in 1999).
- If you take into account the number of children born without any father

42 The fact-finding process was completed by a commission convoked by the administration of Miguel Ángel Rodríguez and organized by the National Institute for Women in coordination with the Legislative Assembly, as well as experts from a number of institutions in government and civil society. These include the Special Commission on Women's Issues, representatives from the country's judicial and police systems, the Citizen's Ombudsman (an important post in resolving social conflict in Costa Rica, the National Council on Children, the Civil Registry, and the University of Costa Rica (Rivera and Ceciliano 2004:52).

registered and subtract the number of those whose fathers voluntarily recognized them, the proposed law would protect 14,845 children.
- In 1999, only *one third* of alleged fathers (4,898 of 14,845) appeared at their appointments with the Department of Forensic Laboratories for testing to determine paternity (from Rivera and Ceciliano 2004:51).

The representatives were informed that the proposed law would greatly simplify and streamline the process by which fatherhood (and its responsibilities) was established. Women could register a father at birth. The state would notify a man of his being registered as the child's father and offer to carry out DNA testing if the man wished to contest his paternity—both the State and the father having been established by legal precedent as being parties recognized as responsible for the well-being of children and the family. This mechanism was intended to correct the failings of “the slow and bureaucratic process” that had earlier been in place. That process had made new mothers the bearer of the legal burden to prove paternity through a series of legal actions against the alleged father. The complexity and duration of these actions was such that women's efforts to prove paternity were “frequently... abandoned by mothers before [being] conclu[ded], given that the average length of the [earlier] process was three years” (53).

Of course, the streamlined method of establishing paternity enacted by this law was not instituted merely to allow children to “know” their fathers, as guaranteed by Article 53 of the country's constitution (and elaborated in the Family Law Code and the Code on Childhood and Adolescence). The practical outcome of the law and the primary argument made on its behalf was that it forwarded the aims of the Law on Child Support by making the establishment of paternity an easier process.

However, beyond that more practical outcome of the Law on Responsible Paternity (especially for this understanding fatherhood in Costa Rica and the men in this study), its more far-reaching effect has been to deepen the logics of “responsibilization” and “carceral feminism,”

which have come to shape family law and its enforcement (see e.g. Ferguson and Gupta 2002:989 and Bernstein 2010:52-58, respectively). I will briefly explain each of these logics and the way that the above laws extend them into governmental practice.

The responsibilization logic has been best described by James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta. Citing contributors to *Foucault and political reason: liberalism, neoliberalism and rationalities of government*, the authors point out that neoliberal logics of governmentality are not primarily about less government, as they are often assumed to be (Barry *et al* 1996). Instead, this work shows that neoliberal governmentality is about promoting the "devolution" of government, shifting governance from the state increasingly onto individuals and other non-governmental actors, who become "responsibilized" (or "empowered," in the more propagandistic parlance used by promoters of these logics):

> [T]he social... operations of the state are increasingly 'de-statized'... But this is not a matter of less government, as the usual ideological formulations would have it. Rather, it indicates a new modality of government, which works... through the devolution of risk onto the... individual... and the 'responsibilization' of subjects who are increasingly 'empowered' to discipline themselves.

Ferguson and Gupta's analysis may help us to understand how the laws above have shaped the circumstances of "responsible" childcare. Despite the fact that the above laws have reiterated earlier legal precedents in which *the State* is named as a responsible party in the care of children (such as Article 51 of the constitution, the 1973 Family Law Code, and the Code on Childhood and Adolescence), the actual *mechanisms* of many of these laws (especially the Law on Responsible Paternity and the Law on Child Support) actually work by devolving these responsibilities (and the risk of *not* fulfilling those children's needs) onto the father and mother. The end effect is not a universal program meeting the many needs of children for which the State had earlier made itself responsible. Instead, these laws absolve the "retreating State" of precisely

those obligations to children by instead “responsibilizing” fathers (and, by extension, mothers, who usually devote larger economic and temporal resources in their children even when child support is paid).

A second critique of neoliberal logics of governance should be raised here. Many in the edited collection cited by Ferguson and Gupta noted that the State does not retreat or devolve its responsibilities onto citizens totally and utterly, leaving no State governance at all. Instead, with the withering of the social welfare state, the State itself undergoes a dramatic shift in terms of what it does and what is seen to properly do: a shift from a focus on (public) social welfare to (private) securitization (i.e., often in the interest of private property rather than public goods or public welfare). In short, the logic of neoliberal governance is: responsibilize, then police.

Under this logic of governance, women's interests are promoted not in terms of public welfare but in terms of private property. That is, women as a group are not provided for through public resources. Instead, their fortunes are devolved onto non-public resources (i.e., whatever private economic resources can be had from the fathers of their children, such as child support payments). If these men have no resources, the first offer of the State is to incarcerate, not to supplement those resources.

This neoliberal approach to “addressing” the needs of families and citizens primarily through punitive and law-and-order methods has been called “carceral feminism” by its feminist critics (Halley 2006, Bernstein 2010), who have perceived moves like these as part of a neoliberal logic of governance that looks increasingly to policing and carceral solutions, not public welfare ones. The Law on Child Support appears to be a perfect example. Despite the fact that the State has determined what children's basic needs are, and despite its apparent legal obligation to meet those needs, the legal mechanisms in place do not result in those needs being

met by the State. The State's actions rely instead on coercion and surveillance, citing that portion of the Law on Child Support that states that "in the majority of the cases the payment is obligatory," regardless of whether or not parents have such resources (Rivera and Ceciliano 2004:49). The failure to pay merely results in the periodic arrest of men who may be unable to pay, being out of work, as many man are. It is also not hard to imagine what leverage this gives employers over their employees either.

Despite these harsh measures, it is hard to see how this incarceration responds to children's basic needs, which are the justification for this action and which cannot wait until economic conditions improve. However, if the legal logic of what its critics call carceral feminism is merely an instantiation of this neoliberal, security-obsessed logic of governance, then the legal framework makes more sense. Much like law-and-order campaigns in general, which point to the victims of crimes as a justification for harsher police tactics, the logic of neoliberal governance is furthered by tying itself to sympathetic figures and weaponizing that sympathy. The logic of governance does not address itself first and foremost to meeting public needs. Instead, its success as a political program may be measured by the extent to which it crowds out more proactive, affirmative versions of "governance feminism" that might be oriented towards social welfare and social justice (such as direct economic support for children and families, or job training and placement programs) (cf. Halley *et al*. 2006).

On the whole, some aspects of these more benign-seeming "responsibilization" and "empowerment" logics were subscribed to by the support groups I analyzed. In general, many of them at least hoped to be more responsible. There was also a strong ethic of moral autonomy that articulates with this logic to some extent. A few of the participants I spoke with suggested that the state should play a greater role in resolving most of the problems they faced, such as offering

employment, improving men's economic conditions, and offering more financial support and outreach for groups like Wém and AA and for mental health treatment in the national health care system. However, several of the men I interviewed complained frankly about the carceral logic of the Law on Child Support. A few described the humiliating experience of being out of work and having the police periodically show up to jail them for failing to pay child support.

The suggestions by support group participants that the State had a responsibility to play actually became the subject of concrete action while I was visiting San Carlos in 2011. Members of Wém were collecting testimonies from other members and the family of members whose lives had been directly affected by their participation in the group, as part of an effort to lobby the central government for financial support that was in danger of being cut when, as many of the members saw it, the need was more urgent than ever. Although I often tried to analyze the extent to which neoliberal logics of governance might be amplified by the sense of "responsibility" and "empowerment" that groups like these try to cultivate, at this and other moments it seemed that these support groups were re-framing responsibility and empowerment—just as they had used popular notions to reframe ideas about gender and religion. In this case, they were reframing responsibility and empowerment contest in collective ways, which could if necessary make demands upon the State and its responsibilities, re-politicizing and de-atomizing these terms.

Another vivid example of how support groups do this can be observed, as I mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, in a documentary that shows how an organization in Barcelona uses support groups to integrate victims of the foreclosure crisis into a movement (Faus 2014).[43] The leader of

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43 Available with English subtitles at http://www.paufaus.net/comandovideo/SISEPUEDE-Film-English.mp4

the organization, Ada Colau, spent from 2009 until 2014 leading the organization, and in 2015 went on to become the (current) mayor of the city. In the documentary, as she describes how these groups work to show participants that they are never alone, the filmmaker shows how new members first joined support groups and listened to others share their stories before then sharing their own, and that the participants shared tears during and after sharing these stories. More experienced members offered newer participants not only sympathy and encouragement, but practical help, including a sort of "sponsor" relationship familiar to support groups, where they introduce new members to the resources that are available and generally make themselves available. At the end of this process, some of the new members were so encouraged and emboldened by this support that they, in turn, were willing to stage sit-ins and engage in civil disobedience to stop others from being evicted. The film shows perhaps even more strikingly how support groups can frame "responsibilization" or "empowerment" as collective and politically oriented, rooted in mutual support, in contrast with the versions of (individual) empowerment and (individual) responsibility promoted by neoliberal governance, as described above. Instead, these alternative visions of empowerment are a direct contest over the meaning of governmental logics that have sought to depoliticize social crises (such as these evictions) by devolving responsibility onto atomized individuals. The fact that this style of social organization can generate enough mutual support and solidarity to both rescue individual lives and organize them collectively to challenge governments and financial institutions is one of the reasons that, as I will discuss in Part II, researchers may need to look to models of social organization like the Methodist model to understand these groups and the changes that are transforming Latin American religion.

This chapter has tried to show the legal and technological changes that have shaped the

crisis of masculinity and the crisis of the family, and well as the governance logics that appear to have guided some of these legal changes. Because some of the language used to express these governance logics (in terms of responsibility and empowerment) appear to articulate in interesting ways with the language used by support groups, I also discussed the way in which these groups reform this language to imbue it with collective meanings, similar to the way in which they reform existing gender logics. In the following chapter, I bring the discussion of these gender logics to their culmination, showing in some detail how these alternative gender identities are constructed from two existing gender logics in particular.

Chapter 5: Changing gender logics, changing gender identities: constructing machismo, marianismo, and alternative gender identities through logics of carnality/spirituality and activity/passivity

5.1 Introduction

Above I have outlined above some of the legal, technological, and economic forces that are changing men and women's relationship to the home and shaping what it means to be a man in contemporary San Carlos. This section will use several ethnographic examples to illustrate two other salient cultural logics, logics at work in constructing both machismo and the alternative model of spiritual masculinity that is being cultivated by the evangelical and support group movements in parts of Latin America like San Carlos. These two, related logics—that of carnality versus spirituality, and that of activity versus passivity—are both central to the construction of spiritual masculinity. Specifically, spiritual masculinity is usually constructed in terms of, and in opposition to, machismo, and machismo has been shown in several analyses to be constructed in part using these historically significant logics (which also shape its foil, the Marian stereotype that the literature usually refers to, in a parallelism, as marianismo). Despite the many “meanings of macho” (the title of Gutmann's [1996] now-classic text, which lays out the many valences and changing meanings of the term during its short history), these two logics can still be untangled from the term and remain important, as I will show, even in the construction of new models of gender identity today.

Before I delve into these layers of meaning, I want to point out that we have seen a similar operation of cultural logics in the prior chapter, wherein the understandings of the casa

and the calle were reformed by preserving and using some of their logics to invert and contest others, and where new values were put forth by invoking older, better-known concepts or values. Moreover, the precise carnal/spiritual logic that I used in the prior chapter is one of the two logics through which marianismo and machismo are constructed, and out of which the new model of masculinity I am calling spiritual masculinity is constructed as well. Thus, the idealized image of the casa remains compelling for many Latin Americans as a place more spiritual than carnal, more other-interested than self-interested, much as in North American cultural logics that link home and the family to ideas about care and acting for love, while associating areas outside the home with individual self-interest, money, and the market (e.g. Brusco 2011[1995]; cf. Bellah et al. 1985, Weston 1991, Ragone 1996). The term calle has likewise retained a powerful resonance in popular discourse, commonly being used in Latin America as a gloss that refers to all realms of social life that are motivated by carnal, selfish, or competitive interests, having apparently lost many of its positive moral resonances and associations with (decent) work.[44] In short, I have argued that the calle and the casa continue to be deeply informed by a crypto-Pauline distinction between *el mundo* (the world), and what is *mundial* (worldly), is "of 'the flesh'" (*carnal*), both of which are opposed to *el espíritu*, and what is *espiritual*. Yet, despite all this continuity, what has changed (or rather, been successfully contested) are the gendered norms that naturalize men's association with the street, the world, and the flesh, while associating women with the home and spirituality.

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44 The spatial concept of a workplace or the non-spatial concept of work/labor is still not as closely connected to the concept of the *calle* for many Latin Americans, just as in North America, but there is evidence in popular culture across the Americas that this has been changing, probably not unrelated to the pervasive informalization of Latin American economies cited above, and somewhat more relevant to Costa Rica's GAM. Cf. the notion of "the hustle" in hiphop culture in America, where the street exemplifies money-making in the neoliberal city.

This carnal-spiritual dichotomy is important to the logic of machismo, but it interacts with an active-passive logic, as I will show below. Both logics appear to be retained in the alternative model of masculinity constructed in these groups (and thus in a number of religious and non-religious movements and institutions), but masculinity is redefined by leaning on the second, non-Pauline logic to reorder how masculinity approached the world and the flesh.

In analyzing these logics, I will dwell on early analyses of the carnal-spiritual logic in which machismo participates in what Norma Fuller (1995) called the "marianismo-machismo polarity." Though the particularizing turn of the 1990s often took pains to delimit such stereotypes in the study of gender (e.g., Stevens 1972 as cited in Melhuus and Stølen 1996a:11-12,31n17, Gutmann 1996:26,92,223), such stereotypes remain ethnographically and emically salient to the study of religion in Latin America (e.g., see Gutmann 2003); they are invoked and reworked by Latin Americans and even deconstructed by a number of religious and non-religious organizations and movements, including (but hardly limited to) the evangelical and support group movement. While the stereotypes are invoked and some of the underlying logics are often preserved, they are often harnessed to new ends.

Let me briefly summarize how this is done, how the deconstruction of machismo in support group is part of the process by which men come to cultivate, in one another and in themselves, the virtues of an alternative, spiritual masculinity. The peer groups I studied preserved both the spiritual-carnal and active-passive dichotomies themselves, along with the associations between these dichotomies and the casa-calle dichotomy. What changed is their gendering of these categories.

In contrast with the construction of machismo I will illustrate in the narratives below, these groups universally valued spirituality valued over carnality—a reversal of the logic of

machismo where men were concerned. Spirituality was meanwhile characterized as potentially masculine; this was done by depicting spirituality as fundamentally *active* (at least in its regular practice, after the arguable passivity of men's surrender to God and to the group, which is commonly described in conversion narratives). In this way, the "traditional" gendering of masculinity, as active, is preserved, even pivoted upon, to present spiritual masculinity as recognizably masculine.[45]

The spirituality of men was thus most frequently depicted as an active and ongoing struggle against the carnality and destructiveness of machismo. I call this image of masculine spirituality a *Jacobean spirituality* at various points in this dissertation, in order to evoke the image of Jacob from the first book of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles (Gen 32-33, cf. 27-28), who is only blessed after his struggle with God/the angel by being reunited with his brothers and his family. Jacobean spirituality, which reverses the active-passive gender logic that constitutes Marian spirituality, makes spiritual masculinity *identifiably masculine* not only to outsiders but to potential converts. Thus, much as Roger Lancaster's (1992:235-278) analysis of machismo in revolutionary Nicaragua reveals how machismo participates in some very durable cultural logics indeed—not only a carnal-spiritual binary, but also an active-passive, subject-object, honor-shame logic that anthropologists have examined in various circum-Mediterranean and Eurasian gendered social systems (e.g., Peristiany 1966a-b, Pitt-Rivers 1966, 1977, Gilmore 1982, 1987b; Goody and Tambiah 1973, Tambiah et al. 1989)—so too does spiritual masculinity participate in these temporally deep logics (which are deeper than the discourse of machismo itself by a good

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45 On the other hand, from the perspective of women who, engaging with these spiritual movements and discourses, have also reevaluated spirituality as largely active, this appears to be a reversal of the logic of marianismo.

deal). *How in particular* these logics are used will be elaborated in the section after the following one, where I deal with the story of Omar, as the first of three real-life examples of machismo in contemporary Costa Rica.

5.2 Omar and the Crocodiles

The head of the man was apparently the only part of him that the crocodiles would not eat.

The story of Omar Jirón's grisly death appeared in the Costa Rican press as I first drafted this text,[46] and its depiction seemed to mirror the tales many of my interlocutors at churches and in support groups told about machismo. Here I will show the media depiction mirrors two ways those men talked about machismo in the course of their narratives: both its destructive impulsiveness and bravado,[47] which hint at the gender logics I deal with in this chapter and its rootedness in a sense of crisis (which I have dealt with at length in Part I).

On the main route connecting Costa Rica's Central Valley to the Pacific Ocean, there is a well-known bridge crossing the Tárcoles River, beneath which over a dozen crocodiles regularly congregate. The bridge has become a semi-official tourist destination over time. Foreigners and locals alike bring their children, take photos, and (to the chagrin of the officials who frequently patrol the bridge) occasionally throw food to (or at) the crocodiles, which can grow to over 15

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46 See Chávez 2014a-b, Fendt 2014a-b, Torres 2014, Umaña and Solano 2014.

47 Likewise, Gutmann (1996:231) notes how frequently machismo was explained in social scientific texts with reference to one single memorable quotation from Oscar Lewis's (1961:38) classic text, *The Children of Sanchez*: “In a fight, I would never give up or say, 'Enough,' even though the other was killing me. I would try to go to my death, smiling. That is what we need by being macho, by being manly.”

feet in length.

According to several Costa Rican media sources, Jirón and another young man had exited a bus near the bridge in the early afternoon (either voluntarily or at the driver's insistence—reports were unclear). Both men were fired earlier that day from a construction site for allegedly being intoxicated at work. Witnesses interviewed by the Red Cross reported having seen the two escorted by police away from the bridge, but the pair returned to the scene after visiting a nearby *cantina*. His erstwhile companion, in an interview with the investigative police (OIJ), claimed that Jirón had ignored his warnings about the crocodiles and even boasted his intentions before removing his clothes and leaping into the river from the bank (where his clothes were later recovered by police). Red Cross interviewees reported events differently, claiming Jirón jumped from *atop* the bridge. Newspapers declined to publish pictures of the crocodiles dismembering Jirón, taken by onlookers (Fendt 2014a). However, several outlets published pictures of investigators huddled on the muddy bank, recovering Jirón's head (Fendt 2014b, see Chávez 2014b).

The first, sensationalistic media accounts of Omar's death converged on a cautionary tale about machismo: here (according to this familiar moral narrative) was another alcohol-fueled machista, driven by drink to follow his reckless impulses to an avoidable death (cf. Gutmann 1996:11-32,173-242; Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013:477). These reports largely used the deceased's last name (as I have done above) and highlighted the characteristics Omar shared with the stereotype of the typical machista in the region: Jirón was drunk; he was working-class, a manual laborer, and he was Nicaraguan. Thus, he was easily stereotyped as rural and backwards, yet (in accordance with a notion of machismo as Hispanic) he was of fair complexion

(*tez blanco*) (Torres 2014, cf. Umaña 2014).[48]

I chose to focus on media narratives about machismo because their emergence in the immediate wake of Jirón's death contrasts somewhat with the more sympathetic narrative that later emerged, which I treat shortly. That it emerged so soon after his death, classifying him as a machista in these stereotyped ways, helps reveal the way that this stereotype works to tie the qualities of Jirón to a destructive (and self-destructive) image of machismo, which I elaborate at length in this chapter. This latter-day understanding of machismo seemed to make sense of Omar's senseless-seeming death: fueled by machismo and alcohol, the familiar story went, one young man, still drunk after having been fired from his construction job, had knowingly jumped into a river full of crocodiles, a gruesomely literally reenactment of the struggles with machismo I heard shared in the groups and services I attended.

Neither would the second narrative about Omar's death that emerged in the Costa Rican press be likely to surprise many Latin Americans (or Latin Americanists). This subsequent "crisis narrative" depicted Omar's death and more historicized, more sympathetic terms, is another victim of Latin America's twin crises the "crisis of masculinity" and the "crisis of family."

This crisis narrative largely emerged after interviews with Omar's grieving mother changed the tone of the media discussion of Omar's death (e.g., Chávez 2014b). In these interviews, it emerged that, for instance, Omar had been supporting his mother over the past

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Omar was born in Nicaragua, but he had lived in Costa Rica since childhood. Both Nicaragua and Nicaraguans living in Costa Rica has frequently been stigmatized by many Costa Rican discourses associating the country with violence, poverty, and other social problems (e.g., Sandoval 2000, 2004:xviiii-xix,33-38). The country is also, live the Northern Zone, associated with ranching culture, which is in turn associated with machismo. However, machismo is associated with Hispanic rather than Afro-Caribbean or indigenous origins in much of Latin America (cf. Fuller 1995 on Peru).

eight years, due to chronic medical problems that made it impossible for her to continue working as a housekeeper. Omar's mother acknowledged her son's alcoholism but claimed that it had not become a problem until five years ago, when his partner left him and denied him access to his two school-age children (among the three most common life events that, in my life history interviews, led men into their deepest crisis).[49] In the interview, Omar's mother described fruitless trips that he took to visit his children, only to have their mother (who arranged meetings) ultimately prevent him from seeing them at all. His mother even reported pleading with the children's mother over the phone.[50] "The anguish of not being able to see his children led Omar to die like this," she said, in what became the headline of another article (Chávez 2014a). "My suffering has overtaken my ability to stay on my feet. I feel alone, devastated. My son, my everything—he's gone!"

This latter account emphasized the contingency of both people's stories upon the social crises I have been discussing, even if it reproduced images of long-suffering marianismo and machismo to draw readers in. For instance, Omar's mother revealed Omar's earlier suicide attempt, three years prior, just after having told his mother he didn't have the desire to live (*ganas de vivir*). In another image that broke from the Pièta-like image of a quietly suffering mother, she

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49 The other two were the death of a loved one and problems with employment. A caveat should be expressed: *both* the departures of partners and children (or the ejection from the home, which is more common) *and* employment issues are problems for which most of the men now assume some or all responsibility, seeing them as resulting from their own machismo. However, many men also acknowledged that changes in employment and the cost of living also played roles in their circumstances. "There are many men—I speak from my own experience," Ulises told me, "there are many men who feel this, many men who feel like *this*! [hammering the table] Frustrated! They feel angry! They feel impotent... knowing that, whatever salary they could earn—it isn't enough to cover the mountain of necessities at home."

50 Omar's ex-partner was, to my knowledge, not interviewed, making this account partial.

described going mad (*Me puse como loca*)[51] after receiving a call from the hospital saying that he had been struck by a car—had in fact *thrown* himself in front of it. (Omar's mother also revealed something of their living conditions by detailing how she had to wait for someone to drive her to the hospital, feeling too unsafe after dark in their barrio to leave on foot.) Although the hospital released Omar into an alcohol recovery program, he withdrew after two weeks "because we didn't have the money (*plata*) to pay for it." After a short recovery, Omar began to relapse. "Some two weeks after [leaving,] he began to drink again, until… until this happened."

5.3 Machismo: logics of gender, logics of religion?

Tales of fatal and near-fatal binges, estrangement from one's children and family, homelessness, attempted suicide, and violence against others were common for participants in the peer groups I observed, both as part of what they shared during meetings and in the interviews I conducted with members of each group. In almost all cases, men liberally used the term machismo (or machista[52]) to describe these moments of crisis.

However, these same terms were *also* used during the narratives these men told to describe problems and personal characteristics considered by these men (and myself) to be comparatively less serious, trivial even. This might give the impression that the term machismo

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Alternatively, this is translatable as "I became like [a] madwoman," further diminishing from the Marian image.

52

In Costa Rica, machismo refers to the quality, while machista is both the adjectival and nominal form for a person exemplifying machismo. See the alternative, related meanings of "macho" to refer to fair complection or a male animal in the main text following this footnote.

might simply have become a sort of general derogation given a male or masculine inflection (cf. Ramírez 2008).

Nonetheless, despite this seeming excess of meaning, the concept of machismo did serve a critical function in these men's narratives and in their depictions of themselves. The stereotype of the machista served as a foil, an Other, against which an alternative, emergent masculinity—specifically, an *alternative to machismo*—could be designed. I am calling this alternative to machismo "spiritual masculinity" (borrowing from the language of the groups themselves, a curious overlap between evangelical and support group uses of the language of "spirituality" to describe their ultimate concerns—but more on that to come). In their efforts to embody spiritual masculinity, machismo acted as the better known "source domain" by which this new conceptual domain, or "target domain," could be rendered. These depictions of machismo were often tragic, yet, as I will show, these groups employ a great deal of humor which distinguished them (like some moments in evangelical church) from liturgical religion in their ethos. Gutmann observed this in his study of Mexico City, including his study of a men's support groups dealing with domestic violence, much like Wém (1996:198-213). "To the extent that the *macho*... is a joke" in these groups, they seemed to confirm Gutmann's observation that "those who grasp the humor will have their consciousness and agency restored to them, at least in part and in comparison to those who do not get the joke" (Gutmann 1996:227).

Some highlights of "the meanings of macho" are worth considering here to understand how the evangelical and support group movement spell out "spiritual masculinity" as a legible alternative to machismo. The word *machismo* has a relatively short history itself (*ibid.*, cf. Paredes 1971[1967]), and yet its meaning has transformed dramatically over the twentieth century. An earlier, positively-valued image of the macho, as "proper" Hispanic masculinity, was

linked historically to an honor-shame complex found in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern anthropology, and this older usage is still genealogically apparent in the Costa Rican use of the term *macho/a* to denote a fair-haired man or woman (cf. Fuller 2003). However, these positive connotations have largely disappeared, except among an older generation. In their place, the contemporary meaning of machismo is almost universally (and deeply) pejorative, used to identify a man as backwards, rural, and "uneducated" (*mal educado*) at best, dangerously aggressive and destructive at worst.[53]

Despite the fact that the former, less severe meanings of machismo may have implied the development of proper masculinity, the term is often used as a folk essentialism, of "how men really are," as Gutmann (e.g., 1996:129-133) notes. This essentialized meaning may also be apparent when the word is used to describe any non-human male animal (fem. *hembra*). This may also account for the fact that machismo is used to index an animal, carnal, or virile sense of masculinity (a "cult of virility" in Stevens's [1972] terms). However, a number of authors have noted that the feminine counterpart to the stereotype of machismo is *not* "hembrismo" (i.e., that the opposite of machismo is not a feminized carnality), but *marianismo*—the Marian image of women as "naturally" spiritual, which Stevens (1972:91) memorably called a "cult of feminine spiritual superiority." This Marian stereotype "fits" with the concept of machismo whether machismo is reckoned as the honor-bound man of the past, "responsible for providing financially... for his family" (Gutmann 1996:221) or as an uncivilized, unevolved (and usually

53 See Gutmann 1996: 221-222,236-240 and 1997:842 on this shift in the connotations of the term. See Lancaster 1992:235-278 on "subject honor, object shame" in the logic of *machismo*. Contrast mid-twentieth century images of "cinemachismo" in de la Mora 2006 with contemporary images in Ramírez 2008.

rural and/or lower class) man of the present (Stevens 1972, cf. Jiménez 2004, Tamez *et al*. 1987); in either meaning of machismo, the concept articulates ideas about gender with a Christian-influenced flesh-spirit cultural logic in which religion and spirituality are opposed to this sense of machismo (cf. Pitt-Rivers 1977:3).

Prior chapters have dealt with how machismo maps onto these abstract logics: as active and as carnal/unspiritual. We have seen both its association with ranching culture (which is linked in San Carlos with the past), as well as its association with being maladapted to the present, destructive of oneself (as in the case of Omar) and of others (as in the examples I will use below). While spiritual masculinity defines itself in part merely by taking advantage of the increasing pejorativization of the term machismo, I argue here that machismo participates in some very durable cultural logics.

Taking together the early analyses of Evelyn Stevens (1972) and Roger Lancaster (1992:235-278) reveal why machismo (and perhaps masculinity, in some sense) might not be symbolically associated with spirituality. After all, both analyses of machismo focus on men's bodiliness—"the physical body" being a "central, recurring theme in many if not most meanings of machismo," according to Gutmann (1996:22). This would seem to link machismo with the flesh rather than with spiritual matters, a recurrent Western dichotomy inflected by Christian discourses.

Likewise, both Stevens and Lancaster dwell on the aggressivity of machismo as its defining characteristic. Both authors note how the aggressivity associated with machismo can be portrayed as both violent and sexual:[54] Stevens (1972:90), in Colombia, sees the primary

54 Variation exists over space and time as to whether machismo's aggressiveness and carnality are portrayed as more closely linked to sexuality (e.g., Gilmore 1987:132-133) or violence (as below, in the story of Zaca). Gutmann finds both meanings in Mexico City; a Latin Americanist colleague of mine, Gerardo Rios, commented

distinction between men's violent and sexual aggression being a question of the object of the aggression (female or male), but Lancaster, examining the case of the stereotype of the *cochón* in revolutionary Nicaragua (which predated Western notions of LGB sexual identity), showed how masculine-coded sexual acts, whether they were directed at either men or women, are frequently described using terms also used to describe violently striking someone, like *pegar*. All of this seems to indicate that machismo should be portrayed as carnal, destructive, selfish. This contributes to the flesh-spirit, Pauline distinctions we have mentioned—as well as to their variations (world-spirit, etc.).

Here I would like to show why these logics around gender and religion came to be so important not only in the stereotypes of machismo and marianismo, but in the groups that I studied and which I examine in Part II. Otherwise, this discussion of these logics and the stereotypes they generate runs the risk of essentializing these stereotypes by failing to specify the particular historical path they took in different parts of Latin America. The question becomes, why and under what historical circumstances would the crises of men like Omar be presumed to be expressions of men's characteristic carnality and virility, their pride and aggression? Why and under what historical circumstances would women like his mother, suffering through these crises, be presumed to express a characteristic spirituality and virtue, humility and patient self-abnegation? Why would the men joining support groups and other social movements in Latin America that grapple with the "crisis of masculinity" both see themselves in these images of machismo and yet struggle to construct narratives that rejected these images as not "true"

that in his travels in contemporary Mexico, northern Mexicans tended to use the term *machismo* more to refer to violence and one's interactions with other men, whereas central and southern Mexicans tended to emphasize sexuality and one's interactions with women.

masculinity? After all, have men not held near-exclusive power in religious institutions in Latin America? How can this reality be squared with the spiritual superiority supposedly attributed to women and the prominence of Marian depictions of spirituality in Latin America? Why (and under what historical circumstances) would *women* be accorded this “spiritual superiority”?

In exploring this seeming contradiction, I want to briefly show the utility of my general theoretical thrust throughout this dissertation: that masculinities and femininities—past, present, and future—emerge in historically particular social contexts, structured by forms of social organization and a social ethos, and that these social contexts in turn encourage or inhibit different discourses and practices. Thus, the seeming contradiction between Marian depictions of spirituality and male religious authority is partly resolved by examining the *ethos* and *organization* of spirituality in Latin America before its contemporary period of religious pluralization, and the way in which these movements' new notions of spirituality are constructed in contrast to this earlier ethos and style of organization. To put briefly what I will lay out below at greater length: over time in Latin America, the relationships between religious institutions and spirituality (communal or collective) came to be imagined as *hierarchically organized* (through the Church, which is supported in part by the State). As a result, the previous ethos of spirituality was one that accompanied a sense of submission to the religious hierarchy, of adopting a lower, relatively passive position within a vertical “channel of grace” by which supernatural grace was communicated. This is the notion of spirituality against which a contemporary “spirituality” discourse is setting itself, a discourse promulgated by peer groups in a number of movements and institutions, as well as many evangelical and charismatic Catholic groups.

Historically contextualizing the marianista attribution of spiritual superiority to women in Latin America requires acknowledging that this attribution has taken place, and that this

attribution takes place not only within the context of widespread Marian devotion in Latin America (to which Stevens certainly attributes some of the origins of marianismo) (cf. Villaseñor 2006), but also within the context of *important institutional struggles* that shaped the nature of religious practice in Latin America (cf. Villaseñor 2006). Importantly, a number of scholars have described the competition between ecclesiastical and familial authority across Catholic Europe and Latin America, which led to different models of virtue for men and women: a model that men were to uphold in opposition to a model upheld by the Church and considered appropriate to women (e.g., Pitt-Rivers 1966, 1977:3, Willems 1967:25ff, Schneider and Schneider 1976:96, Brown 1981:ch.2, Caro 1992, etc.).

These struggles have often been portrayed as a struggle between different kinds of virtue: a virtue-as-virility (tied to the masculine honor complex and its exaltation of courage and virility as the source of those worldly honors) in opposition to virtue-as-spirituality (as capable of earning one spiritual honors) (cf. also Stewart 1994). The contemporary meaning of the word virtue, and the fact that moral virtue for men as well as women has come to mean something quite different than virility, displays the general *outcome* of this struggle: both virtue and virility derive from the Latin word for a male human being, *vir*, yet the meaning of virtue has come to mean more commonly something different than and even opposed to the pursuit of worldly success. However, this tells us very little about its institutional partisans: the family and the Church. It is worth noting that the institutional struggle between the Church and competing institutions like the family continued being relevant in Latin America long after most of Northern Europe and North America, throughout "the long nineteenth century," when Liberal-Conservative Wars pitted the Roman Catholic Church against competing institutions throughout Latin America, until the mid-twentieth century, when the Roman Catholic Church's state-

enforced “monopoly“ over religious faith in Latin America began to fall apart.

During this period, in the mid-twentieth century, Emile Willems carried out an early, multi-sited, sociologically complex ethnography designed to understand the social and cultural attraction of Protestant-derived forms of Christianity and Protestant churches throughout the region and across the social landscape. Much like Gutmann (2003a), Willems, in his work *Followers of the new faith: cultural change and the rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile* (1967), resisted universalizing or one-dimensional descriptions of Latin American religion or gender. To get around these, he carried out work in Portuguese-speaking Brazil as well as in Chile, among the dislocated urban poor as well as among the rural, middle-class landowners of Minais Gerais, and among men and women, Catholics and Protestants.

Willems focused in particular on the roles of class and gender in shaping the rise of Protestantism and pentecostalized churches.[55] In describing the cultural innovation and novel social roles that Protestant institutions could play, he also described the appeal of Protestantism in terms of certain stereotypes commonly held about participation in the Roman Catholic Church. Of particular relevance were strong class and gender associations with Catholic participation (and with withdrawal from or lack of participation in the Church).

On the one hand, Willems found that, *across* social classes, language differences, and ethnicity, “anticlericalism is an attitude of the Latin American male rather than of the female” (1967:42). Young men throughout the regions and social settings where he conducted his research learned to “ridicule” and “treat [priests] with suspicion” (41). This would seem to

55 See his section on “The Protestant family” and his “Excursus on protestantism and social class“: 169-173, 197-220.

support the argument made by Stevens (1972:92) that the stereotypes of irreligious machismo and spiritual marianismo, as a "convenient set of assumptions" were "ubiquitous in every social class" and even across regions, ethnicities, and linguistic differences—even if, as later criticism posited, these were to be understood as personae or models of identity rather than as full representatives of lives lived in Latin America.

On the other hand, Willems found that a commonsense "association between the Catholic Church and the upper strata" obtained in both Hispanophone and Lusophone Latin America (and, it might have been added, much of Latin American *history*) (1967:42). Willems found that the majority of men in both rural and urban areas across Latin America considered "[t]he Church [to be] something for the rich and the women" and largely regarded the priest as "a member of [the upper] class... who uses the things of God to make money" (41).[56]

This association of the Church with the elite classes probably amplifies the "anti-vertical," anti-hierarchical elements of anti-clericalism among men in the popular classes. In the years since Willems's research, the Second Vatican Council's (1962-1965) profession of a "preferential option for the poor" and the spotty institution of ecclesiastical base communities (CEBs) has not yet erased this longstanding association between the elites and the Church or succeeded in identifying the Church with "the least of these" among Latin Americans. John Burdick (1993:68-86) provided an early ethnographic description of CEBs just outside Rio de Janeiro in the 1980s that uncovered their tendency to reproduce classism among the laity, rather than to create solidarity. Despite the facts that some CEBs were inspired by liberation theology

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56 This reputation for graft and/or corruption plagues Protestant pastors as well and appeared in many of my interviews with men.

and populist themes, the ethos of these groups was marked by class stratification, unlike the rigid egalitarianism and populism striven for by the peer groups I studied. Instead, most CEBS, when they established peerhood among its members, did so largely among middle class participants (a fact for which Burdick [1993:85-86] finds other evidence in Brazil and the rest of Latin America). In contrast with early "demand side" or "deprivation" models for evangelical growth and religious pluralization, the religious economy school offered a "supply side" explanation for why the "preferential option for the poor," found among liberationist Catholics especially, has not had greater success in eroding the Church's association with Latin American elites: given the near-"monopoly" that the Roman Catholic Church had on local religious identities for nearly half a millennium, the Church in Latin America historically invested proportionally less time and fewer resources (including human resources like priests) in that region's popular classes than it did elsewhere, focusing instead on Latin American elites who could protect the Church's interests.[57] In part as a result of this top-heavy engagement, social scientists have variously classified anywhere from two-thirds to nearly nine tenths of Latin Americans as "nominal" Catholics who rarely participate in or attend services (*idem*, cf. Chesnut 2003:9n5). Political scientist Anthony Gill (1998), in his quantitative, mixed-methods, comparative analysis of variation among Latin American Catholicism, appeared to confirm part of this supply side analysis on a macro- and mid-level scale, showing that Vatican II's "preferential option for the poor" was mostly disregarded by Latin American clergy in the late twentieth century—except in

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57 "[T]he fundamental principle [of the religious economy school] is that monopolistic religious economies will produce large numbers of nominal believers— those who feel culturally connected to the hegemonic faith but do not regularly participate in official religious services or activities" (Chesnut 2003:9, citing Stark and McCann 1993:113).

those areas where the Church faced stiff competition among the popular classes from evangelical congregations. Where such competition for poor congregants existed, Gill found, local priests were much more likely to embrace liberation theology, which embraces this preferential option. Sociologist and ethnographer David Smilde (2007, 2008) has also carried out exciting "supply side" research on social networks and conversion to evangelicalism, asking questions about social support networks and life histories that have shaped this project.

In revealing how these class- and gender-based associations worked together in Latin America in the years after Vatican II, Willems reveals three ways that religious participation informed gender identity, based on secular gender norms. First, for laywomen, participation was normative and feminizing, based on secular norms. Second, for laymen, abstention was normative and masculinizing, just as in the citations I have drawn from Willems above. And third, for clerics, their participation in the Church hierarchy was non-normative and did nothing to masculinizing their identities. I briefly describe each here.

For Catholic clerics, Willems does not explore the relationship of the gendering of clerical identity in relationship to the lifecourse of clergy (Protestant pluralization being his main focus). Willems does reveal how clergy are typically gendered by others, though, particularly in the vocal expressions of anti-clericalism he observed throughout Latin America, largely among men, and especially among the non-elites, but across the boundaries of ethnicity and class for the most part.

Willems noted that the celibacy of the priest "seem[ed] so completely at variance" with widespread understandings of masculinity and femininity in Latin America that men in both Brazil and Chile "believed [the priest] to be either abnormal or a hypocrite" in this regard (1967:41). In this, too, he seems to voice a judgment close to that of Stevens—of certain "Latin

American sex mores" being particularly broad-based, if a bit stronger among the classes least likely to have close contact with priests, or who might possibly be least able to resist these mores or the consequences for violating them. Among these widespread mores what were then considered "the conventional attributes of manhood," including this physical and sexual aggression (*idem*.). The suspicion men aimed against the priest was a gendered suspicion that he was either a "strange being," somehow non-normatively gendered, or "a cheat" who in fact "exploit[ed] the credulousness of the people and... violate[d] the rules of celibacy" (*idem*.). In the first case, the exception seems to prove the rule (i.e., the machista 'rule' about an essential, carnal masculinity), while the second case was thought to be no exception at all, simply an illustration of carnality as part of a masculine nature.

With regard to the other two ways that religious participation informed gender identity, Willems traces them both through a typical lifecourse, illustrating how these normative, feminine and masculine approaches to religion diverged:

> [T]he young [Catholic] man tends to throw overboard what religious instruction he may have received [in his childhood] and to join [his male] peer group in its derision of the priesthood and submission to church rules, while the young [Catholic] woman, following the example of her mother, is likely to remain a faithful and devout member of the church.
>
> This, most... men believe, is as it should be, for "*religion is women's business" and regarded as an effective control of female behavior* (1967:42-43, emphasis mine).

These last two characterizations that I have italicized—by Willems's male informants, about their notions of religion and gender—are complementary to one another. Men understand that "religion" is normatively "women's business," because "religion" is effectively understood by men as a form of control, whether that be the control of women or control of lower social classes ("something for the rich... to make money": Willems 1967:41). Willems portrays a masculine understanding of religion as fundamentally about *control* (and "submission") in

contrast with reinforced in the “peer group” (his terms) (see Willems 1967:34-45, “The Catholic Church and social control”). This will be important for our discussion of why the egalitarian organization and ethos of support groups appear to Latin American men as something distinct from the entire ethos and hierarchical structure of “religion” proper.

Willems also foregrounds the question of social networks in determining the gender-normative attitude towards that control. Both the Latin American men Willems describes and (apparently) women's mothers largely support female participation in religion. The male peer group, by contrast, “deri[des] the priesthood *and submission to church rules*” in a move that defines masculinity as incompatible with this sort of submission, while “regarding religion as an effective control of female behavior.” Thus, when Willems speaks of the generalized anticlericalism found when men congregate, he clarifies that this is not the same as anti-Catholicism. Among the working and middle-class men he met in Lusophone and Hispanophone South America, “anticlericalism is not so much directed against the church as an institution” or against Catholicism *per se* “as against the... authority of the clergy” over them (41). That is, the anti-clericalism that finds its strongest expression among groups of men expresses an opposition on the part of men to submit themselves to this hierarchical control, or to submit their families to Church authority (see Willems 1967:169-170, cf. Brown 1981:23-49, Pitt-Rivers:3-11, Schneider and Schneider 1976:96 in Catholic Europe). This value is fully in line with the agonistic egalitarianism that Bourdieu (1966) and others have noted as being the basis for honor competition culture (e.g., Gilmore 1987a).

The passage from Willems illustrates the relative importance of different relationships for socializing for male and female gender identities in the middle of the twentieth century: vertical ones for women, horizontal ones for men (with the latter also existing in the present-day groups I

studied). Willems reported young women developing normative feminine identities primarily through *vertical* relationships, whether within the Church or within the home. Their vertically-positioned mothers (and not than their horizontally-positioned female peers) were their primary models for femininity, according to his account. Mothers, likewise, modeled for young women how femininity is normatively performed by modeling it *upwards*, toward men, both in the Church and in the home: a femininity expressed in vertical relationships. Thus, the verticality of religious institutions was seen by many of the men Willems came to know as a normative site for the performance of the feminine, but an inappropriate site for the practice of masculinity (cf. Brandes 1980:186-188,202).[58]

By contrast, Willems describes young men of the middle and popular classes in mid-twentieth century Latin America developing their normative masculine identities in comparatively *horizontal* contexts, in their informal social networks and groups of peers. These horizontal relationships socialize men to resist clerical authority and to regard religion (like the home) as potentially threatening to masculinity.

Here, it is mostly relevant to note that the type of masculinity of men nurtured in these informal peer groups corresponds nearly exactly with what is contemporarily called machismo: irreligious, virile, carnal, more "at home" in la calle than in the casa (or at church). Likewise, the image of normative feminine spirituality was largely Marian. The machismo discourse—really, an anti-machismo discourse, trumpeted by evangelicals decades prior to its paradigmatic expression by Brusco (as Willems noted) and by many Catholics as well (e.g., Tamez 1987)—is

58 Smilde (2007) and others have also argued for maternal influences on many first-generation *male* evangelical converts.

a criticism of such a masculinity, out-of-place-and-time, a "protest masculinity" that continues to hold out against the "modern" integration of men into the traditionally feminine spheres of religion and the home (Broude 1990, cf. Ramos 1975 on "virile protest," Willis 1977).

The evangelical movements and support groups not only provide an alternative model of masculinity, but they provide recognizable parallels to the peer group where *machismo* is cultivated. The anti-clerical, anti-religious, and anti-authoritarian impulses present in informal men's peer groups are harnessed by the evangelical and support group movements and embedded into these movements' own discursive critiques of institutional "religion." This discourse privileges "spirituality" as a viable alternative to religion and redefines spirituality, giving it a set of connotations—active, challenging, processual, egalitarian—that do not strike men as either inherently religious or inherently feminine, based on existing norms. The boisterous, expressive ethos of the evangelical and support group movements feels more like informal, machista peer groups than the Mass, but in these movements' peer groups, there is an even greater stress on egalitarianism and mutual support. On a structural level, the evangelical and support group movements appear to offer men "replacement" peer groups. And through a set of ethical (or "spiritual") exercises, including "sharing" and expressions of "masculine" forms of care and support, these groups offer men more than a critique of machismo; they offer the chance not merely to *observe* an emergent, alternative model of masculinity, but to *perform* and *practice* it in a supportive, all-male environment, which psychologists have long argued is central to men's projects of psychological treatment (e.g., Addis and Mahalik 2003, Andronico 1996).

As I will show in the sections on Zaca and Isaac below, the alternative model of masculinity promoted in these alternative peer groups, *spiritual masculinity*, articulates with all of the above gender logics, accepting some, and inverting, deconstructing, or de-gendering still

others (cf. Pype 2012). I have already mentioned some of these operations: spiritual masculinity is generally portrayed as fundamentally active (and thus comparable to the active-passive, subject-object logics in which machismo participates)—but active with regard to spiritual matters rather than worldly ones, *distancing* it from the calle and social realms where some of the honor-shame logics, "of challenge and riposte," are at play (Bourdieu 1966). In addition, associations from the honor-shame complex between activity and agonism are sometimes retained and repurposed in depictions of spiritual masculinity: agonism between one's will and one's machismo becomes central in many narratives (as in Zaca's, below), rather than between oneself and others. For this reason, I refer to this spiritual imagery as a Jacobean spirituality, often framed in terms of wrestling with God, as partaking in a struggle (*lucha*), as Zaca and Isaac do in their narratives below. Meanwhile, while participants in these groups usually invert the carnal/spiritual and calle/casa logics of machismo, they also sometimes deconstruct or de-gender these latter divisions. For instance, in the testimonies (*testimonios*) of some (especially newer participants or those with especially serious compulsions), an active resistance to the allure of the calle and to one's temptations is emphasized and may be accompanied by suggestions about men's natural or cultural predisposition towards machismo or temptation; but, in some longtime participants' narratives, the pursuit of spiritual masculinity leads to a certain holism that unifies and deconstructs spirituality and embodiment, or to a prioritization of the (nurturant) home over the (injurious) street, appropriate to both men *and* women. In sum, there are aspects of the model of spiritual masculinity that vary from person to person, but the key quality of this emergent masculinity is a sense of an *active* spirituality, which pivots from a logic of activity as masculine towards a reevaluation of other gender logics that are central to the stereotype of the machista.

These logics and social realities do not exhaust the elements of machismo examined in

these groups, however. As Brusco (2011[1995]), Brandes (2002), and others have shown, participants in the evangelical and support group movement often focus on the emotional and personal characteristics of machismo. Below, I give two extended, partly contrastive examples of how this spiritual masculinity is constructed using these logics, in opposition to the stereotype of machismo.

5.4 Zaca(rías): machismo, egoismo, and violence

Zaca, a fifty-year old mechanic, had attended Wém for over two years by the time of our interview. Like many of my interviewees, he had visited other groups at other times in his life (including La Fraternidad and a Catholic base community) to little effect. Likewise, Zaca, like many of my interviewees and men I heard speak in these weekly meetings, became more actively religious after finding his group, now attending mass and periodic retreats. Thus, although he was an active and committed Catholic, his story contained a strong resonance with apparently evangelical themes and narrative, emphasizing the difference between spirituality and religion and the importance of a personal conversion.

Our interview began with Zaca talking about his daily life and personal interests. He was active in politics, he said, on behalf of a relative, a well-known municipal government figure in San Carlos.

Zaca linked his political activism to struggles against machismo, portraying the abuse of public authority as rooted in the same machista selfishness and lack of concern for others that drives domestic abuse. “Most politicians,” he said,

> aren't interested in the people [el pueblo]... But if the government is bad... it's bad for you, bad for me... it's bad for everyone!
>
> So much politicking [*politiquería*] is for the ego, for the “I”! We should send all the politicians to Wém, eh! (We laugh.)

You know why, though? Because Wém is a mirror for el machismo, la prepotencia [arrogance].

In my interview with him, Zaca cited his own experience to show how Wém has the power to "hold a mirror to men," who often lack these deep, mirroring connections with others, and are "chained to themselves" (in his words).[59] Throughout his interview, Zaca paired machismo with the term egoismo (egotism, selfishness, self-centeredness), repeating "my ego, my machismo" five times as he discussed his "process" since his conversion and regular attendance at Wém. Many other participants equated machismo with men's egoismo and atomization. Another interlocutor from Wém, who had previously attended La Fraternidad and an AA group before settling on Wém), made a similar comment: "Many men are closed up like this, in a bubble, in their machismo, in their egoismo."[60]

"You want me to tell you my history with Wém? *Yo*..." Zaca drew out this "I...," framing his thoughts in the therapeutic "I" language that is supposed to help participants frame their statements in a kind of spiritual and epistemological humility towards what they can speak about with some authority. Both the support group movement and parts of the evangelical and charismatic Catholic movement in San Carlos (the latter of which also shared much of this emphasis on spirituality and conversion) considered this framing a sign of spiritual maturity:

> I was a violent man. Machista and violent. Jealous. A man—with a good heart, but violent. With many problems... I had problems with the whole world. Violence—so much violence. Violence in the family. Although I played with the kids, I was also violent. With my wife, violence. All the violence you hear about... Blows [golpes], abuses [maltratos]. That's how I was...

59

Adam Smith's (1976[1790]:III:1) idea about society-in-general serving as a mirror that forms the personality is an interesting comparison.

60

See above and Peterson 1992:62, "Selfishness: the essence of sin, the root of alcoholism."

For another thing, I was an unfaithful man. Many different women...

Violence and infidelity, anger and jealousy: Zaca identified these destructive, anti-social behaviors and emotions with machismo itself, and he would use “violent” or “violence” to describe his machista past 9 more times.

Interrupting his catalogic confession, Zaca lit up:

> “It was, 'Darkness in the house, lightness [claridad] in the street.' Do you understand? In the calle, I was all 'Hey' [yo era todo, '¡Ey!']—until I got mad at least. But in the house...”

He trailed off again. “It was this way for years.”

The common refrain Zaca referenced “Darkness in the house, clarity in the street” (*Oscuridad en la calle, claridad en la calle*), was often voiced in these groups with a sense of regret and pain, but here it makes explicit the calle:casa logic embedded in machismo. Still, Zaca also said he “got mad” (*me enojaba*) sometimes in the street as well, perhaps violent, trailing off as he recognizes this apparent incongruity between his experience and the saying (*dicho*).[61] Perhaps his violence at home was “darker” for being aimed at loved ones who should have been exempted by gender and age from these displays, or perhaps because such violence was hidden. This hiddenness and the portrayal of women and children as especially inappropriate victims of violence are frequently invoked in public discourses and imagery dealing with domestic violence: one example is the chilling Ecuadorian public service announcement about domestic violence sometimes seen aired Costa Rica, “Machismo is violence”—a title that accurately summarizes its haunting scenes of a battered family who dreads each arrival of an abusive

61 Perhaps he considered his domestic machismo “darker” for being aimed at loved ones, or at women and children (as in the PSA “Machismo is Violence”).

husband and father, culminating in a series of women who appear to have been physically abused, saying together, in solidarity, "If it happens to one of us, it happens all of us."[62]

Like many interlocutors, Zaca described "going blind" with rage, unable to remember events. He claimed not to remember the climactic moment that sent him spiraling to "rock bottom," when he seized a machete to kill his wife, children, "even my own *mamá*." The latter had accompanied his family to confront Zaca about his abusiveness at the auto shop where he worked (presumably out of fear), and he described regaining consciousness on the ground, being restrained by co-workers.

After he was ejected from his home (being the one in four interviewees mentioned in previous chapter concerned the Law against Domestic Violence), he described a period of denial in which he went on a manic, dissolute spree, suggesting that he felt a perverse sense of freedom that led deep into drinking, substance use, and sex that he eventually regretted. Finally, Zaca's brother intervened and suggested that he consider attending Wém, a programa[63] that met on Thursdays. When he confronted the stories of broken marriages and relationships that other men were sharing in Wém, Zaca described being completely overcome and doubtful, as in so many Christian conversion narratives, as to whether he deserved to be forgiven by himself or anyone else. He confronted the seriousness of his actions but could not imagine himself successfully overcoming them as those men had. Zaca described contemplating suicide until, in his bleakest moment, he said, God offered him a "saving grace," directing him to open the Bible to Psalms

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62 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8-fzhAmlSs.

63 This was of talking about one's participation, as a program or process, is part of the language drawn from AA, which describes itself as a "movement" consisting of a "program" and local "fellowships," consisting of a series of steps that constitute a "spiritual process."

25:7: “Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me... O Lord” (NRSV).[64]

Though Zaca described that finding this verse, seeming providentially, gave him hope and buoyed his spirits, he described how the next round of difficulties came when he experienced machismo's destructiveness directed at himself. “When I first made a change, my ego, my machismo... wouldn't let me alone.” In a description reminiscent of Luther's descriptions of suffering audible, demonic “assaults” (Anfechtungen), Zaca described experiencing his machismo as an “internal” voice (*en mi interior*) mocking his resolve to stop womanizing and drinking: “I'd say to myself, 'Pansy' (Playo), 'Sonuvabitch' (Hijueputa).”

This story, placed alongside the way that Zaca has paired “egoismo” and “machismo” and his stories about dissociative episodes, reveals that egoismo and machismo are not simply ways to express a selfish concern for oneself over relationships with others. Instead, both egoismo and machismo represent *an inability to relate at all*, even to oneself, which in its most extreme forms is not merely anti-social but dissociative, resulting in internal voices and blackouts (both from intoxicants and from the intoxicating power of one's own passions). As I show in Part II, this is because of the way that Alcoholics Anonymous has imbued the notion of addiction, or machismo in this context, with Christian notion of sin, and has drawn on a metaphor of sin as primarily a therapeutic rather than a juridical model, dominant in Orthodoxy but somewhat submerged in Western, Latinate Christianity, which draws more heavily on Augustine.

For Zaca's conception of egoismo, or machismo, Paul's sarx (flesh) may be a plainer influence than Freud. While Freud (1989[1933]:128-129) came to see the destructive death-drive

64 Although many Catholics have full Bibles, even more Catholic homes where I spent time seemed to keep handy an abridged publication of the New Testament, the Psalms, and Proverbs.

(Todestrieb) as competing with libido, with the latter being a potentially positive if sometimes disordered energy, Paul depicted the flesh as in close cooperation with death, as leading to death, with both the flesh and death being opposed symbolically to spirituality and portrayed as destructive of spiritual relationships (Rom 6:12-23, 8:1-14, Gal 6:8, cf. Mk 14:38). In the face of these centrifugal and dissociative, anti-social forces, the support group model of organization offers relationships as an antidote, and as a new source of identification and belonging (cf. Mosko 2010, Bialecki and Daswani 2015).

In his interview, Zaca moved on from these carnal/spiritual and calle/casa logics to portray his machismo as an anachronism that he had carried over from his father's era. Much like the second narrative surrounding Omar's death, shaped by the biographical perspective offered by Omar's mother's interview, the sharing genre denaturalizes and developmentalizes the human life, suggesting how a life can change dramatically depending upon different possible paths and relationships they may contain.

Directing my attention to his subsequent recovery, Zaca described the importance of forgiving his father in his recovery from machismo. Zaca reported that Wém (chosen by me as, supposedly, the most secular of the men's support groups) had taught him what seemed to me like a plainly neo-Christian logic of salvation that is shared by some Latin American evangelicals and Catholics, as well as by support group culture as a whole: that in order to be forgiven, one must forgive (Mt 6:14-15, Lk 6:37):

> I had to forgive the people who had scarred me, who had done me harm, for the way that they made me, because they formed that part of me [i.e., his machismo]...
>
> [For instance,] when I was five years old, I tried to give my father a kiss. He shouted 'Men don't kiss!', then he pushed me, [and] he gave me his hand, his closed hand. (He pauses.) That scarred me. Many things, more like that, scarred me, left me useless [inútil].
>
> That's how they were in those days: 'Darkness in the home, lightness in the

> street.' Better outside than inside. Inside, all the *malacrianzas* [rudeness, lit. "bad-upbringings"], the yelling, the aggressions.
>
> My father—I can see moments now where he was a man with a good heart. A man who worked very, very hard. A man who struggled...

Zaca used the word "struggle" (v. *luchar*, n. *lucha*) to describe his father as a man "with a good heart," and in doing so he was using language common in these groups, language that associates masculinity with activity ("A man who worked very, very hard"). Because both machismo and "spirituality masculinity" are framed by notions about the masculinity of activity (versus passivity), activity-related terms act as important markers of masculinity in these narrative—and thus as a way of signaling alternative masculinities. Support groupers use the term lucha to connote a fruitful struggle, a "greater jihad," so to speak, in which the agonistic connotations remain. The ongoing lucha against machismo is treated as if it were interchangeable with an individual's overall *proceso* (process) of spiritual development, but their earlier conflicts were described as barren, thorny "problems": "I had problems with the whole world," Zaca said. By contrast, he and other participants portrayed their luchas in Jacobean terms, as refusals to surrender in a spiritual struggle that ultimately serves to bless them and others, reuniting men with their brothers and bringing peace to their homes and communities (Gen 32-33, cf. 27-28)—not problems, but fruitful "problematizations" (to use Foucault's [1997[1984]:117] characterization of ethical practices).

Like Jacob, Zaca's struggle ultimately ended in his family's forgiveness and his return home, "one year exactly after starting with Wém." "Thanks be to God, Wém had given me the tools to control myself," he recalled, using Wém's masculine-inflected language that describes its process in the imagery of tools (*herramientas*) and of meetings in which they learn to use these tools as "workshops" (*talleres*).

Zaca offered an example of these tools. Once, while still basking in the glow of reunion,

he was caught off guard by a comment made by his youngest son. "'Papi, I'm going to tell you something: we are still afraid of you'... It made me angry (*Me enojó*), but this didn't pass into rage (*ira*), nor to violence, nor to aggression. Before? No! Before—" and here he impersonated his prior machismo, glaring and cursing "Hijueputa!" and striking his palm with the back of his hand. Remembering what he had learned, though, at Wém's workshops on anger management, Zaca withdrew until he could completely calm himself and let go of his anger, and only some days afterward he did have a heartfelt talk with his youngest. (Zaca described other such withdrawals, including once when his friends began drinking and some sex-workers[65] arrived—"all that party scene," he said dismissively.)

His withdrawal from his son was brief, and different from the isolation he experienced thanks to machismo. Having decided that his anger was keeping him from identifying with his son, he first returned to Wém to express his frustrations and to practice identifying with others with the spiritual masculinity cultivated there. "I arrived at Wém in bad shape, but they helped me to see my errors—they don't give me advice."

The mutual support of these groups depends upon this seeming lack of "peer pressure," which Isaac also mentions in the section below, and which stands in contrast to the aggressive peerhood of machismo). In this we see again the apparently Christian resonances in this model of social organization, just as Paul, before he counsels the Galatians to discern between spirit and flesh ("Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life": Gal 6:8), pleads with them not to judge

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65 For work on legal prostitution in Costa Rica, see Downe 1999, Schifter-Sikora 2007.

one another and to share and bear one another's spiritual burdens (6:1-6). Support group likewise teaches "the fundamental and first message of Alcoholics Anonymous": that individuals are "essentially limited, but able to find a healing wholeness," a "connectedness with others" that "comes about from [this] very limitation" (Kurtz 1991[1979]:4, cf. Mosko 2010, Bialecki and Daswani 2015). It is for this reasons that, as I mentioned in the introduction, George Vaillant (2012:314) avoided the term "self-help" when describing support groups, and claimed that the latter were "as much about self-help as a barn-raising." This is also the view of most psychologists, many of whom prefer to talk about these as "mutual help" groups (Mäkelä *et al*. 1996). In Christian terms, peer groups like Wém help men like Zaca discern good fruits from bad, yet they do not do this by offering advice, but instead by exemplifying what these relationships, and the masculinity they signify, looks like in practice (cf. Humphrey 1997, Zagzebski 2010).

5.5 Isaac: from religious traditions to spiritual relationships

The Biblical metaphor of spiritual growth as "bearing fruit" (e.g., Pro 12:12, Mt 13, Lk 3:8f) may have had a particular appeal in the verdant Northern Zone. It certainly had for Isaac. After a career at Dole, he had recently founded a company selling organic, biodegradable substitutes for pesticides, fertilizers, and other agricultural chemicals. At first glance, Isaac's life could not have looked more different from Zaca's. However, in their narratives, they reveal the common threads that make up the struggle against machismo in which participants in these groups are engaged, demonstrating the diversity and growing appeal of these groups among both working- and middle-class men.[66] Still, for Isaac as for Zaca, it was *activity* (and in particular

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sustained effort)[67] that characterized spirituality as masculine, and both men saw human relationships as the most identifiable fruits of one's lucha against machismo.

Unlike Zaca (who rarely attended Mass prior to Wém), Isaac described always having been "religious," attending masses and mostly avoiding "falling" to the "secular world," as he put it. However, Isaac had not always been "spiritual":

> My situation—my practice of the faith—has changed indeed [sí ha cambiado]. Before, there was a fear [of angering God]—a religious part rather than a spiritual part...
>
> You see, I didn't involve God in my goals... I took God as a "default" [sic: in English], not something I had to seek.

The language of "goals" (like the language of "bearing fruit") illustrates the teleological predispositions that these groups cultivate in participants through the practice of sharing. Likewise, Isaac's parenthetical, speaking of his "situation" as a question of his "practice of faith," frames the developmentalism of this perspective. God, as he says, is a matter of "seeking," a journey that requires the sojourner to stay oriented, with an eye on their telos, their prime spiritual end: healthy, growing relationships with others (and especially God).

The sharing genre cultivates this teleological perspective by examining the fruits of past actions in light of one's immediate goals, yet it moderates anxiety about future goals with its 24-hours-at-a-time quotidianism, which also seems to draw on enduring if submerged aspects of the Christian tradition, nearly echoing the Sermon on the Mount's commandments not to worry

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Still, support groups often further self-segregate beyond gender, along class-based and other lines. See below.

67 Contrast with Bourdieu's (2002) depiction of a Mediterranean, "phallonarcissistic logic" that associates masculine activity as "discontinuous... brief, dangerous, spectacular acts that... mark breaks in the ordinary course of life," rather than "continuous... monotonous" practices, coded feminine.

about tomorrow (Mt 6:25-34), but to focus instead on ultimate concerns. (Much more will be said about this in Part II.)

Before Isaac's conversion, another telos had consumed him: “el Isaac Perfecto.”

> I was always trying to become better [ponerme mejor], to always be the best, to always be perfect... including [being the best] in my family. [For instance,] the opportunity I had to study [in the U.S.] was because of a scholarship—for my academic efforts, not because my father had money or because I was from a very 'fine' [fina] family.
>
> While I achieved the highest levels I could at school, in my job, relying on my own resources and efforts, my family was 'left in the road' [dejada en el camino], you see? My sister married very young; my brother is alcoholic; my other brother was a disaster after losing his family; and for his part, my father needed resources [from me] to be able to sustain himself.
>
> This created 'emotional baggage' [cargas emocionales]. So I said to myself, Look, my happiness doesn't necessarily depend upon others' happiness...

By pursuing this anti-social view of cultivating happiness, Isaac's early successes merely engendered resentment in his family, he said:

> This “Perfect Isaac”—who studied, who had the advantage of going off [abroad] and studying—then [returned and] tried to change people... looked down on them [menospreciarlos]. At home, I would say “Look, we should do such-and-such” ... They'd say, “Look, it's that you want to change us” ... They'd say, “It's your pride,” and I'd say, “It's your ignorance.”
>
> My having studied, earned a position [at work], learned another language, gone to see the world—all this created difficulties in my family-relationship [relación familiar].

Isaac was among a distinct minority of my interlocutors who, even before becoming “spiritual,” could be judged as worldly successes by their peers, in terms of their education and earnings. University attendance was itself a decided minority condition in the groups I attended, even in a country where public universities are truly public (i.e., free of tuition and fees). As I discuss in Part II, enough of my middle-class interlocutors expressed horror at the tell-all quality of sharing to suggest the broader application of Vaillant's conclusion (from the longitudinal Grant Study, which traced men throughout their lives) that many college-educated men find support

group practices repellent and are more likely to die from alcoholism than submit themselves to the program (2012:308-314, cf. 298). Isaac's having studied abroad, in Iowa and Florida, was unique among my interviewees. From these groups, however, he learned why his machismo, his hierarchical, prideful approach to his family, could never transform their lives and could only upset them.

After returning from the US, Isaac worked for Pan American Seed Company, then for Dole, where he climbed the managerial ladder, eventually managing, he said, a department of 400 employees and a $3 million budget. Yet Isaac described ending up deeply unhappy, working fourteen-hour days while his wife managed their three growing boys alone (then 10, 7 and 4 years old). She felt ill-equipped for the job, having grown up (unlike many Costa Ricans of her generation) as an only child without brothers or even close male cousins. Isaac said that she repeatedly told him that she wanted a stronger male influence for the boys. He remorsefully recalled her delivering a popular gibe about being a “Soyla” (i.e., “Because I am the one [soy la] who does everything”), echoing many complaints I heard from Costa Rican wives about their machista husbands. Likewise, and in accordance with the anxiety many Costa Rican men feel to avoid being seen as macho, he lamented that he played such a nonexistent role and home and was mostly “absent” from his boys' lives: “no family-time, no community life, nothing—just work, work, work.”

Nonetheless, Isaac felt increasingly dependent on Dole. “They paid everything: my house, my car, private school, car- and house- insurance. 'Nothing to worry about',” he said, in English, code-switching to mock Dole's strings-attached corporate beneficence.

The extent to which Isaac's “practice of the faith has changed indeed,” from his being merely “religious,” as he put it, to “spiritual” and to having a “relationship with God,” began two

years before our interview, after Dole signaled that his next assignment would require relocating, possibly outside Costa Rica. His wife expressed her opposition to the move (especially under the prevailing division of labor, one imagines), and Isaac also felt “past the phase” of wanting to live abroad anymore, having learned to appreciate community and putting down roots (*arraigarse*). Still, he felt trapped, he said, unable to see how he could provide this lifestyle without Dole.

> I couldn't decide for my wife, but it wouldn't be responsible to leave behind her and my children in Costa Rica to make myself big in some company.
>
> My wife, my kids, economic responsibilities—the burden [carga] became very heavy...
>
> A moment arrives when one says [to oneself], 'I'm carrying [cargando] everything,' right? 'All by myself.'

This sense of isolation and atomization runs through most of the accounts of machismo I heard in these groups, including Zaca's, and Isaac's was no exception. But what is interesting here is how Isaac's “moment” of recognition that not even “Perfect Isaac” could bear this life's burden all by himself, echoes the First and Second Step of the Twelve Step model of support group organization: “We admitted... that our lives had become unmanageable,” and we acknowledged our dependence upon the “Higher Power” of God, as represented by the group (according to the Second Tradition) (AA 1986[1953]). This distinctly non-machista acknowledgment, that one needs others, is celebrated as a key realization in such groups, and such moments are recounted whenever participants try to construct a more spiritual masculinity in opposition to the loneliness of machismo.

Yet these are only the first two steps. As I will argue more fully in Part II, support group culture appears to be fundamentally Wesleyan-Arminian in its historical origins and in its theology (and its theological anthropology),[68] although it is worth noting that this theology and

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Theological anthropology refers to the way the latter term is used in theology, to describe the image of the human being in a given theology.

set of practices has much in common with Franciscan practices and Thomistic ideas about ethics, as well as Orthodox ones, in which a central role is given to *synergism*: a theological term the cooperation or alignment of the individual will with the divine will. (More on that to come.) In the Wesleyan model, God's grace is “prevenient,” coming first, and it enables human us to say Yes to a many-stepped journey—yet we must say Yes and cooperate along this journey. And the Wesleyan path is uniquely social among the many views of God's model for how this synergism should take place, although the value that such a social system of ethics would provide is by training easy for social scientists and psychologists to see. The widespread anti-machismo discourse has become persuasive for many young men across Latin America, but it does not in itself produce alternative masculinities, or new places to practice them; social networks and relationships are required to really give rise to a social reality, and sometimes new networks and relationships are required to produce new realities. To develop a new masculinity that included what Isaac saw as a real relationship with God, to “involve God in [his] goals,” was, like all gender, a fundamentally relational question, and Isaac (unlike many of the college educated men that Vaillant studied) found that to develop this new identity he needed to develop communion with others. This new source of communion was not a change in religious affiliation, but a new friendship, a deepened engagement in spiritual relationships, in what I will talk about in Part II as “friendships of virtue” (following Aristotle).

The practical theology of these groups, drawn from Twelve Step culture and ultimately from the Methodist model, portrays the group as a horizontal “channel of grace.” Much as in Paul's plea that Christians “restore one [another] in a spirit of gentleness” and “bear one

another's burdens" (Gal 6:1-2), the character of Higher Power is defined minimally, but crucially, as both "loving" and "caring," and as known to participants "as express[ed]... in our group conscience" (see the Second Tradition and Third Step: AA 1986[1954]). So it is not just a workaround that atheists can treat the group itself as the Higher Power (which many know about the Twelve Step program by reputation). As new members are counseled about the ethical system of the group when they join, "Fake it 'til you make it." The communion of peers is fundamentally how most participants are *supposed* to meet God anew. True "belief," or "faith," or genuine understanding, comes later, from coming to know and trust God.

The major change in Isaac's relationship with God likewise emerged from a new, unexpected human relationship—with an evangelical pastor. Pastor Jaime was the leader of Dios es Fiel. Isaac was deeply impressed that Jaime never once pressured him to convert from Catholicism, echoing Zaca's impression of Wém and its lack of peer pressure. "There was respect in both directions," Isaac said, stressing the role that egalitarian sentiments played in their friendship.

Isaac began attending a weekly, 3-hour bible study with Jaime, and from this time onward they developed a closer relationship, Isaac confiding in Jaime about his problems balancing work and family. (Recently, even his parents had been attending the bible study—"old Catholics," he said, emphasizing the seeming unlikeliness of the arrangement.)

After attending these studies for some time, Isaac accepted Jaime's invitation to join Hombres Íntegros. He was surprised to find that he was not the only Catholic in attendance. As another testament to the non-sectarian, "spiritual" approach of the groups like this (even when held in churches), Isaac felt reassured about the group when, after sharing with them about his family issues, one of his evangelical *compañeros* encourage him to try one of a group of families

associated with the (Catholic) Christian Family Movement (MFC), and to practice his Catholic faith more actively, as many of them had been encouraged to do by the group.

Finally, a year into his new-found “practice of the faith,” and with support from his family, Jaime, and the members of the groups to which he belonged, Isaac summoned the courage to leave Dole and begin his new company. His lifestyle had changed dramatically since then. Whereas before he enjoyed “no family-time, no community life,” he described his deep involvement in the life of his nuclear and extended families, and he counted off 8 hours each week spent dedicated to spiritual matters with family and friends: “three hours with Jaime in Bible study, two in my men's group, 1 in Mass, 3 in MFC...”

Even his work had now become something he used to nurture relationships with his family and others (unlike the earlier image of work as noble, but primarily a realm of competition, that was embodied in the calle/casa distinction):

> I realize now: this company isn't just for Isaac. It should give opportunities to my family—to my children, my nieces and nephews, my siblings.
>
> Now, if I stopped thinking of others, I'd stop being happy, because I'm happy when I see the company yielding sufficient resources for my parents to live well, for my in-laws to have a secure, tranquil life—when I see others sharing in my business.
>
> My situation, of seeking God in these moments, is a relationship—one which has strengthened me [me ha dado fortaleza]... Before I would awaken thinking, 'What a bore, another day at work'... Now, there is a spirit of struggle [un espíritu de lucha] that energizes me every day.

This “spirit of struggle” defines the Jacobean spirituality that characterizes “spiritual masculinity,” the emergent model of masculinity that is modeled and performed in the peer groups I observed and in the evangelical and support group movements more broadly. This model is constructed in an explicit opposition to machismo, with machismo serving as a well-

known source domain for ideas about a “toxic” (rather than “hegemonic”[69]) masculinity.[70] The biographies and narratives of peer group participants above demonstrate why machismo serves this orientating purpose and why this masculine spirituality is cultivated more effectively within the supportive confines of the peer group than elsewhere, including in church services (in San Carlos and, it would appear from the literature, elsewhere in Latin America: cf. Brandes 2002, Smilde 2007, O'Neill 2010). In the following two chapters, I offer some historical reasoning for why these spaces have developed into unique spaces for reforming masculinity and restructuring Latin American religion as whole.

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69 See Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, especially 839-840, on this glossed-over distinction in much writing about the hegemonic masculinity.

70 See Stevens 1972, Tamez 1987, Ramírez 2008 to review this 'pejorativization' over time. Cf. de la Mora 2006 on early, positive connotations.

PART TWO: From the calle to the grupo: how the evangelical and support group movements use the ethos of peer groups to shape a new masculinity

Chapter 6: The ethos of religion and the ethos of spirituality: framing the support group and Methodist model(s) of organization

6.1 Some notes on ethos and on the cultures of religion and spirituality in San Carlos

By the end of Part II, I aim to have illustrated in some detail the most important aspects of the peer groups I studied, especially those aspects of the groups that allow them to generate new models of masculinity and which appear to be influencing a "restructuring of Latin American religion" and spiritual communities, in something akin to the process that Wuthnow (1988, 1994a-b-, 1998) described in North America. The potency of these forms of organization and their effects can best be conceptualized, as I have suggested, according to their particular organization and ethos, which attract and retain participants and allow them to identify with the discourses and practices of the groups.

To talk about these changes to the cultural landscape, I want to use a geographical metaphor to explain the path along which I ask the reader to travel. This path, like the road to San Carlos itself, winds along a tortuous course that seems to take longer than it should. Yet, given the maneuvers required and the slipperiness of the roads, even a moderate speed would be too much. However, the advantage of this road is that, for its troubles, it provides access to some vistas that I hope are worth a fraction of those found on the road to San Carlos, and which are not accessible by a more direct route.

If I can extend the metaphor, I want to show the reader both the *topographical place* of these peer groups in Quesada's contemporary social landscape (where they currently fit in the

social environment), as well as the deeper historical *geology*, that gives rise to them—two aspects of a landscape that mountain roads sometimes allow us to see. The topography of the Costa Rican religious landscape is a rapidly changing space, much like the topography of that mountain road leading to San Carlos. Host to an ever-diversifying array of organizations and movements, awash in flows from across the world, the religious landscape is much like this topography, undergoing rapid changes that almost cause the casual observer to forget about the tectonic changes underneath—just as residents of San Carlos were surprised by the eruption in 1968 of the long inactive volcano, Volcán Arenal (an event that killed many and is still recounted in the region as preceding other, social crises I have dealt with here).

However, these two kinds of change are only apparently different: the topography and geology of the region is shaped in the same time frame, if not always the same time scale: tectonic forces are constantly at work, even if the eruptions and earthquakes seem sudden. The flows of water across the landscape shape its topography and geography as well, giving life to the teeming plant and animal life of the zone that make up the surface of the earth there and carving out the surfaces on which this life thrives both gradually and in great moments of change, like the mudslides that periodically close the road to San Carlos. Likewise, I will examine in this chapter some of the different ways that the same passage of time as it refers to religious change on both an individual and social level, and I will refer to *gradualist* and *subitist* models of change (terms roughly equivalent to the gradualist and punctuated equilibria models of evolutionary change). Both these scales of change will be important in the way that religious change is conceived in the lives and relationships of my interlocutors, although they will also be helpful in thinking about the rate of religious change at larger scales. My hope is that, by examining these two scales of change in the lives of participants of these groups, as well as from

the deep historical perspective, a fuller picture of the restructuring of Latin American religion and the reformation of machismo can be offered, which can in turn aid in the analysis of other cases of social change. The winding path taken there will allow the reader to see, I hope, broad vistas of ethnographic landscape and the contemporary flows across, as well as some of the deeper geological history that mountain roads, in being carved out of such landscapes, often reveal. This path is constructed in order to offer the reader both views, to see how the shared religious terrain that this model of social organization populates emerges at both scales: both from the cross-pollination and flows (local and global) that move daily through San Carlos, and the hidden histories of this religious terrain in past eruptions of religious change, including those that eventually gave rise to support group culture. Both scales of change help to explain the contemporary shape of the groups I studied, and whose commonality among evangelicals and Catholics, among men's church groups and "non-religious" support groups like Wém and AA, was frankly baffling to me at first.

I will also use the concept of ethos and a focus on social organization throughout Part II to clarify my analysis of these groups, because my fieldwork also suggested to me that it was the organization and the sense of the unique affective environment that attracted participants to these groups and which kept them in one group or another. My focus on organization and ethos is in some ways a correction for a tendency I see in many anthropological analyses for a focus on both *discourses* and *practices*, and the unfortunate tendency of two foci to crowd out alternative framings of the same cultural material. I do not revisit in this dissertation the belief/practice debates that may arguably continue to influence the discipline's research habitus and implicit objects, nor do I revisit: the history of the organizational approach in anthropology, particularly in the study of kinship, or the history by which it may have become associated with the long

duration or other experience-distant approaches, or the way in which the flourishing literature on affect is (sometimes unfairly) associated with an experience-near approach. I merely want to suggest that, if a focus on discourses and practices has become a sort of common sense, a sort of taken-for-granted "mid-sightedness" or middle range focus in ethnographic analysis, such a view may unintentionally obscure other ways that the "far-sighted approach" (on social organization) and a "near-sighted one" (on affect, and in particular the affect of a kind of social group) are connected. My ethnographic research showed that a focus on discourse and practice was sometimes extremely helpful for explaining how aspects of these groups' social organization was related to their intense emotional content. At other times, however, a focus on their discourses and practices obscured precisely how these groups were effecting cultural change in the area.

Allow me to use as an example one subfield in sociocultural anthropology that I lean heavily upon, the anthropology of Christianity. In the subfield there is a powerful analytic that I have used in this part of the dissertation, which has studied the ways in which certain "transposable messages" and "portable practices" that are found in evangelical Protestantism, charismatic Catholicism, and other forms of the religion have far outstripped specific ecclesiastical institutions, and may thus be better understood as constituting "a globalizing *movement*" of one kind or another, carried as much by practices and discourses as any single institution (Csordas 2007, Robbins 2004b:118, emphasis mine, Handman 2014, Bialecki 2017). These transdenominational flows are an important finding, especially in the Latin American context (e.g., Martin 1990, Steigenga 2001, Chesnut 2003, Steigenga and Cleary 2008, Hartch 2014), which is known for its embrace of hybridity and the cross-pollination that takes place between religious movements and between religious and secular culture, and I make use of this approach throughout. However, my fieldwork and the analysis of my data also suggested that my

implicit discourse-and-practice approach accidentally excluded elements of social life that were not privileged or easily appreciated by either framing.

In addition, there seemed to be something other than of my taken-for-granted theoretical assumptions, something of my methodology, that influenced the theoretical perspective I eventually adopted on the organizational restructuring of Latin American religion. It was only with repeated visits to Quesada over the course of a decade, watching churches boom and bust and even schism, as in the case of the evangelical church(es) I studied (Maranatha/Dios es Fiel), that I came to appreciate the role this organization played in people's religious lives. I have not had the opportunity to explore the impact of this multi-temporal field methodology (see e.g., Howell and Talle 2012), but while I think that an attention to affect can be incorporated to some extent into traditional, one-stint fieldwork methodology, there may be something about the multi-temporal approach that benefits research on organizational variety and organizational change. Similarly, there may be something about multi-temporal fieldwork that may allow for longitudinal approaches that supplement life history approaches already pursued by many ethnographers. My multi-month stays in 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2012, adding up to twenty-two months, allowed me to watch these churches and groups grow and shrink, to watch individuals join and abandon and exchange the churches and groups they belonged in, and to be guided between small group meetings, support groups, and weekend services by participants of these various movements and organizations. Without this experience, and the ability to get to know and follow sancarleños in and out of a variety of movements and institutions over the course of a decade, I doubt that I would have been able to come to observe my interlocutors' lives or their "conversion histories" as intimately or as directly as I did (cf. Gooren 2006, 2008, 2010b), or to focus my project on the organizational questions that I eventually came to see as

central to these lives and the changes in which they were participating (and many of the anthropologists who have written about multi-temporal research seem to have come to similar conclusions).[71] The nature of this research allowed me to know my interlocutors in new, intimate ways, and gave me time to re-visit authors like Gooren, Smilde, and Coleman who emphasize the life-long, ongoing nature of evangelical and charismatic religious practices and framings, and the importance of social networks and social support in these conversion histories. It also gave me the opportunity to draw from related fields, like social history and sociology, that have made institutional and network questions primary in their analyses (e.g., Martin 1990), and from fields like psychology that have studied the spread of support group and Twelve Step culture as both a globalizing *movement* (where its transportable set of messages and practices are often the focus) and as a network of local *fellowships* (where the ethos and group organization play crucial roles in attracting and keeping members) (see Kurtz 1991[1979], Mäkelä *et al*. 1996).

On the other hand, my commitment to focusing on social organization and to the effect of certain discourses and practices on people in certain organizational contexts has led me to rely upon the term "ethos." The term ethos has a number of under-appreciated valences that, once illuminated, seem memorable and uniquely descriptive of my attempt to capture the relationship between affect and a particular social structure and organization. One of these valences (derived from its previous anthropological uses, by Gregory Bateson) suggests its complementarity to a focus on meaning: *ethos* and *eidos*. As I argue below, the term suggests that a habitus requires a habitat—that the gradual and sudden changes produced in the sense of identity and the self

71 E.g., in Borneman and Hammoudi 2009, Halstead, Hirsch, and Okely 2008, Hirsch 2008, Howell and Talle 2012.

require a change of setting, and in particular the emotional and organizational qualities of a setting. Stated more simply, my research suggests that, to capture important aspects of the social environments I have examined here and there in the “reformation of machismo” by Latin American religious movements and the “restructuring of [Latin] American religion” by the support group movement (Brusco 2011[1995], Wuthnow 1988), the analysis needed to focus on these emotional and organizational qualities of these groups, and how they are reproduced and diversified. I will treat both terms briefly here, before concluding with a note about how this approach complements meaning- and practice-based analyses based on the discipline's own preexisting strengths.

Notably, the concept of “ethos” has already been used to study similar social fields in Latin America by anthropologists like Elizabeth Brusco (whose influence on my work is apparent). Her celebrated account of “the reformation of machismo” was carried out among Colombian evangelicals in the 1980s, and she employed Bateson's notion of ethos (as a “system of organization of the... emotions”) to characterize the “feminine ethos” of evangelical cultural settings and family dynamics: an emotional orientation towards, and positive evaluation of, the previously-feminine domains of the *casa* and of spirituality. Brusco saw the adoption of this feminine ethos as central to men's long-term conversion to evangelicalism (Battens 1936:118, cited in Brusco 2011[1995]:129). Bateson depicted a relationship between *ethos* and *eidos*—what-is-*feelable* complementing and producing tensions with what-is-*sayable.* I often interpreted this ethos/eidos distinction in terms taken from Jean and John Comaroffs' (1991:18-29) account of the relationship between (unspoken) hegemony and (spoken) ideology, in which an ethos is hegemonic, built into the social organization of the Methodist model, and therefore less easily contested or upset. By contrast, the explicit ideologies of these groups, although absolutely

crucial to organize the groups, required explication and therefore potentially signaled some aspect of support group culture that was understood to be contestable, often because it was not taken for granted in the world outside these groups. Likewise, raising the concept of ethos to the level of ideology helped me contest my own taken-for-granted theoretical assumptions and helped keep my own eye on "the system of emotional attitudes [of] a [particular] community" (Bateson 1936:200), and on the various ways in which this ethos interacts with its eidos, or discourse, to produce values and evaluative discourses, in particular contexts and in the world beyond.

This link between emotional attitudes, the character of a group or individual, and specific social contexts and spaces is also buried in the word "ethos" itself, a connection partly suggested by Aristotle in the Nicomachean *Ethics* (1934:2.1.1). He posits that *character* and *habit—êthos* and *éthos*—are to be understood as etymologically related terms (compare the Latin *mores*, *habitus*). Using etymological reasoning, Aristotle argues that both individual and collective "character" (*êthos* [ἦθος]) are developed ethically, through "habit" or habituated practice (*éthos* [ἔθος]). Yet Aristotle did not explore a third possible etymological connection: an older use of *éthos* to mean not "habit" but something like "habitat" (an "ecology," in Batesonian terms).

This usage of *éthos* to mean something like "habitat" is visible earlier in Greek history, such as is preserved in *The Iliad*, for example. During an extended comparison between the noble bearing of Paris and that of well-bred horses, Homer depicts the latter in a scene where they are galloping gracefully in the *éthea kai nomón hippon*, the "[habitats] and pastures of horses" (ἤθεα καὶ νομὸν ἵππων, 1920 6.511). My invocation of the anthropological term *ethos* is meant to evoke and link these three meanings to the notion of ethos: the peer group's (affective) *ethos* produces a certain kind of social space (a *habitat*, or ecology), and the supportive

emotional tenor of this habitat helps facilitate highly demanding ethical practices, carried out methodically (as a *habit*), so that, ideally, it becomes part of a person's very *character* (e.g., *habitus*) in some durable sense—a character that reflects the group's ethos. However, in the interest of reducing the abstruseness of the terminology I use, I will usually refer to identity rather than to a term like habitus, "character," or (the individual) ethos, partly to avoid the Bourdieuian connotations, although the notion of identity will sometimes lack the ethical or collective connotations I would prefer. The term identity will be useful for describing many aspects of what it is men wish to change and identify with, as well as for describing the ethical process of identification, in which the participants come to identify with one another and with the character or ethos of the group, "as it is expressed... in the group conscience," as the language of the Twelve Step program has it.[72]

What can briefly be said about the ethos of these peer groups? Many of the emotions and moods that characterize these social spaces seem noteworthy, especially inasmuch as they mark a departure from the ethos of liturgical religion and an affinity with evangelical and charismatic spirituality. My suggestion here is that, like portable practices and transposable messages, systems of emotion may travel across denominational lines and spread throughout non-church movements, institutions, and interpersonal networks—especially when such systems of emotion are embedded in a model of social organization like the Methodist model.

Perhaps one aspect of these groups' ethos that seems to mark their meetings and align them more with evangelical services than with liturgical traditions is their humorousness and

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72 See the Second Tradition (AA 1986[1953]).

joviality. I am arguing that what is important to these meetings is not simply that humor—laughter and jesting—take place, but that the groups actively encourage the cultivation of a "sense of humor," an ethos that participants are taught to develop a *sense* and a *feel* for. After a good deal of participation in these groups, one not only develops a deep sense of sympathy, as might be expected, but also a deep sense of humor over things about one's own life that surely did not seem funny beforehand.

My attention to ethos was first suggested by my participant-observation in various churches in San Carlos, whose different emotional qualities seemed to interest (and motivate) my interlocutors as well. Active Catholics sometimes praised a 'good' Mass for being solemn or dignified (*digna*), "observed" through measured, almost melancholic participation, with participants standing, sitting, singing, and incanting in unison as they are able. By contrast, I noted how what were considered "successful" evangelical services were considerably more boisterous, enthusiastic affairs. When I was guided towards small groups and support groups, I noticed early on that this affective quality that I associated with evangelicalism was even more pronounced in these groups than in evangelical services, where humor largely restricted itself to preaching, testimony, and announcements. My tentative conclusion is that, in support groups even more than in evangelical services, humor serves an important role in creating bonds between participants and a sense of mutual identification.

Consider the role of these bonds in creating these different institutions. Because most Costa Ricans are still assumed (by other Costa Ricans) to be Catholic by birth, to "belong" to the Church and to have a place in its chapel, whether they share a bond with other Catholics is somewhat less central to what it means to many to identify as a Catholic. Although more "active" Catholics with whom I spoke sometimes expressed a deep, cosmic bond between themselves and

other Catholics, other active Catholics I spoke with in San Carlos (and elsewhere in my own life) preferred a private but frequent faith, visiting the chapel during quiet hours to pray, light candles, meditate on God, and open themselves up to his grace. Contrary to stereotypes about an individualistic evangelicalism versus a collectivist Catholicism, Catholic masses, and chapels more generally, seem in many regions of the world to promote private, individualistic religious practice, with various possible focal points of prayer and activity scattered around the chapel and in its side altars.

By contrast, however individuated the expressions of religious passions may seem among evangelicals (especially to non-evangelicals), most evangelical services seem to encourage a shared emotional focus and the encouragement of emotional unity, with humor and the frequent interjection of comedy into earnest preaching and testimonies serving to synchronize participants' shared focus and collective emotional experience. The role of humor was probably important for similar institutional reasons: such groups are entirely voluntaristic, and almost never assumed to be inherited by birthright as is one's Catholic identity. One's place in evangelical congregations depends more on developing relationships within these new social networks and developing a new spiritual identity by identifying with these groups.

Likewise, in many support groups, the humorous ethos seemed to have the effect of, and even the purpose of, promoting affective relationships among participants, shared emotional experiences, and a shared ethos of humor, intimacy, and trust, regardless of how individuated the expressions of emotions were understood to be by participants, or appeared to be to outsiders (cf. Lindholm 2013a, 2013b). Within this broad emotional range that characterized both evangelical groups and support groups, humor seemed to most sharply set their ethos apart from that of liturgical religion—which is not to say that humor was lacking from all Catholic services. It was

certainly present in many lay activities, especially charismatic ones. But in contrast to the tone set by frequent bursts of laughter in evangelical and support group settings, the rare moment of humor during Mass[73] seemed to act as a burst of comic relief (i.e., relief from the seriousness and quiet dignity of service, which in turn allowed this solemnity to resume after this burst of relief). One of the more light-hearted priests might make some apparently jesting statement during the announcements or the sermon, yet the laughter would die down almost as quickly as it began, registering as somewhat out of place for the proper ethos of service, and rarely being repeated many times in a single Mass. Similarly, Catholics who were less than warm to evangelicals or evangelicalism often criticized the extent to which evangelicals appeared to take God too lightly, and in fact some evangelicals leveled this criticism among themselves at services or pastors they considered too indulgent in humor for its own sake. In contrast with liturgical services, in peer groups and during evangelical testimonios and sermons, laughter and a ready sense of humor was a regular and highly prized feature of the landscape. It was important to the identities people formed, as I stress below, but it also fulfilled a number of rhetorical functions (such as disarming hearers in advance of some emotional redirection, as with Pastor Jaime below) as well as organizational functions (such as fostering peerhood between participants and muting inequalities, as with Quentin's narrative below).

In the following sections of this chapter, I will first discuss some examples of how this humorous ethos relates to the organization and narrative practices of these groups (examples that

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73 At most, I noted one or two humorous instances per Mass, depending entirely on the priest. These almost always occurred during announcements or the sermon, each of which might feature one laughter-inducing statement at most—a restrained laughter that was vanished nearly as quickly as it erupted.

will be treated at greater length in Chapter 9). After that, in the final section of this chapter, I show how this ethos and the narrative practices of these groups are understood by Costa Ricans who are not participants, in order to more fully explain their place in the Costa Rican religious and cultural landscape.

6.2 Examples of the humorous ethos of peer groups and its relationship to group organization

Consider these following three uses of humor, taken from scenes in the three men's peer support groups I observed most closely, and the ways in which they are related to and reflect the organization of these groups and this model of social organization:

Each Wém meeting begins just as the popular image of AA groups would lead one to expect: with greetings that obey egalitarian principles, including first-name-only introductions, followed by the amount of time spent in the program. (Other information that may be used to distinguish participants, and which may threaten this egalitarianism, from one's last name to one's profession, is often treated as extraneous and even counterproductive to the group's purposes, although newcomers sometimes introduce themselves this way before learning these norms.)

Further initiatory rituals serve to delimit the group as a unique social space, to emphasize the peerhood of its participants, and to motivate participants to share in the group's jovial, expressive, and supportive ethos. Much like many AA groups' ritual of reciting the Twelve Steps and Traditions (or the Serenity Prayer[74]—though most AA groups do this to close meetings), the

74 Written as an ecumenical prayer by American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, the best-known version goes:

guidelines and rules of Wém are stated aloud, volunteered one at a time by anyone who offers, raises a hand, and is clearly acknowledged by any other member (a process of “seconding” that may be carried out by anyone, in theory, and which affirms the democratic and egalitarian operations of these groups).

Both the content of these rules and guidelines and their form (in which almost any member can voice them) underline the group's constitutional governance, egalitarianism, and lack of personal authority. One of these is, “We don't give advice here,” as Zaca mentioned in the last chapter. “We don't interrupt here” is another, placing emphasis on the autonomy of expression and the premium placed on supportiveness and equality in the group. “We speak for ourselves here: we always speak in the I and never in the You” is another clear statement of these principles. And so on.

Yet the first of these rules is always the same. A participant raises his hand, is acknowledged by another member, and says “What is said here...” to which the mass of men respond “...stays here!” The exercise, as with the role played by humor, acts to unite the members in act and in sentiment, similar to the boisterous spirit of AA greetings, wherein speakers introduce themselves, “Hi, I'm X, and I'm an alcoholic,” to a jovial, good-natured, often raucous, “Hi, X!” To add to this raucousness and to the alignment of affect produced by this ritual, the call-and-response of the first rule usually occur three times, louder and more affirmatively each time. Needless to say, the content of this ritual, and the special use it makes of collective participation to affirm the confidentiality and anonymity of what is said, is central to the functioning of any support group, AA merely being the best known example.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.

The ending of this ritual recital of the rules and guidelines is, just like the beginning, always the same—and almost always ends in laughter, matching the good humor of the ritual's opening act. A member will begin reciting the group's familiar definition of Wém: "Wḗm[75] is a Bribri [indigenous] word meaning the best of man: the best father, the best son, the best brother, the best co-worker, the best husband, and—why not?—the best *ex*-husband!"

The group always laughs heartily at this, despite the fact that many have heard it many times, but the point is serious: making amends in *all* one's relationships, even difficult ones, is as central to Twelve Step culture as to Christian practice (or more), as we saw in the story by Zaca in Chapter 5). Furthermore, "the best of man" (*lo mejor de un hombre*) is expressed almost entirely relationally, as opposed to an image of machista isolation and self-sufficiency (or any essentialist view of men-in-general). "The best of man" is not his individual achievements or the extent to which they are his alone, nor some private experience or sense of satisfaction or pleasure. Instead, the best of man is the joy of being in relationship with others, as a beloved family member, colleague, and so on. Even if life has estranged an ex-partner, men are their best when they excel even in that relationship, by being the best version of themselves that they can.

During one session of AA, I watched Quentin deliver a rather standard-bearing AA *testimonio*. It touched periodically on the course of his recovery and the difference between before and after the moment that his relationship with God and the group had begun, but it also managed to refract all of this, periodically, through the lens of the group's daily topic: in this case, the Ninth Tradition (which deals with AA's anti-hierarchical and acephalous organization). During the first half of the conversion narrative, Quentin recalled his darkest days, before

75 See footnote 6.

contrasting them with his present health:

> Before—you all know! I was worse off than [a recently joined member, whose alcoholism left him homeless for a time.]...
>
> And not just with drinking! I am by nature the weakest sort of person, emotionally. When things get rough, rather than face reality, I attack myself, isolate myself—with alcohol, but *also* with my thoughts: "Yes, yes, you *maricón*, *maricón* [pansy]! The whole world is against you!"
>
> I know: fear, insecurity—they can kill you! Some moments, I almost let them kill me. For almost eight years, [I was] like this... But after learning to rely on my group, I don't even want to drink anymore!

The group burst into applause upon hearing this message of redemption. Warmed, Quentin continued, intoning even more earnestly: "My group knows me! My group understands me!"

"Those sons of bitches, eh?" his friend Carlos interjected. At this, the group roared with laughter. Quentin, wiping his eye, chuckled and grinned ear-to-ear, nodding along with the joke. When he wrapped up a few minutes later, he did so, once more, to hearty applause.

"It's hard for men to cry!", Pastor Jaime told the men of Hombres Íntegros at the opening of their annual retreat. "[A man] may be watching TV or a movie with his wife, let's say [digamos], but if there is something sad [on], he says to her, 'No, I'm not crying! Men don't cry!'"

Pastor Jaime mimicked the embarrassed machista, angrily wiping away tears in denial, which drew a gale of laughter from the men present. With the humor having played its role, Jaime revealed his mastery of the genre, suddenly becoming serious while the men were momentarily disarmed:

"But why *not* cry in some moment? Why not?" The laughter died down softly as the men grew suddenly reflective, seeming to ask themselves the question in earnest. Jaime continued:

> Today, may we *all* open our hearts to God this way. May we break our hearts before God! If you feel the urge to cry, cry! May we all have hearts so disposed to

> God! *This* is the way, brothers, that we [can] become aware of/sensitive to [*sensible a*] our ministries—as husbands, as fathers, as sons—and conduct them according to the will of God, and not our own! Through *communion*, with one another—and with God.

In each of the three situations above, humor binds group members together with positive affect rather than serving to divide them. Except in rare moments when the norms and structure of the group break down, the men never laugh *at* each other or try to exult themselves implicitly over others (as they might in the calle). Instead, they laugh openly at themselves: a bunch of SOBs, ex-husbands who used to be bastards, ex-*machistas* who were once frustrated by their incapacity to relate to others. The groups welcome and indeed encourage men to laugh more freely than the demands for social support might otherwise suggest. Perhaps more importantly, they are supported in this general, humble view of themselves, as worthy of good-natured, supportive laughter, far more than they likely could have on their own.

In this kind of habitat, "good" humor is ethically liberating, real best-medicine stuff, and the appreciation and enactment of humor is itself appreciated as an ethical practice that transforms not only men's ideas about their own identity but their ideas about what must be sacrificed in foregoing the life of the calle. In contrast to many stereotypes of religiosity that are popular among men, which portray the religious path as a humorless one, men find in peer groups a joyous, happy, laughter-filled spirituality, an ethically positive humor in contrast to the destructive, "bad humor" of la calle. In fact, the mocking humor of the calle still rings in many of their ears even after they have left the calle, as the *machista* voices in the heads of Zaca and Quentin attest, so the kind of gentle teasing Quentin underwent from his friend would be unlikely to be used with a newer, potentially more sensitive member.

In the peer groups I observed, the men largely laughed at their own machismo. Laughing

at their machismo helped them to develop a more humble approach to their own gender identity and also allowed themselves to identify with one another by sharing this experience and “letting their guard down” to the specter of machismo as a constant threat. During meetings, Gutmann's (1996:227) observation, mentioned in Chapter 5, about how machismo is often used by younger generations as “a joke” that restores men's consciousness and agency to them, seemed to ring true.

The laughter also allowed for the members to mutually identify with one another. One of the group's primary functions, as I have mentioned, is to provide an alternative to machista social networks and a sort of social support in distancing oneself and one's identity from those old networks. Laughter and the reformation of humor seems to help these groups replace the attractions of the calle, or of earlier, non-spiritual peer networks associated with the calle. In part this is probably because humor is an important part of the calle and its social networks, and in part it may be because it generates mutual pleasure and positive associations all around, especially in contrast with the darker emotions frequently shared in the group. The humorous ethos of peer groups thus helps the participants develop affectively expressive relationships with one another.

Lastly, the laughter in these groups facilitate the main practices of the group. Partly, this seems to be because laughter implies comedy's attention to timing and to shared attention, requiring a certain synchronicity of that attention. This attention to the listener, and laughter as the confirmation of that attention, communicates to the speakers, to other listeners, and to newcomers that listeners are truly listening and models an identification with the narrator. Certainly listening is “performed” and “practiced,” but (maybe more significantly) listening is also *perceived* or *felt*, as a necessary part of the groups' ethos, rather than one of its (discursive)

rules or (practical) exercises.

Listening is also deeply transformative for participants in these groups, perhaps more transformative than speaking itself (at least in the immediate term). Of those interviewees who mentioned specific highlights from their initial visits to the groups, they recounted listening as a more impactful and formative experience in their conversion than the actual experience of sharing their own stories. In part this may be because the genre of the narrative can be challenging to replicate, despite its seeming simplicity, and the retrospective distance that the genre implies can take time to develop. However, those who described the importance of listening often cited the common knowledge, expressed by Zaca in his interview, that the experiences of others serve as a mirror, and that it is often easier to see one's problems when they are shared and reflected by others than it is to clearly see oneself.

A good sense of humor (or a sense of "good" humor) is both one of the inputs into this process of character formation (from those who have already cultivated it) and one of the outcomes of the process: a character, developed through a habit, learned from a particular habitat, in which it can be safely practiced and modeled. Humor is enjoyable, but it is hardly an end in itself, as Pastor Jaime seemed to demonstrate with the way he used it to drive home a serious point in his brief sermon. Humor seems to keep the participants affectively united and synchronized, which in turn opens the emotional field for the expression of other, even tearful emotions, like sorrow, joy, and love.[76] Humor, it seemed, was one of the key elements that helped

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I have not been able fortunate enough to treat here the role of love, or of the various forms of love, which is naturally suggested by the oblique references to *Nicomachaen Ethics* and Aristotle's discussion of virtuous friends, in which "friendship" and "brotherly love" are both translations of *philia* (cf *philos*, friend), distinct from the expansive, purposive, kin-like *agape* expanded upon by later Christians, who later translated it "charity" (L. *caritas*). These 'types' of love are not sharply distinguished in these groups, for reasons that do not bear exploring here.

these groups cohere and coalesce as “protective social capsules” (Martin 1990:284), enveloping them in a sense of support while simultaneously pushing and expanding that protective envelope to make room for these other sentiments. During my research, I spent a lot of time focusing on these other emotional states; joy (*gozo*), for instance, seems to pop up in discussions about particularly valued evangelical services. However, repeated experience with humor in both evangelical and support group settings persuaded me that the emotions associated with humor seem to provide the sharpest distinction between the ethos of religion and the ethos of spirituality.

My attention to how these peer groups are *organized* has guided this research as a whole. Only through first following male evangelicals from church services to men's groups and support groups of various kinds did it first become apparent to me how the problem of male conversion and the reformation of machismo were being solved in these groups. Other researchers interested in gradualist understandings of ethical formation and transformation, including those studying Protestants engaged in projects of “sanctification” (or “holiness”), have also found themselves guided to these groups by their interlocutors, and have likewise found such non-church formations to be productive sites for understanding these efforts (e.g., Bielo 2009, O'Neill 2010).

What I discovered about the organization of these groups as its importance upon visiting them was similar to what Wuthnow reported of late twentieth century North America, about how extensive the “contribution” of AA and Twelve Step groups had been to the wholesale restructuring of the discourses, practices, emotions, and organization of religion and spirituality in the region:

> Of the various kinds of organization [support groups] are the most democratic, the least dependent on formal organization, and the most capable of functioning without strong leaders.
>
> For these reasons they have influenced... the small-group movement very

> widely and... are being emulated even by leaders of Sunday School classes and Bible study groups (Wuthnow 1994a:150, cf. Mercadante 2014:176,174).

This "emulation" of AA's organizational style and its egalitarian ethos in American social life, which holds for many therapeutic and non-religious groups as well (Mercadante 2014:176,174), should perhaps be unsurprising in Latin America, given that Twelve Step-style support groups are more popular in many parts of that region than they are even in North America, with AA groups, as I mentioned, having triple the proportional membership in Latin America that they enjoyed in North America over a decade before the present century had arrived (Vaillant 1995:268).

These groups are organized in ways that psychological and sociological theories of social networks and social support might expect, and anthropological theories might expect, if they were scanning the social horizon for groups designed to transform their participants' attitudes, behaviors, cognition, and sense of identity. New self-understandings or identities, with which individuals have little experience identifying, are at first fragile, volatile, and insecure, and they tend only to become more stable and secure through ongoing identification with others in the group and eventually the practice of these identities outside the group (cf. e.g. Holland et al.1998:66-97). Accordingly, the organization and rules of peer groups express the principles of non-exploitation and non-confrontation to newcomers—principles that are especially soothing to the wounded pride of any newcomers.[77] The groups are acephalous, so models of masculinity that might be wary of any possibility of having to submit to hierarchical control are not alarmed.

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77 See Bateson's (2000[1971]:326-332) description of AA as defusing "alcoholic 'pride'," which "progressively narrows the... 'self'" until the self contains only the "conscious will," reduced to "an obsessive acceptance of a challenge" (328, 319, 327); Omar's fatal swim with crocodiles and Zaca's near-fatal attack on his family being two possible examples. Bateson argues that many men's addictions, compulsions, and obsessions cannot be understood without grasping this experience of the challenge to their willpower, an internalized "logic of challenge and riposte" that structured early Mediterraneanist depictions of masculinity (e.g., Bourdieu 1966).

In fact, the degree of equality or identity/sameness between individuals is usually the basis for such groups (not only gender segregation, in Latin America, but of course segregation according to problems like alcoholism, or whatever is the shared identity or peerhood around which the support group is organized). In a single meeting, a newcomer can see that the groups are governed constitutionally and collectively, and that the meetings operate to cultivate an egalitarian and supportive ethos among members, with numerous leveling practices (both formal and informal) at work to iterate and substantiate the formal equality of participants, especially those that begin and end the meetings.

These ritual practices structure the meeting itself, which in turn helps organize the group. Closing practices reiterate the group's egalitarian structure,[78] often including collective prayers like the Serenity Prayer (see footnote 75), as well as mutual applause and group hugs, which are among the most powerful of the leveling mechanisms that structure the group. Humor might be understood as also serving this organizational function throughout the meeting. Carlos's gentle, self-mocking "heckling" of Quentin represents the far end of what humor may be had at someone's expense, and it was only encouraged or tolerated when it was couched in warm affect toward a friend. More importantly, on an organizational level, such joking was only ever directed toward *advanced* participants. As such, it might be "read" as "patting down" the most practiced speakers for any pride they may have smuggled in as they demonstrate their mastery of the genre.

Attention to peer group organization explains not only why peer groups are so *easily*

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78 Group prayers often begin and end meetings of Hombres Íntegros, in which each person participates individually, while standing in a circle (non-apical by definition). Likewise, the ending prayer also ends with communal chanting of the Lord's Prayer. In AA, this is the Serenity Prayer, which is incanted collectively in Un Milagro en San Martín.

adapted to a variety of purposes, but why they are so *frequently* adapted with great success. After all, these groups require little to no money to found, only a charitable space to meet in. These "low barriers to entry" for organizations of this type appear to have facilitated their spread, just as in the case of the evangelical movement (Mäkelä *et al*. 1996:3,85-95, Robbins 2004b).

In sum, much of my analysis of peer support groups and their widespread reproduction rests on a hypothesis supported by other disciplines' investigations of such group. This hypothesis is that the successful adoption of peer support groups in a variety of settings may be attributed as much to the organization of such groups and to the way such an organization feels, its ethos, as to the groups' practices and discourses. The ritual creation of the group's egalitarian, acephalous organization is crucial not only to the spread of peer support groups themselves, but to the spread of their influence across Latin America. As such, only an anthropological account that pays as close attention to social organization and ethos as to discourses and practices can fully appreciate how they transform men's identities and produce new models of gender, spirituality, personal identity and interpersonal relationships.

To examine the impact of peer support groups on popular culture as well as on people's lives and on men's gender identity, I will delve in the following two chapters into the deep history of how these organizations, like evangelicalism and pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, arose from the Methodist movement, preserving a great deal of the organizational principles that social historians have identified in the Methodist model. First, I will deal with some local views of such groups in San Carlos that show how it is viewed by non-participants.

6.3 Local perspectives on the ethos and discursive practices of peer groups

In the period during which the membership of the support group movement in Latin

America has outpaced its North American membership, a variety of local views of the movement have developed. In this section, I want to focus on how these groups are perceived by locals, largely omitting the material that shows how these sensibilities are shared by many North Americans and Europeans as well, where these groups have also grown considerably. Suffice it to say here (as a preface to the local material I present below) that popular opinions of these groups, as reflected in depictions from mass media and entertainment, have only recently improved in their complexity, their accuracy, or their sympathy. What will be worth noting as I cover the local material is that when these groups are viewed with suspicion and with a lack of sympathy, the reasons are similar across many regions: a fear of the religiosity of these groups, and of the way in which this "spirituality" overflows the boundaries normally separating religious and secular life, or religion and science. For instance, before the broadly sympathetic views of support groups one sees in contemporary US television shows, ranging from the brightly hued, bubblegum feel of *The New Girl* (Season 7, Episode 2) to the emotional weightiness of *Transparent* (Seasons 3-4), depictions of these groups highlighted popular fears that the overflowing religiosity of these groups could be dangerous: irreverent comedies like South Park portrayed Stan's father getting swept away with AA as he tends to with many things, somehow treating his alcoholism as if it were simultaneously a medical affliction requiring a wheelchair and a spiritual affliction requiring a miracle [Season 9, Episode 14] [2005]); while in wide-ranging dramas like *The Wire*, even a positive depiction of Narcotics Anonymous, which eventually frees the character Bubs from a life of drug addiction and loneliness, is shown sending him into a deep, spiraling relapse when he first encounters the spiritual power of these groups (Seasons 2-5) (Simon 2002-2008). More importantly, the fear of the religiosity of these groups appears to have a certain, persistent class bias, as George Vaillant (2012:308-314, cf. 298) also

found in his longitudinal study of the lives of men across different demographic groups, with college-educated men having a number of biases against the intimate practices and spirituality of these groups. This class bias can be casually observed in news media that caters to this demographic in the US: positive coverage of a very dubious book on the “unscientific” nature of AA (Dodes and Dodes 2014), from both NPR's *All Things Considered* (2014) and later *The Atlantic* (Glaser 2015:50-60), led to an outcry from scientific experts in a number of relevant fields, including psychiatrists and researchers at Harvard Medical School (Kelly and Beresin 2014) and at Georgetown (see DuPont 2014), major practitioners-policy makers in the field of drug treatment (ibid.), and fellow psychoanalysts (Roth and Khantzian 2015, but see Roth 2011, Dodes 2013), who expressed astonishment at all the evidence the book (and the media coverage of it) ignored. Despite the fears of the “the irrationality of Alcoholics Anonymous” (as *The Atlantic* put it) by those who unthinkingly associate religiosity with irrationality, “the field [of psychiatry and mental health] has moved beyond asking *whether* AA and 12-step treatment works, to investigating *how* and *why* they work” (Kelly and Beresin 2014).

Here I want to focus on an example of the way this fear of (or discomfort with) the uncontained spirituality of support groups, familiar to many North Americans, is shared by college-educated Costa Ricans, and is presumed to be antithetical to machista masculinity as well. I will also use a number as well as the extent to which this fear or discomfort with the spirituality of these groups appears to be mitigated by or absent in those with positive interactions with or attitudes towards religion and spirituality.

The local commentary on these groups also tends to focus on their affective quality rather than on their explicit discourse of spirituality. Stereotypes of these groups appear to mirror stereotypical ideas about (liturgical) religion, on the one hand, and the fanaticismo (fanaticism)

of evangelical religion on the other: sometimes these groups are depicted as strangely sedate and positively boring to the outside view, while in other depictions they are understood to excite the participant to an unhealthy, even fanatical degree. The commentary I tended to hear in San Carlos and throughout Costa Rica on the organization of these groups tended to echo these concerns. What did it mean to have a leaderless group, and what kinds of dangerous collectivism or disavowal of personal responsibility might emerge?[79] This perception is at once similar to and different from negative perceptions about evangelical groups, whose apparent lack of structure and improper religiosity leaves them vulnerable, in the eyes of some, to the loss of individual autonomy or to authoritarian processes.

Despite these prejudices, apparent in at least one of the ethnographic examples I use here, these bystanders and over-hearers perceived accurately, in the view of most psychologists and psychiatrists, that there *was* power in these groups to alter the individual consciousness, personality, or behavioral patterns. In this chapter, I began to analyze the extent to which these groups exercise power in ways that are alternatively *collective* (requiring group decision making) and *constitutional* (requiring the enforcement of decisions that were understood to be non-negotiable and fundamental to the group as such).

Thus, the two most common criticisms I heard about these groups when I discussed my

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The aforementioned South Park episode (Season 9, Episode 14) emphasizes both contradictory views. When Stan arrives at AA to rescue his father, the scene appears as painfully boring. “I've been sober now for five years,” one participant says, “and I've learned that drinking iced tea and getting more involved with my relationship with God is way more fun than partying!” A typical round of affirmative, evangelical-style responses to the testimonial is portrayed as pathetic: one seated, rotund, defeated-looking man looks forlornly at the floor and (as the viewer is made to understand) lies to himself aloud: “It sure is.” The sharer concludes, “Once I accepted that I was powerless to control my drinking and my life, I put it in God's hands. Now these meetings are the most fun thing I do!” When Stan interjects, it reveals how this apparent sedation and leaderlessness is linked to fears about psychological suggestion and influence. “Ah, excuse me, who's in charge here?” Stan asks the AA group. “None of us are in charge. We're all powerless.” Confronting what the group as a whole, Stan admonishes them to be more careful when wielding this kind of psychological influence: “You can't just go around saying stuff like that [i.e., about alcoholism being a disease and a religious problem] to people like my dad. He's kind of a hypochondriac.”

research, both in Costa Rica and in the U.S., were about these groups' apparent affective and organizational qualities. These criticisms seem to point to an understanding that addiction is a medical or "mental health" problem rather than a religious or spiritual problem, in which intervention by credentialed health experts was therefore presumed necessary. Moreover, there were in these criticisms a more general criticism of the *kind* of religiosity (or "enthusiasm" or "fanaticism") in these groups, a criticism also leveled at evangelicals in Costa Rica. The groups were seen not only as excessively religious, but as wrongly religious, wrongly spiritual.

These criticisms, as I will show, contain a kernel of truth, traced by Wuthnow (1998) in his study of the spirituality discourse that grew out of the support group movement and was colonizing American notions about religion. The spirituality discourse of these groups does challenge the bifurcation of the world into religion and secularism, as Ann Taves and Courtney Bender have described:

> [W]e cannot help but notice that the studies of secularism and its related religious formations are frequently phrased in terms of a "secular-religious binary"...Yet this [approach], as we have noted, has limits once we consider the relationship of spirituality (and spirits or "the spiritual") to the binary...
>
> [A] closer look at the ways that people actually refer to spirits belies this easy distinction. Indeed, we observed that spirituality and spirits are often invoked as an aspect of secularity or are aligned with it. Insofar as people use these terms to describe experiences and denote positions and aspirations that are "more than" or "move beyond" either secularity or religion, it complicates a straightforward religious-secular binary.... (Taves and Bender 2012:5,6,9).

In my discussions with many Costa Ricans, it was the way in which evangelicals and support groupers ignored this division of the world into religious and secular spheres that seemed most troubling (cf. Brusco 1995:20]). For instance, I recall describing my project to one of my more cosmopolitan Costa Rican acquaintances, a well-traveled young man in the capitol whom I'll call Tristán. Because of my perception of him, I tried at first to describe my research in a style that academics sometimes affect in the presence of other academics or others whose privileges

might let them consider the pursuit of highly abstract or non-monetizable-seeming sort of research perfectly normal in their circles, if admittedly a little self-indulgent. I explained how the project sought to explain important social phenomena, but I also tried to make light of its odd topic and the tedious-sounding nature of conducting such research: the hours I spent in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and group therapy sessions and Christian men's support groups, listening to men divulge their most hidden moments as well as their most mundane struggles. It was a funny thing to spend one's time doing, wasn't it?

Tristán reacted visibly, shuddering, his lip curling in a grimace of disgust. I laughed a little, and he joined in with a kind of easygoing, emotionally-responsive social grace.

“Yea...” I conceded, trying to acknowledge his reaction as understandable.

“I could *never* do that,” Tristán said.

Whether he meant that he could never sit through the meetings or whether he meant that he could never behave as the people in those groups did, who could blame him? (I suspect he meant the latter, but I never asked.)

I could not help but agree with by Tristán, or with the findings of George Vaillant (2012) that most people, especially people who have adopted a certain restraint as part of their identity, could not easily do what people do in support groups. It is not an easy thing for new members to do, regardless of how much they may want to (e.g. see Cain in in Holland et al. 1998:66-97). Even pastors and priests, with decades of experience and practice in pastoral and religious ministry find themselves floored by the level of raw honesty and confession they experience in these groups. This was the experience of Richard Rohr, now a Franciscan priest and author for almost half a century, who has spent three decades working with support groups and encourages his readers to consider whether “the [contemporary] notion of addiction might not be one very

helpful metaphor for what the biblical tradition calls 'sin'", whether it is not truer to the kinds of healing required to become well and to the way that God's love, mercy, and forgiveness (and accountability) often greet us in humble, human forms (2011:xxii-xxiii, xxv, 43-47). Comparably, many psychologists have admitted their humility in the face of these groups, and the extent to which those who actually share a problem can provide a level of support and encouragement for one another that therapists often cannot (leading many therapists to try to facilitate their patients' participation in such groups: e.g., Walitzer et al. 2009:391-392, Humphreys 1999).

"These men," Tristán asked, "are from *San Carlos*?" Tristán had spent a considerable amount of time in the town of San Carlos, mostly visiting a mutual friend who had been living there for a number of years for a job she had taken. Beyond this, though, it was commonplace to hear Costa Ricans from the GAM hint at San Carlos's reputation as a ranching area, associated with rurality and machismo. I assumed that he was surprised to find the purportedly *machista* men of that area willing to discuss these things.

Then a look of having discovered a possible solution flickered across his face. "Well," he started again, "are these also your evangelicals?"

Here is the association I have mentioned above, and in much of the dissertation, in which both evangelicals and support groups are seen as strangely enthusiastic and unsettlingly willing to divulge personal information and display deep vulnerability and emotion in talking about their own lives, especially by educated Costa Ricans that might have been thought of as "cultural Catholics." Tristán seemed to be reasoning that evangelicals would be used to this sort of thing. Perhaps the AA groups were mostly populated by evangelicals; perhaps this explained why these Costa Rican men, from San Carlos no less, were willing to engage in this kind of activity.

I told Tristán that, well, no, most of the men in Wém and AA were not evangelical. However, I told him, I saw exactly his point. My own research, I told him, was actually being driven by an interest in the extent to which support group culture was related to evangelical culture. Certainly they were historically related.

The ethnographic examples I will introduce here briefly, including discussions with a Catholic priest and an evangelical co-pastor, demonstrate how those within religious institutions often take the approach taken by Richard Rohr when evaluating support group culture, seeing such groups as complementary to religious institutions and their aims. Putting aside the resonances between evangelical and support group culture, this complementarity may be at the heart of how support group culture has surfed the wave of religious deregulation and diversification in Latin America.

For my own part, I discovered the convergence and mutually affirmative relationship between support group culture and churches quite unexpectedly: in early interviews with a Catholic priest and an evangelical co-pastor whom I came to know quite well in my years studying with his church. During 2008—over four years since my first two visits to San Carlos as an undergraduate, comparing the political characteristics of active evangelicals, Adventists, and Roman Catholics—I interviewed for the first time the local priest who had allowed me to hand out questionnaires in the Catholic church after a Mass in 2004. The priest, Father Juan Miguel, was telling me about all the groups and activities that the parish offered the Catholic laity in San Carlos, enumerating and describing the charismatic Catholics, the Christian Family Movement (MFC) (to which Isaac and several other interviewees belonged), the base communities active in the area, the spiritual retreats organized by different orders of the church, the many devotional groups that had sprung up around the area (especially among women), the

charitable activities to which different groups of individuals and organizations contributed alongside the Catholic Church, and so on.

Exploring the outer limits of this, I followed an informal strategy quite similar to what I practiced above with Don Javier (in Chapter 2): seeing how far the elaboration could be pushed. I expressed marvel at all the things the Church managed to do in the area, despite what he had mentioned in his earlier comments about the problems with staffing and the extent to which pastoral resources were often stretched thin.

“Yes,” Father Juan Miguel said, before going on to clarify that, of course, “the Church cannot do everything in a small community like San Carlos.” “Sometimes, for example, I refer men with serious problems to Alcoholics Anonymous, or to *La Fraternidad...*” La Fraternidad, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, refers for many in San Carlos to a large chapter of a transdenominational men's fellowship with neo-pentecostal roots. At the time, I was still unfamiliar enough with the literature on parachurch organizations and support groups' relationships to church organizations to brush past the comment, not being aware of the group's neo-pentecostal roots (and only having heard about it from other Catholics). At the time, I knew that many churches allowed groups like AA to meet in them, and that many pastors might feel that it was their duty to refer members with specific, medically- and/or psychologically-related issues to outside help.

Nor had I begun studying with these groups and interviewing participants in La Fraternidad. As I did, I found that many Catholics commented on the symbiotic relationship between institutional Catholicism and such men's groups. Nestor, an active Catholic with whom I conducted a life history interview, explained that the pentecostal-originating group was of great use to Catholic churches in Costa Rica: “This is the goal of La Fraternidad: to encourage men to

find a church, but not to tell them which one."

Likewise, one of my evangelical interviewees, Ysidro, who belonged both to La Fraternidad and to Hombres Íntegros, said that, since attending La Fraternidad:

> I see church differently now... I have better relationships with the pastor, with other members...
>
> There are some people [in San Carlos] who are afraid of La Fraternidad because they see it as a 'competition,' eh? But in reality, it's not like that. The plan is to rescue men who [previously] don't believe in God for nothing [i.e., in a way that matters]—and it places them in the strong arms of a church. This is the sincere goal of La Fraternidad: that all the men that participate in it work hard in their respective churches.

Many pastors and priests were afraid of the group, Ysidro said, but one of the reasons he was attracted to Pastor Jaime's church (Dios es Fiel) was that he understood the value of the group.

In fact, this is the rarely acknowledged fact about the religious arena in Latin America, which many studies of religious "competition" and "markets" seem to ignore: although there are obviously limits on the number of groups in which people can participate, not all religious or spiritual organizations are exclusive competitors with all other such organizations, and many of them actually direct members back and forth between complementary organizations. The strategy of most support groups and "parachurch" organizations in Latin America has become to tame the sectarianism sometimes reported between Catholics and evangelicals, instead favoring a more ecumenical focus on developing shared spiritual practices like the "sharing" testimonial (cf. Bartkowski 2004 on the Promise Keepers in North America).

During the same visit in 2008 (but I interviewed Padre Juan Miguel for the first time), I had been invited for the first time to attend Hombres Íntegros by its organizer, Jaime, then-pastor of the pentecostal(ized) church, Maranatha, who would soon go on to found the evangelical church Dios es Fiel/God is Faithful.

I was surprised to find, on my first visit, that the men who attended Hombres Íntegros

were encouraged to participate in a hybrid testimonial-confessional genre that reminded me more of support groups like AA than of the more triumphant, evangelistic-sounding testimonials I sometimes heard at evangelical churches. I was interested in a number of seeming similarities between how Hombres Íntegros was operating, and its apparent similarities to portrayals of AA groups: although they spent some time going through "the book" together, focusing especially upon short, ethically-minded passages (especially from the Psalms and the Epistles), the men began to re-examine their lives and to offer each other support in their struggles to overcome temptations and reshape their own characters—something I had read about in Mexico City (Brandes 2002), but about which the anthropology of Christianity was soon to begin describing (e.g., Bielo 2009, and O'Neill 2010:60-86).

After I attended a couple meetings at Hombres Íntegros, I mentioned to Don Caché (who would soon be Jaime's co-pastor at Dios es Fiel) that I had been struck during the first meeting by the apparent similarities between this group and support groups like AA.[80] Caché agreed and even encouraged me, if I was interested, to drop by the AA group in Barrio San Martín and to say hello, for he knew the men there well and thought that some of them might be interested in my research. Caché, it turned out, was actually quite familiar with the program, once having been a heavy drinker and being close friends with several recovered alcoholics, although he himself had quit drinking quite apart from AA, much as had nine of the other men I interviewed (including Hector, Zenon, Teodoro, Oscar, Ysidro, Nestor, Jonas, Victor, and Pastor Jaime himself—all but

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Please see my acknowledgments. The late Caché was one of the men to whom I felt closest at, and his recent passing has been deeply felt by many if not all members of the church. Interestingly, Don Caché was a bit older than Jaim, and until Don Pablo and he began to attend a number of pastoral classes together, also lacked much formal theological training. Jaime explained to me once that Caché was, as he himself had been, a man who had been "lost to The World," before "coming to Christ." Don Caché was "a man of good testimony," Jaime told me, and this was Jaime's primary standard for discerning the quality of an individual's faith, much in the evangelical tradition—and much as within the support group tradition.

one of whom later joined either AA or another men's group for the spiritual benefits and continuous project of "recovery").[81]

There were some obvious parallels between AA and evangelical men's groups, which are often noted even by Latin Americans who belong to neither (e.g., Brandes 2002:113): both AA and evangelicals appeal to quit drinking, despite its attractions, making arguments about how destructive it is to the family. Yet Caché did not mention any of this. Instead, he cut directly to a much more straightforward evangelical logic. Caché explained that, despite the ambiguity (or non-particularity) of AA on specific Christian doctrines, he was persuaded that it was spiritually "healthy" (*sana*) based on the *testimonios* of its members. The men of AA are "men of good testimony" (*hombres de buen testimonio*), he said. This was striking language, because within the evangelical church, many spoke of Caché's own *buen testimonio*, which was often cited by Jaime as his primary reason for choosing Caché for his co-pastor. "Good testimony" was proof of saving faith. Caché went on to say that he respected AA and recommended it to others, not only because he saw it as capable of bringing so many to repentance and to (an initial) conversion (i.e., to *salvation*, in the pattern that evangelicals usually recognize) but more importantly because he saw that these men had the "testimony" of an authentic Christian faith because of their subsequent *sanctification* (evidence that the salvation was genuine, as I discuss in the following chapter). According to Caché, many alcoholics went to AA, began a relationship with God, and then found a church—in that order, according to his experience. Caché was accurately describing a sense in which the "conversion narrative," or "testimonio," is frequently understood

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81 This is a story I often heard from members in AA, including one member in particular, Nieves, whom others considered to be one of the *ancianos*, or elders, of the group. Although Nieves had earned a special respect for his command of AA's principles and of The Big Book (or "El Libro Azul," The Blue Book), he had joined AA some 7 years after already having quit drinking.

to contain both the story of an initial conversion, and the narrativization of their subsequent lives as a story of ongoing sanctification. Furthermore, regular "sharing" of their testimonial was understood to be a practice of "continuous conversion" (Coleman 2003), a means of helping make subsequent decisions by aligning them with initial turn toward God and the promise of sanctification and further conversion (Lindhardt 2009, cf. Cain on AA in Holland *et al* 1998).

This brings me to one of the central arguments of this dissertation, which will be important to keep in mind for the rest of Part II: that support group culture and evangelical culture have managed to exalt the conversion narrative[82] to a *genre*[83] and to a basic narrative *plot structure*. The familiarity of the genre and plot structure of the narrative allows individuals to describe the ongoing events of one's life and to reshape their identities, their relationships with others, and their decisions about the future by framing struggles in terms of a momentous experience of turning to God. Thus, in San Carlos and elsewhere, the genre or plot structure of "conversion" is used by support group and evangelical culture *not only* to describe what support group culture calls "hitting bottom" or a "Damascan Road moment," but *also* to narrate an individual's daily ethical and spiritual struggles as an ethical practice, to appraise and reappraise one's motivations and decisions by turning one's attention regularly toward God and towards

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I could have prioritized the concept of *confession* over the concept of *conversion*, since both are crucial to the genre of "sharing." However, I have not done so, partly because the metaphor of conversion (of "turning toward" God) was the dominant narrative element that I could identify during my research into narrative as a form of ethical cultivation, and partly because the distinction traditionally drawn between confession and profession in certain strains of Christian theology might have made the focus on confession deceptive or misleading (since conversion narratives are, in their Calvinist origins, professions of faith rather than confessions, according to this distinction). (This distinction will become clear in the following chapter.) At present, confession has come to be used both to describe creedal affirmations of the faith as well as to describe priestly, fraternal, and "direct" confessions of sin (i.e., to God). Both senses of the word figure in the "sharing" genre and into conversion narratives as I studied them. Still, it is the conversion/turning to God that is highlighted in these narratives. This turning to God is often used as a way of framing questions and declarations about the will of the individual and the will of God, both of which are foregrounded in the Calvinist-Armenian dialectic on these matters that support group culture embodies, and which I will mention below.

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On genre in church/congregation studies, see Hopewell 1988, Walton 2012.

spiritual standards.

Of course, the place of conversion in Christianity has long been understood as fundamental and multifaceted, and the V-shaped conversion story of Saint Paul has long served as a popular model. (There may also be narrative demands and questions of comedic genre structures and hero narratives I am not qualified to analyze and do not treat here.)

In the two chapters that follow, I will argue that, in the historical transformation of the conversion narrative among evangelicals and support groupers into a genre through which one lives an authentic, spiritual life, a number of developments have been and continue to be important: the way revival movements reshaped earlier understandings of conversion; three long-term religious "turns" in western Christianity (towards sanctification, experience, and voluntary organization among the laity); widespread ecumenical (or at least transdenominational) theological discussions on and disputations of different orthodoxies (especially on salvation, justification, and sanctification); and institutional and organizational factors (including, but hardly limited to, relationships between the State and other institutions, including religious institutions).

Among these, I ask the reader to remain especially alert to the importance of the concept of *sanctification*, which I have introduced here but will treat historically in Chapters 7 and 8, and to the role of sanctification in motivating what David Martin calls "the Methodist model." In its inception, I will show, this model of social organization was motivated by theological and practical concerns over how to organize the laity into voluntary organizations so that they could progress in their sanctification through ethical exercises (or "methods"—hence "Methodism"). In Western Christian history, sanctification has been translated into a number of lexical analogues, such as "holiness" and "piety" (cf. hesychasm and theosis in Orthodoxy). Most Protestant,

Catholic, and Orthodox traditions have argued that sanctification, or holiness *of some kind* should follow from salvation or justification (cf. theosis), however that sanctification or holiness may be differently conceived (e.g.., whether as largely ethical or largely mystical, or whatever role the human will is considered to play).[84] Some recent scholars in the anthropology of Christianity, including especially Kevin O'Neill (2010), have paid close attention to processes of sanctification. There is some widespread, general agreement among Christians that, in the saved or justified person, sanctification or holiness can be interpreted as a process of development, in which some virtues are increased, although beyond this level of agreement there are widespread and sometimes fundamental disagreements as to the mechanics and kind of grace and/or Holy Spirit that is at work in this sanctification (with theories of grace and sanctification among Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox theologies placing different stresses on the believer and differing widely in their theologies according to the differential influences of Augustine, Denys/Pseudo-Dionysus, Aquinas, Gregory of Palamas, Luther, Calvin, etc., with renewed ecumenical dialogue over these issues being only a few decades old: cf. McPartland 2005, see e.g. Hallonsten 2013). Many, probably most traditions place some emphasis on what Roman Catholics call the three "theological virtues" of faith, hope, and love (1 Cor 13:13), as well as a number of other "fruits of the spirit" (Gal 5:22f), many of which are taken to have rather prosaic-seeming markers in dress, comportment, and speech. Nonetheless, even in support groups and evangelical churches where these kinds of markers have a special importance (cf. Robbins

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84 Even this generous depiction is oversimplified, though, since some Calvinists and those evangelicals who hew to a Calvinist line emphasizing God's power and election have downplayed the importance of sanctification as a marker of election. It is, for instance, well known among historically minded Calvinists that Pierre Bayle (in his 1697 entry in the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*) held up God's persistent love for David as exemplifying God's unconditional, personal election (for kings, at least). This interpretation may be compared with similar Calvinist readings of Romans 9 on Jacob and Esau. (However, see also Abasciano 1993, who points out that many have begun to take exception taken to this reading of Romans 9 as if it pertained primarily to individual, personal unconditional election, rather than "corporate election," among contemporary evangelical scholars.)

2004b, Lindhardt 2011a), most traditions recognize these three virtues as preeminent. Support group culture seems to share this view, and its minimalist theology of a relationship between humans and a God of love, forgiveness, and redemption (in the Second Tradition) fits comfortably with most of my interviewees' religious faith, and would be recognizable in such commonly cited exhortations in churches of all kinds in San Carlos: that "in Jesus Christ... the only thing that counts is faith working through love" (Gal 5:6), that "faith without works is dead" and "barren" (Jas 2:26, 20), [85] and that "everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

This is what Don Caché saw in AA: the men there could be said to "give good testimony," *not simply* because AA claimed to save people, for both he and his co-pastor seemed to be more critical of this claim from evangelicals. Instead, Caché found these claims credible because their conversions "bore fruit" in the lives of AA participants whom Caché knew, in terms of their growing sanctification.

In what follows, I trace how the support group culture came into existence, with its particular historical constellation of discourse, practice, social organization, and ethos. I argue that this constellation is spreading across Latin America alongside its cousin, the evangelical movement, for reasons similar to those which have caused the evangelical movement to flourish. Along the way, I will point out why this hybrid (and hybridizing) cultural form might have had a special appeal to men for whom previous or hierarchical religious and therapeutic forms were unattractive or unavailable for different reasons.

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Again, this counts as a major oversimplification. Luther did famously relegated James to the *Antilegomena* in his Bible, in part because of these passages. Still, almost no one doubt the authenticity or authority of First Corinthians or Galatians (which is not to imply that Pauline authorship *per se* was ever one of the three main standards of canonization for the major Christian traditions).

Chapter 7: The development of the "Methodist model"

Before I move on to some ethnographic examples of what the evangelical and support group movements in San Carlos share in the way of their practices, ethos, discourses, and forms of social organization, I will trace in this chapter and in Chapter 8 the shared histories of the two movements, focusing especially on the small group forms that continue to shape religious and therapeutic culture in Latin America. In this chapter, I will deal with the development of "the Methodist model" in the eighteenth century, focusing on how the model of organization thrived by drawing together three major historical turns, or struggles, in Western Christian religious life: the turns towards laicization, towards experience, and towards sanctification. Although this chapter will require a good deal of historical and theological background (including some footnotes that readers may omit without losing the main thread), tracing this history will allow the reader to appreciate, in Chapter 9, how the Methodist model was further reorganized into a number of forms and movements after the heyday of Methodism. By the end of Chapter 9, it should be clear how the Methodist model came to influence not only support groups, but the evangelical and pentecostal-charismatic movements, and other Christian groups and ministries as well.

To this end, I will focus in particular on the development of "the Methodist model" (Martin 1990),[86] and its important so in a massive and well-known body of social history on the

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86 "The key problem areas from the theoretical viewpoint are the issues raised by Halévy about the advent and impact of Methodism… So far as Methodism is concerned, my focus is on… the emergence of a voluntary form of faith in England (and Wales), and its full realization in the United States was part of the erosion of organic unities at the level of the locality and at the level of the state. *What was the social role of Protestant networks for mutual support and the effect of new notions of self…* once those unities broke up? These crucial questions are now transferred from the Humber to the other side of the Rio Grande" (Martin 1990:3, emphasis mine).

effects of the Methodist movement.[87] In his now-classic work on the spread of Latin American evangelical and pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, Martin summarizes this work, describing the "Methodist model" as "the emergence of a voluntary form of faith"—especially in the form of voluntary "*networks for mutual support*" (1990:3, cf. Lawrence 2011). Creating this egalitarian, horizontal style of lay group was a fundamental goal of the Methodist movement, which the Wesley, following Spener, Francke, and the Pietists, frequently called *ecclesiolae in ecclesia* in his writings: the "little churches" within the broader Church Universal (which aligned with the sodality/modality distinction, or the notion of the confraternity, in Western Christian history). Wesley's main goal in organizing these groups was not to convert men into new denominational affiliations, and he did not mean Methodism to become a denomination, intending for it to be a revival movement within Anglicanism, again drawing from how the Pietists (like some early Puritans) had sought not to divide but rather to revive the laity of the church to engage with the existing ecclesial structures. This voluntarism and mutual support was the main goal in designing these groups, as I will show.

To this day, Wesley's particular model of sanctification (a model of Aristotelean, developmentalist "perfection") remains the most widely cited version of Arminian Protestantism—that is, a Protestant model that emphasizes human cooperation with God's will, versus monergistic models, dominant in Calvinism and Lutheranism, in which human will is either completely depraved or is merely an illusion of no practical significance.

The lay groups that Wesley pioneered to hold together his movement constitute a model of voluntaristic networks for mutual support that spread throughout the entire Anglophonic

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See below, but these mainly include the work of Troeltsch and Weber applied to Methodist and Anglo-American histories, including especially Elie Halévy, E.P. Thompson, Bernard Semmel and others [refs]. Cf. the review of this same cast on the specific classes and bands of the Methodist model in Watson 1987:134-145.

world, often in response to political-economic problems, as the social historians that Martin cites have shown. Martin is interested in how the key organizational characteristics of the Methodist model have fueled what he calls the "second wave" of Protestant growth in Anglo-American societies, as well as this "third wave" of Protestant growth: pentecostal-charismatic Christianity (31, 28, cf. Synan 1997[1971]).

Martin describes this Methodist model, shared by Methodism and pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, in a torrent of adjectives that emphasize its affective and organizational qualities. The Methodist model is defined by

> a voluntary, lay, participatory and enthusiastic faith… the cultural logic of [which] was active, participatory, fissile, egalitarian and enthusiastic.
>
> In short, it represented an autonomous mobilization of mass-consciousness transforming and energizing individual persons, and bringing about myriads of competitive *voluntary networks for sharing and for mutual support* (274, emphasis mine).

Martin's first point, about how Methodism gave rise to pentecostal-charismatic forms of Christianity, is occasionally noted by anthropologists interested in the latter. However, what is more rarely appreciated in many contemporary studies is the way this emphasis on egalitarianism, the will (voluntarism), and mutual support has fared (perhaps because this claim may not apply to all the settings in which anthropologists have studied pentecostal-charismatic Christianity).

Nonetheless, for the purposes of our study, Martin has accurately identified a key cultural logic and organizational principle. Mutual support was *not only* fundamental to Methodist classes and bands, as they developed into some of the first lay organizations to organize masses of lay Christians into groups aimed at moral cultivation (but see Watson 1987); it was *also* central to subsequent developments in the holiness-pentecostal-charismatic churches, which likewise have developed into a globalized form of Christianity that travels through transnational

networks of people and media (Robbins 2004b, Csordas 2007, but see Synan 1997[1971]:1-21).

These subsequent developments include not only pan-American religious formations, as Martin and others have realized, but also the support group movement. I will show why these developments are not merely analogous to developments in North America with the "restructuring of American religion" through support group culture (Wuthnow 1988, 1994a-b), but also homologous: the Methodist model's subsequent development can be traced genealogically to both the evangelical and the support group movement). Still, the analogies between the two sister movements also worth noting, and I draw on Wuthnow and other more contemporary studies to do so. Both the evangelical and support group movements in Latin America may be aptly described as consisting of "active, participatory... voluntary networks for sharing and for mutual support" (even if the egalitarianism of churches varies somewhat). But the two movements also share a history, as suggested by the fact that Martin's historiography leaves off with the development of the YMCA out the Methodist model—with which Peterson *begins* his history of Alcoholics Anonymous (1990:274. and 1992:53-57, respectively, cf. Pittman 1988:116-117,143, but see especially 122).

Of course, other genealogies are possible for showing what influences these movements may share. We might for instance focus not on group organization or ethos, but on the subject positions they generate. For instance, Amélie Oskenberg Rorty has summarized a "philosophic history" of how contemporary forms of subjectivity, our "experienced sense of ourselves," "serve multiple functions and fuse distinctive archaeological layers of meaning" (2007:33-34, cf. Gramsci 2005[1929-1935]). Carrithers (1985, 1990) has offered a study Jain and Buddhist self-formative traditions, "enduring historical streams" that have, in fact, influenced supposedly "western" streams.

The purpose of this historiography is to show how both the support group movements and the evangelical movement, in Latin America as in North America, have long participated in a shared history of religious and cultural transformation, despite the many regional and local differences. Support groups do not represent the first but merely the latest and one of the most successful adaptations to a persistent and recurrent problem of the need for mutual support. There are a number of uses to which this mutual support can be put and social problems with which it can deal, and only some of which may immediately be thought of as "religious" or "spiritual," but many have seemed to focus on men and masculinity, much as did the Methodist model during its history and at present, in the evangelical movement as well. That is what this genealogy is intended to show. Without it, there is a risk that we fail to appreciate how social change takes place, or merely hold that a social form has "diffused" in some way, that it "travels" or "translates well." Such a view would not only fail to appreciate how models of organization reproduce and adapt. It would also provincialize their growth in a region like Latin America, despite the fact that it influences and affects North American culture (with its own sizable Latino population, the U.S. having the second largest Spanish speaking population of any country after Mexico) as well as being influenced and affected by "el Norte."

Moreover, there is a contemporary "cross-pollination" or "hybridization" to speak of in Latin America, with not only "borrowing" taking place but a good deal of regular traffic of members in between the support group movements and a wide variety of churches. This is thanks in part to a portrayal I mentioned in the prior chapter of support groups as complementary to organized religion and as encouraging men to find, attend, and participate actively in a church. The shared history of support group culture and various Christian movements in the Americas and across the Atlantic is in some ways becoming *more* shared, along new media networks and

new flows of people (not only members of these groups but mental health specialists persuaded by their efficacy). These recurrent concerns and contemporary flows are better understood in light of this history.

I would like to begin this section by adopting David Martin's advice in the beginning of *Tongues of Fire*: that "to find the right perspective on the current rapid explosion of evangelical Protestantism in Latin America"—and here I would add, 'and/or of support group culture in Latin America"—"we have to place ourselves initially on some very high ground" (1990: 9-10, emphasis mine). In these early pages of this history of Latin American religious change, Martin's begins so far back in history that the reader who skipped the introduction may well wonder what history Martin is telling exactly. The first chapter begins, a bit like that in the Gospel of John, at the earliest conceivable, most metaphorically charged historical moment. This is 1588, the year that the Spanish Armada sailed for England (and the year of Hobbes's birth). The year has been poetically embellished in the Anglophonic world, and used, much like the Battle of Thermopylae, in ways that outstrip and essentialize the historical event, in order to depict a mythic tale of resistance to tyranny and subjugation that resonates throughout the Christian and (and "post-Christian") West.[88] For Martin, the event's significance was not between nations or ideals but potentialities: "on the one side was the certainty of autocracy; on the other the potentiality for freedom" (1990:9).

Nonetheless, Martin takes pains to state that he does not want to resurrect ideas about Anglo-Hispanic "culture clash,"[89] going on the describe the relationship between various nations

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For instance, much has been written about the year's relevance to Hobbes's own biography and the views expressed in *Leviathan*, as an absolutist social contract that gives the sovereign the right to dictate even religious matters.

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Martin (1990:9) critically appraises the old, triumphalist English-language literature on the conflict. "The

and religious identity in a set of typologies with names like Protestant Patterns A, Protestant Pattern B1, and Protestant Pattern B2. His goal is to demarcate different possible relationships between religion and the State, and he found that, in America (B2) far more than in Britain (B1), the disestablishmentarianism of certain strains of Protestantism were "br[ought] to a logical conclusion" (19). The Armada, sent to force England's crown to accept Catholicism, is merely a memorable, important, and convenient symbol for this struggle for disestablishment. "Some wars are a very long duration, with the actual fighting quite intermittent," Martin (1990:9) writes.

In fact, disestablishment, like other forms of secularization, has remained incomplete (and perhaps not capable of being completed) in many places with Christian histories, despite the fact that disestablishment (like secularization) has sometimes been mythologized as uniquely western response to perennial if not universal concerns about the relationship between cosmology and governance. In fact, of course, the absolutism of monarchs was in the late sixteenth century a new phenomenon (now called the New Monarchs by historians from Slavin [1964] onward). Absolutism grew in response to the recent development in nation-state power (including the development of castle-destroying cannonry that diminished the independent power of the nobility), as well as in response to changing arrangements of regional power in Europe, in which the Catholic Church was still an important, if no longer the single most important, institution claiming the right to determine the nature of local religious beliefs and practices.

Yet Martin suggests that fixating on disestablishment alone may be misleading. More important than disestablishment per se may be an *organizational shift* that accompanied it—a

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school book the author read over 40 years ago was very clear about the world historical issues at stake. In his *English Seamen in the 16th century*, J.A. Froude said this: 'We shall miss the meaning of this high epic story if we do not realize that both sides have the most profound conviction that they were fighting the battle of the Almighty. Two principles, freedom of authority, were contending for the guidance of mankind.'" "Nevertheless," though, Martin goes on to say, the popular understanding of many Englishmen and other Protestant nations of the time was that "on the one side was the certainty of autocracy; on the other the potentiality for freedom."

new, alternative “model” of religious organization among the laity, one based on voluntarism. Martin dissects the Methodist model in the book's second chapter. This organizational shift, he finds, would be especially crucial in the transfer of European religious pluralism to British North America, and it would dramatically alter the conditions under which growing pressures for religious voluntarism and lay participation among Western laity were expressed.

The organizational shift towards voluntary lay participation in religion provided the context for three religious turns, or struggles, in western history, which I trace below. These three struggles or turns are shown by Martin to take place not only within institutionalized Western Christian traditions but across them.

These three struggles are the turns toward (a) laicization, (b) experience, and (c) sanctification. By laicization I mean the lay-organizational aspect of the aforementioned struggle for disestablishment and voluntaristic religious organizational forms. The turns toward experience and sanctification, I argue, are central to the Methodist model, in which the voluntary support network providing support precisely for focusing on sanctification and the way in which experience becomes a way knowing that this sanctification is taking place (as opposed to other ways of knowing about salvation and sanctification). That is, many lay groups not only focused on the experience of sanctification; they also considered a “moral inventory” of one's experiences, including and perhaps the less holy kinds of experience, to be the main path by which the laity can be sanctified (much as the sharing of experience is considered central to the activities of support groups and many small religious groups today).

Over the course of Western Christian history, ethical practices and methods that were once largely confined to monasteries and abbeys spread rapidly. These monastic practices had begun to interest the laity in the late medieval period (more on this to come below). Nonetheless,

they began to spread more rapidly as the West's acquisition of the movable-type printing press made more widely available texts such as Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ* (c. 1418-1427), Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (c. 1522-1524) and Arndt's *True Christianity* (c. 1605-1610). This devotional literature increasingly inspired Europeans, both at the individual and collective levels, to pursue both spiritual experience and sanctification (or "holiness," in its Germanic-English rendering). Thus, Martin goes on to explain that the European struggle for disestablishment was the formal, political condition for a broader organizational turn toward the laicization of Christian faith and a growing turn toward experience and sanctification on the part of that laity.

Each of these three turns are united and briefly synchronized in the Methodist model, but before we address this model I want to acknowledge some of its important precursors. While Luther's initial goal had been to reform the Roman Catholic Church, when this did not come about a number of northern European aristocrats and political leaders seized upon the popularity of Lutheranism (and later Calvinism) to found their own established churches in their territories. This was not disestablishment, for it reestablished a marriage between civil government and church authority, with themselves rather than the pope as supreme authority over the clergy. Nonetheless, it represented a contestation of the Pope's religious authority over Latinate Christianity. The *cuius regio eius religio* principle, by which subjects would adopt their ruler's religion, was first legally established in present-day Germany in 1555 by the Treaty of Augsburg, but the legal principle not obtain in much of Europe until a century later with the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, and the bloody "religious wars" (or "confessional wars") of the intermittent period would last longer in other parts of Europe, persisting in the Dutch struggle for independence from the Spanish until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. In all of these wars, the structure of religion must be understood in the broader historical context of the growth of

absolutism and a number of changes which had contributed to absolutist state-building, including military developments and development in bureaucratic governance.

However, at the outset of much of this political and military history, the “radical reformation” of Anabaptists and others began refusing to acknowledge “Christendom” (i.e., the marriage of religion and state, including the right of a state to establish religious orthodoxy or even to rule over Christians). They rejected the claims of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran and Calvinist polities, claiming that they contravened early Christian traditions placing a strong emphasis on voluntarism and citing the prophetic tradition criticizing the blending of religious and political power and the State's demand for worship. In making these radical claims, they became victims of many of the era's ultra-violent religious persecutions throughout Europe, being the enemies of both the Roman Catholic Church and Lutheran princes in Europe. Some of these early radical reformers would join political movements and become martyrs to spread this vision of the Kingdom of God. Though thousands died horribly in these wars, the importance of hagiographic literature for later generations of Christians would memorialize violent deaths on all conceivable sides of religious divides, depending on the locale and the powers vying for dominance there. Two particularly important tales of martyrdom stand out from these early years: the torture and decapitation of German theologian and priest Thomas Müntzer for his role in the German Peasants War (1524-1525); and, less than a decade afterwards, the grotesque treatment of the leaders of the Münster Rebellion, a cruel, public torture and display of the leaders' body parts that exemplified a logic of absolutist government that would remain dominant for centuries.

In part as a result of this horrific treatment of Anabaptists at the hands of absolutist monarchs, more accommodating interpretations of the radical reformation were adopted,

including many that merely denied the rights of established churches to dictate private religious matters. Although such claims could still invite inquisitional and retributive approach, the growing appeal of more irenic and conciliatory approaches is not difficult to understand.

These more irenic approaches would become dominant in the seventeenth century Pietist movement and in eighteenth century versions of Methodism. Both movements advocated that there must be small religious groups for the laity to improve their spiritual lives—not in any opposition to the clergy of established churches, but simply in addition to them (since there were practical limits, anyway, to what the clergy could be expected to oversee). Martin does not mention the relationship between this conciliatory approach and the more radical pacifism of the Mennonites (who believed Christians should to abjure themselves of the *jus gladii*, or "right of the sword," both in committing violence or in serving in any state role), but he does stress the relationship between extent to which Methodism was intimately tied up with various forms of pacifism and quietism, seeing the latter as influencing the success of Methodist-derived forms of Christianity in North and in Latin America (a finding supported by Steigenga's [2001:150-151] multi-sited study of pentecostalization in Central America, which found high levels of pacifistic and quietistic beliefs).

Even among those who shared the absolutist religious commitments of papal Catholicism, there was a growing emphasis on religious voluntarism and a less mediated relationship to God. In 1540, a Papal bull authorized the religious company of "reformed priests" envisioned by Ignatius of Loyola and his companions, for instance. No doubt Ignatius would have disagreed strongly that the Jesuit oath of "direct submission" to the Pope echoed contemporaneous Protestant discourses against clericalism in favor of "immediacy" (i.e., less mediation between God and believers). Nonetheless, the contentious history of religious

transformations in late medieval and early modern Western Christianity is not neatly contained within "Protestantism," nor were Protestant and Catholic (or Orthodox) histories somehow independent of one another. Many sixteenth-century Catholics expressed, alongside sixteenth century Protestants, a desire for greater immediacy and personal connection with God, as can be seen in the emergence of popular literature like *The Benefit of Christ Crucified* (1544), or the Jansenist Catholic movement and its struggles with various popes and unsympathetic Church officials.

The push among the laity and among the religious leaders who promoted their cause for a more immediate, intimate experience of God and for the development of their individual religious lives (i.e., their sanctification) has a history that, like the history of the Anabaptists, is older and far less triumphal history than sixteenth century efforts or reforms by Luther and Calvin's adherents. Its includes Peter Waldo (1140-1206), Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) and the radical Franciscans, the English dissident John Wycliffe (1369-1415), the Czech priest and martyr Jan Hus (1369-1415), and the lay tradition of the Devotio Moderna, beginning in the later fourteenth century. Devotio Moderna in turn gave rise to the Fratres Vitae Communis (or Brethren of the Common Life), a lay order to which the author of *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas à Kempis, belonged.

Loyola's writings also participated in this tradition to some extent, including the calendrically-organized set of ethical methods for Christians that he detailed in his book, *Spiritual Exercises*,[90] which was published nearly two decades before the Jesuits were founded, in the early 1520s, and became the world's first global religious company. *Spiritual Exercises*

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90 Ignatius Loyola is positioned third after Aristotle and Augustine in Amélie Oskenberg Rorty's genealogy of the (Western) subjectivity (2007:37-38). Cf. Taylor 1992[1989], Carrithers 1985.

shares with those aforementioned lay movements the aspiration that the laity might come to experience God in their own lives and undergo a process of sanctification, a growth in grace that the Council of Trent would later frame as part of justification (in contradistinction to Protestant claims about it being a "second blessing"). All of these movements enjoined the laity to pursue sanctification and religious experience—not only individually, but (crucially) in lay groups and in interpersonal relationships that were specifically cultivated for these purposes.

Later, in the seventeenth century Europe, there were a number of important efforts to reform the established churches from within. These include two major movements within the Anglican and Lutheran churches that are relevant for our purposes: Puritanism in England and America, and Pietism in Germany.

The Puritan movement arose as an effort to purify the English Church of various Anglo-Catholic elements since the sixteenth century. Some highlights of this process, including the notable Vestiarian Controversy in the 1560s, over the ornateness of priestly vestments, seem to focus on reforming the hierarchy. However, this concern for moral reform was part of a shared concern with sanctification by both Calvinists and Arminians (with the latter having been dominant in the Anglican Church as various periods).

As a result of various efforts at compromise, some of which are still visible, the Anglican Church would eventually compromise and support lay societies for moral reform under the auspices of the church hierarchy. These societies were gathering to conduct ethical practices of reflection according to methods that could be found in Puritan moral manuals. Such manuals diffused these methods and rendered them commonplace both in late seventeenth century England and in British North America. They would also shape the upbringing of John Wesley in the early eighteenth century and his lifelong project to develop methods for lay sanctification.

So, too, would the tradition of these lay groups.

Likewise, in Massachusetts and Connecticut, these Calvinist practices and their implicit concern for sanctification as proof of salvation were also important. In the context of these colonies' established Calvinist churches, the concern with this proof salvation elevated the *conversion narrative* as a regularized and institutionalized phenomenon. These congregationalist churches sought to restrict church membership (and thus citizenship in their colonies) to those who were “visible saints” (i.e., those with who could cite an experience and evidence of sanctification, and thus of having “true saving faith,” which was thought to be accompanied by sanctifying grace). Both the conversion narrative as a discursive practice and the broader Pietist-Puritan turn(s) to experience and sanctification would lead, in the seventeenth century, to the phenomenon of the revival (more on that below).

The Pietists in Germany, meanwhile, remained fairly irenic in their relationship with the national churches and more emphatic about their desire to awaken the Lutheran church from within and to avoid producing schisms,[91] like many in the early generations of English Puritans and Anglican religious societies (and later, John Wesley, who was influenced by them and by the Pietists). Many early Pietists saw themselves as merely enriching and deepening the Lutheran tradition by passing on those pietistic elements of Luther's thought that had been subsequently muted in many established Lutheran churches (a claim later voiced by Kierkegaard).

After Luther, many Pietists trace their lineage to the influence of the Lutheran theologian Johann Arndt (1555-1621), whose four-volume devotional, *True Christianity* (1605-1610), preached a “practical Christianity” that was inwardly experiential and outwardly philanthropic

91 Another important example of this—one which shows how little sectarianism was esteemed by such movements—was that of the Catholic nobleman de Renty, whom Wesley credited with helping to develop his model. See Henderson 1997:47-51, as well as the footnotes, which detail Wesley's devotion to the small group

and charitable. Arndt's *True Christianity* series was influenced by *The Imitation of Christ*, and, like it, became deeply influential to both Mennonite Anabaptists and later John Wesley, particularly in its distinction between "true" Christianity and merely "false" (or "nominal," or "dead") Christianity (which was a distinction that Wesley would use often).

Ultimately, however, the Pietist movement would find its most systematic expressions in Jacob Philip Spener's 1675 *Pia Desideria* ("Pious Desires") and in the "organizational genius" of Spener's pupil, August Hermann Francke[92] (b.1663 - d.1727)—although no account of the Pietist movement can ignore the role of Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, Count of Herrnhut (b.1700-d.1760), a friend of Francke's who hosted the Herrnhuter Moravians on his lands and helped them cultivate a unique blend of Hussite and Pietist faith. The Moravians would lead influential missions to a number of places,[93] including both England and America. Among the most durable of their influences was the stamp that Moravian "bands" made on Wesleyan bands, as well as the effect of their affect-rich liturgy, the Litany of the Wounds, which meditates in exquisite detail on the salvific power of the embodiment, suffering, and crucifixion of Christ, provoking strong emotion and religious experiences in those who participate in the liturgy.

Among the organizational proposals that first were put forth by Spener then later elaborated by Francke were a number concerning *lay participation and organization*, especially the establishment of small religious societies dedicated to spiritual growth. Spener and Francke (and later Wesley) insisted that these societies should be thought of as *ecumenical* rather than

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92 "If Spener was Pietism's patriarch, Francke was its organizing genius" (Olson 1999:481).

93 The Moravian faith would influence both Wesley and later Enlightenment-influenced Protestant thinkers, like Friedrich Schleiermacher, who famously wrote, "I have become a Herrnhuter again, only of a higher order." The Moravian focus on consciousness and experience would leave a deep stamp on the brand of liberal Christianity that Schleiermacher would influence (e.g. Mariña 2005:2).

schismatic. Thus, Spener called them *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*—"little churches" in the Church Universal (or the established church, at least).

Such professions by Spener and other Pietists about the non-schismatic nature of *ecclesiolae* were not mere theological niceties. They made up an explicit exculpatory stance, taken against centuries of suspicion in Europe that any lay religious organization constituted a threat to the established churches (and thus to the authority of popes and of monarchs over their subjects' religious lives). By the time of Spener's proposals, opponents of such religious societies already mocked them as "conventicles" ("little convents") for having adopted practices popularly associated with monastic settings. Such mockery had not subsided even in mid-eighteenth-century England: Wesley's own pietistic band during his time at Oxford adopted the name "the Holy Club" from what was initially a term of derision aimed at his group. Likewise, Wesley would appropriate the term "Methodists" from detractors of the movement, who mocked the notion that their might be a "method" to holiness.

In fact, by the time Spener's call for the founding of the *ecclesiolae* was published in *Pia Desideria*, in 1675, the English crown had outlawed prayer meetings of six for over a decade, with the Conventicle Act of 1664. Charles II saw in these religious societies a threat to the uniformity of the established church.

The Conventicle Act had actually come just on the heels of two similar acts of religious establishment in 1662. The first was a renewal of Queen Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity of 1558, which not only demanded that all clergy adhere to the prescribed rites but also ejected from the clergy or from any government office any official who would not adhere to these prescriptions. Charles's Act of Uniformity of 1662 resulting in the Great Ejection of over two thousand ministers and barring many Englishmen from public service. The second was the Quaker Act,

which (echoing Elizabeth's 1558 Act of Supremacy) sought to require Quakers and others influenced by Anabaptist and Baptist-influenced opponents of "Christendom" to swear a oath of loyalty to the English king as head of the Church.[94]

Britain was by no means alone in this approach to monarchical supremacy and church uniformity: for more than a century after the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V seconded Pope Leo X's excommunication of Martin Luther, issuing his own royal condemnation in 1521 at the Diet of Worms, various "new monarchs" and their successors had approached religious uniformity and dissent with an absolutist approach, using the issue to consolidate their political power.[95] Similarly, political rebellions (such as those in the Netherlands and in Bohemia) also used religious identity and ideas to unify their forces.[96]

Despite these pressures for religious uniformity, the growth of religious voluntarism and lay organization did not abate. By the time that the Peace of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years War in 1648, the practice of organizing lay religious societies, or what Spener called *ecclesiolae*, in the pursuit of religious experience and of sanctification/holiness had become widespread in

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"When in 1768 John Wesley read an account of these times he was so shocked that he declared Charles II was worse than bloody Queen Mary" (Schmidt 1962).

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Thomas More, for instance, would be put to death a decade before Luther by refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy demanded by the first of these acts (the Act of Supremacy of 1534), under Henry VIII.

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Illustrating what Charles II of England feared in More's non-conformity (see footnote above), the Spanish crown also spent the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries preoccupied with uniformity: King Philip II, who would later send out the Spanish Armada to Elizabethan England, would direct the Inquisition to proceed against the archbishop of Toledo, Bartolomé Carranza de Miranda, the most powerful Roman Catholic official in all Spain until that point, during the precise year (1559) that the Elizabethan Uniformity Act was issued. The archbishop's persecution (including a seventeen-year period of imprisonment and recurrent heresy trials) appear to have been the result of the archbishop's political independence and his closeness with various other noble families, rather than his supposed Lutheran sympathies (see Adorno 1992:817 on Carranza's prosecution, as portrayed by de las Casas). Carranza's case illustrates how religious and political disloyalty were often seen as indivisible. Likewise, the frustrated attempts to revive the Holy Roman revival made by Philip II's father, Charles V, would help unify the Dutch struggle for political independence, which would not to be resolved until 1713, some 65 years after the Peace of Westphalia.

many parts of Europe.[97]

This "Northern European pattern," represented by Pietism's non-sectarian approach to lay organization, "is of prime importance," as Martin (1990:14) points out, for understanding not only the Latin American evangelical movement, but the shared roots of pentecostal, evangelical and support group culture. As a matter of religious *form*, Pietism revealed that the issue of disestablishment was perhaps only incidental to projects to develop more participatory, egalitarian form of lay religious organization. Disestablishment, that is, was as much the product of efforts to establish absolutist forms of governance than it was the demands of those who wanted to organize lay participation. And as a matter of religious *content*, the "legacy of... Pietism" (including the three turns to lay organization, experience, and sanctification)[98] was "passed on alike to Methodist and Pentecostal nonconformity" (*idem*.) and thus to Latin American evangelicalism. In Martin's own words, "The long-term progenitors of Pentecostalism are Spener and the German Collegia Pietatis." Moreover, he continues: "The exploration of a Christian *affect* found in Pietism, most familiar to us through the religious... music by J.S. Bach... is part of the ancestry of Pentecostalism, mediated to a large extent through Methodism" (1990:15, emphasis in the original). This "exploration of Christian affect," found in Pietism, was

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Although Calvinists and Arminians share an explicit interest in sanctification, many Lutherans do not use these terms. See also the following footnote.

98
Various branches of Protestantism disagreed as to where and how this sanctification took place, and a famous exchange between by Wesley and Count Zinzendorf, the Moravian bishop, illustrated these differences when Wesley visited Herrnhut. Zinzendorf, in the Lutheran tradition, rejected the notion of that Christians could undergo sanctification or perfection "in themselves" (*in se*: see Wesley 1964:367-372, also cited in Olson 1999:490), expressing a monergism more like Calvinism (and Dominican theology) than Wesley's own Arminianism Protestantism (or Jesuit theology, or most Orthodox theology). "W: It seems to me that we are fighting over terms. Is it every true believer holy? Z: Indeed. But holy in Christ, not in himself [L., *in se*]. W: But doesn't he live a holy life? Z: Of course. His whole life is holy. W: Well, then, does he have a holy heart? Z: Certainly. W: It follows, then, that he is holy "in himself [*in se*] doesn't it? Z: No, no! Only in Christ! Not holy *in se.* No one has any holiness *in se*" (Wesley 1964:369).

also most fully elaborated by Francke, who argued that the knowledge about whether one had saving faith could only be found in the heart, rather than in "externals."[99]

Martin, like other biographers of John Wesley (Schmidt 1964, Watson 1987, cf. Brantley 1984, Lowery 2008), largely credits Wesley's organizational talents and his eclecticism with allowing him to seize this momentous turn towards the experience of sanctification during the First Great Awakening and to produce one of the most important Protestant movements and denominations of the era, whose effects continue to influence developments in Christian movements today. This eclecticism and eye for organizational experimentation allowed him to combine elements of Pietism, Anglicanism, Puritanism, and Arminian theology, which, as Maddox (1994) details, drew on Wesley's solid grounding in early Church patristics (typical of many Anglican scholars of the era, whose style was more holistic than scholastic and took

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99

August Hermann Francke was not only an organizational innovator but an innovator of religious affect, particularly in terms of how religious emotion was understood to define Christian faith for Pietists and for those influenced by them. Francke turned Pietism even more resolutely toward an emphasis on the emotional states experienced in one's relationship with God as proof of saving, rejecting both sacramental views of grace and those provided by scholasticism's arguments for the proof of saving faith. In this he seems to depart a bit from Luther, who in his writings praised not only scriptural promises of faith but the sacramental and liturgical channels of grace as a means to salvation, not less but *more* than before his conversion experience, the impetus of which was a great insecurity that was produced precisely the unending, anxiety-provoking examination of his internal states for evidence of saving grace, which exhausted his confessor Johann von Staupitz, who counseled this turn to the merits of Christ and the sacraments of grace. By contrast Francke urges Pietists to reject what he calls "externals" (i.e., the sacraments, as proof of saving grace) and to seek instead an inward experience of "saving grace" similar to that described by the mid-seventeeth century American Puritan Congregationalists: "You ought not to say 'I am baptized, I go to Church, I am a Christian.' The hypocrites do the same... You must make no decisions because you follow externals," he told the audience in his sermon "If and how one may be certain that one is a child of God," enjoining listeners instead to follow the path laid out by Spener's groups: the path of self-examination (cited in Erb 1983:147). "The Scripture is directed to your heart and indicates how you must find proper certainty and be sealed by the Spirit of God. You must receive the Spirit of God from God and from it you must know how richly you are graced by God. See, there you are commanded, there you might know what happens in the heart of God for your sake, whether God loves you, whether you are his child." (See the following footnote as well.)

By the end of the eighteenth century, the turn to experience and affect found in Pietism had gone on to influence a great many in the Protestant world, both in romanticism and in what became known as Liberal Protestantism. Schleiermacher 2002[1799] give p. number], for example, in his *On religion: speeches to its cultured despisers*, urged his listeners to recognize in Jesus a perfect "God-consciousness," a "*feeling* of absolute dependence" on God that true Christians should cultivate in themselves (emphasis mine). (Compare and contrast this notion in the text below with Erasmus's concept of the 'mind of Christ' or 'philosophia Christi'.)

advantage of more Greek patristics that not yet become available to the Reformation era).

The success of Wesley's movement would provide the era's great counterweight to the Calvinist strains of the First Great Awakening and of various forms of Christianity in the Anglophonic world, and Wesley's elaboration of Arminianism remains among the best known in contemporary Protestant thought. To this theology, which guided his belief that the laity needed to actively work toward sanctification (more on that to come), Wesley, Martin wrote, combined Pietism's "exploration of affect" and experience with its model of "[r]eligious change... by way of... the emergence of cell... groups," which had deeply influenced Wesley during the periods he spent with Moravians in America, England, and Germany. To the Pietistic emphases on affect and small group organization, Wesley added other organizational models, drawn from Anglican "societies." He also drew upon Puritan ethical exercises and discursive forms (Martin 1990:15,14). Among the most important of these ethical and discursive practices latter was the Puritan-derived conversion narrative, or "profession of faith," but Wesley also drew upon other strands of conversion narrative, including the story of Paul, of course, as well as Francke's autobiographical record of his conversion "of the heart,"[100] an emotional experience that many Pietists took as the best or only evidence of true saving faith. This focus on the conversion narrative would also give rise to *another* Puritan-derived practice that ended up being crucial to the explosion of Methodism in eighteenth and nineteenth century America, and for the spread of the Methodist model throughout Latin American religious life: the practice of revival.

100
The prior footnote deals with the centrality of emotion in Francke's ideas about saving grace, but his account of his conversion experience makes clear how the usage of the term "heart" by the second half of the eighteenth century had adopted its modern meaning, as the seat of the emotions, *rather* than how the term is used in biblical translations of Hebrew and Greek texts, to mean the seat of reason (with the seat of emotion being the gut or liver.) In Francke's account, he describes falling to his knees and praying for the experience of belief. "When I knelt down, I did not believe there was a God, but when I stood up, I believed to the point of giving up my blood without fear or doubt. *Reason stood away*. Victory was torn from its hands" (cited in Olson 1999:481-482, emphasis mine)..

Revival would play an important role in initiating individuals into the Methodist model of social organization, at least during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although certain elements of Wesleyan revival departed consciously and crucially from the Calvinist models of revival embraced by Jonathan Edwards and others,[101] the history of revival shows that the model of conversion and the understanding of the will that are used in support group and evangelical culture are influenced by Calvinist understandings about the surrender to God's will, and not purely to the Wesleyan-Arminian forms of social organization and practices for gradual sanctification that should come after this initial conversion. However, this history also suggests that both revivalism and later iterations of the Methodist model seem to turn repeatedly towards Arminian emphases on the importance of synergism, of cooperating with God's will and asking God for salvation.[102] Revival begins in America first among Calvinists, but Arminian theories of sanctification and Arminian soteriology (i.e., "unlimited atonement," in which anyone, and not merely a preordained "elect," may accept God's gift of salvation) provided new reasons for open-air revivals and for the enthusiasm they generated.[103] Wesley himself seemed deeply skeptical of this enthusiasm, warning against it in a number of writings, including a sermon "On the Nature of Enthusiasm," a tract "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, and another directed to

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101

The "New Divinity" Calvinist model of revival was a modification of High (or"five-point") Calvinism that facilitated revivalism while finding ways to retain Calvinism's monergistic account, wherein only God's will participates in salvation. It was also called New Light Calvinism, Edwardsean Divinity, and "Hopkinsianism," after its fuller expression in the the work of Samuel Hopkins. It is distinguishable both from non-revivalistic brands of Calvinism as well as so-called "hyper-Calvinists" who are dare not preach in terms of God's promises of salvation, for fear of deceiving others about God's sovereign right over the election of individuals to salvation.

102

Some scholars have argued that what has taken place in the course of both the Protestant *and* Catholic debates about the role of the will (see the following footnotes) is a dialectic based on shared presuppositions about the need for salvation derived from Augustine. See Cary 2000. Cf. *hesychasm* in the Orthodox tradition, which is not nearly as influenced by Augustine.

103

"What Methodism and [Latin American evangelicalism] clearly share is an emphasis on the availability of grace to all… and an intense search… after holiness" (Martin 1990:28).

Methodist ministers, “Cautions and Directions to the Greatest Professors in the Methodist Societies.”

Paralleling the Jesuits (and their disagreements with Dominicans over soteriology during the sixteenth century),[104] Arminians may be generally said (along with many Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians) to promote models of salvation and sanctification that are described as *synergistic*—that is, models of salvation and sanctification that involve synergy, or cooperation, between human will and God's will, which predisposes the human will to cooperate, being “prevenient” (coming first). The synergistic position contrasts with the position adopted by Calvinists (and Dominicans), which considers both salvation and sanctification to be *monergistic* (i.e., contingent upon God's will alone).

Despite this disagreement, most Arminians and Calvinists share an emphasis on *sanctification* of one's soul and of one's works as following salvation and *as evidence of*

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See e.g., Flipo 2005:1518-1519, Renault 2005. As they note, the parallel between the Jesuit and Arminian positions is not total, for the Jesuit position (Molinism), which first became a subject for debate in 1580s, differs slightly from Arminianism on some counts that are not pertinent here (e.g., the question of whether the free will's response is foreknown by God, as Molinists generally insisted, but which many Arminians would not hold to be a necessary doctrine).

However, there has been considerable debate among Christians during the last five centuries about the role of the will in salvation and sanctification, starting especially in the late sixteenth century with the Jesuits generally arguing for the role of the human will and freedom in cooperating with “supernatural grace” (especially the students of the Jesuit Luis de Molina [1536-1600], who argued for the role of the will in agreement with the instructions and spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola). The Dominicans and a school of thought popular in Louvain (and among Jansenists more generally) adopted other standard-bearers, including those of Domingo Bañez (1528-1604) and Michel de Bay (1519-1589), whose positions are known as Bañezianism and Baianism. respectively. The fact that in such accounts the grace god gives to human beings is considered “supernatural,” in the language bequeathed by Thomas Aquinas to the Roman Catholic tradition, contrasts sharply with the language used by Jonathan Edwards to describe the *natural ability*, but *moral inability* (read: psychological inability) of humans to choose for conversion. (This distinction by Edwards is interesting to note, given that this bit of optimism and Edwards's generally optimistic, postmillennial view about the state of the world are far less well-known than the terrors of “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”)

This difficulty with language also manages to show why the parallels between Arminian and Jesuit positions or Calvinist and Dominican positions must be seen as partial, for although they all deal with the issue of human freedom and will in salvation, they traffic in increasingly divergent discourses, whose degree of divergence depends largely on the waxing or waning of ecumenism in a given age.

salvation[105]. For both Calvinists and Arminians, God's "saving grace" would transform a person in ways that were perceptible, at least to others among the "elect" (or among "true Christians," to use the Pietist-inflected language, drawn from Arndt, that most Methodists preferred).

The first major theorist of revival was Jonathan Edwards, the great American Calvinist theologian. His successes during the New England revivals of the 1730s would persuade the George Whitefield and John Wesley (Calvinist and Arminian Methodists, respectively) to conduct open-air revivals in the British American colonies and in Britain during the First Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century. Later, Charles Finney, who further modified Edwardsean Calvinism to emphasize the importance of choosing for salvation, would lead vast revivals during the Second Awakening.

To understand why revival became so important in Calvinist New England, the reader must consider the initial development of established Congregationalist (Calvinist) churches in Massachusetts and Connecticut. In the 1640s, these established churches required that one produce a "profession of faith," a conversion narrative, with the focus on the evidence of sanctification, as evidence of "saving grace," in order to become a member of the church, to vote in it and in the colony's affairs, even to baptize one's children. The profession of faith had to be persuasive to existing church members, given the congregationalist structure of these churches. If one's profession of faith was persuasive to church members, membership would be granted and would allow confirmed (adult male) members to vote in church matters (as opposed to presbyterian or episcopalian structures, which give special rights to designated "elders" or

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105

Or else "...as evidence of *justification*," if the legalistic understanding of atonement is used. Such language was popular in Protestant accounts of salvation, which were linked to feudal "satisfaction" and penal "substitution" theories of atonement popular in Anglican and Calvinist circles of the time, respectively. However, this language of "justification" is somewhat less popular in contemporary theology, where "moral exemplar" theories of Christ's atonement have received many new adherents.

bishops, respectively).

This crisis that this provoked was only partly and incompletely resolved by the Halfway Covenant of 1662. The Halfway Covenant allowed non-members to baptize their children, but otherwise maintained the rule about producing a convincing profession of the faith for "full" membership. (Many still did not even accept the compromise, including Increase Mather and much later Jonathan Edwards, although it appears to have become the standard for other Calvinist/Reformed churches in the region as well, including the presbyterian churches [see e.g. Thompson 1895:14].) Later, Solomon Stoddard (grandfather to Jonathan Edwards) would promote an alternative solution that went much further than the Covenant and promoted an alternative, nearly sacramental understanding of saving grace, extending communion[106] to non-church members as well, arguing that communion could be a potential "converting ordinance."[107] Despite the fact that this view affirmed a monergistic view of salvation and justification, wherein God's will and election alone (acting through the communion ordinance) could determine one's salvation, Stoddard's actions further provoked high Calvinists. They argued that such ordinances were only for the elect and that extended them might actually *harm* the unconverted, who might receive it to their further judgment. Many high Calvinists of these colonies, like the Particular Baptists later, held to a stringent interpretation of the Calvinist doctrine of "limited atonement," whereby Christ's death only justifies the elect. This stringent interpretation of limited atonement meant that high Calvinists should not even preach about promises of salvation and grace to

106 That is, what many Protestants would call the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, or what Catholics would call the sacrament of the Eucharist. See the following footnote.

107 "Ordinance" was the contemporary (and current) term used for religious rituals by Protestants, to indicate that they do not hold that they are "sacraments" that impart God's grace but rather merely outward expressions of inward faith.

sinners, for fear of giving false hope to the Non-Elect and of contradicting God's unalloyed, sovereign will (i.e., monergism).

Jonathan Edwards, as a grandson to Stoddard, belonged to the successive generations of Calvinists who criticized Stoddard's practice but sought, as Stoddard had, other, wholly monergistic ways of resolving the Congregationalist dilemma. When a series of revival experiences suddenly emerged in the Congregationalist churches of Massachusetts and Connecticut in the mid-1730s, Edwards used Calvinist understandings to theorize the phenomena in his essay, "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton." In Edward's account of the months of revival, he claimed that the Calvinist congregations visited by the revival had been effectively confronted with (or "convicted" of) the terrible facts of their own sinfulness and their inability to save themselves or choose for Christ of their own will. As in Luther's dilemma, the sinner is thus confronted with the fact that the individual, if he or she is presumed to be "totally depraved"[108] (a point of agreement between many Calvinists and Lutherans), may only will sanctification or salvation for him- or herself for *selfish* reasons, rather than to fulfill God's will. Because a depraved will can only wish for salvation selfishly, willing for salvation cannot have any merit or sanctification in and of itself.

In deeply experiential terms that sound today like a proto-psychological account of coping with and accepting trauma, Edwards's essay described the convicted sinner undergoing a

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For many Calvinists, however, the total depravity of the human will is *not* indicative a general state of postdiluvian Fallen Nature. Jonathan Edwards took the view, as did Augustine and many other postmillennialists, that Creation remains good and that Christ's return will happen after the further, ongoing development of the Kingdom of God within Creation, during the (present) millennial age, in which Christ's rule-by-proxy (i.e., through his "body," the elect) is extended. That this may not look like "ruling" was explained easily enough through appeals to scripture: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them... But I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:25-27, cf. Mt 20:25-28).

complex process of anger, attempts to bargain with God, denial, and deep depression. However, if, at the bottom of this downward spiral, the convicted sinner surrenders to God's judgment and loathes his or her own sin as much as God does, he or she may come to love and even identify with God's judgment and to accept his own damnation, to the point of not even resenting the salvation of others, but rather seeing it as good and righteous expression of God's will.[109] However, since this total surrender and loving of God *for Himself*, rather than from a desire for one's own salvation, is so alien to the total depravity of the will, Edwards theorized that loathing one's sin and giving up on the hope of salvation *is itself* an evidence of saving grace.

This, in the minds of Edwards and later Edwardsean-Calvinist theologians, may be a thoroughly Calvinist solution to the problem of salvation. High Calvinists felt prohibited from preaching "the Gospel" (in the Lutheran sense) to the non-elect. Others, like Edwards, came to see the preaching of what Luther called "the Law,"[110] and of what Edwards called the sinner's "moral inability" to fulfill it, as an act of love—even if, in the short term, this preaching of the Law terrorized the conscience in order to "convict" it. This terror has become the most memorable aspect of a book by Edwards that became much better known than his essay on the anatomy and purpose of Calvinist revival: *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.[111] Later,

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109

The value of this acceptance is alive and well. An Internet search for "non-elect" led, on one search engine, to a website for an Australian Church that links to the First Calvinist Church of the Non-Elect, a self-described body of believers and worshipers of God who have accepted Calvin's interpretation of their non-election, to which they give a list of 21 doctrines believed by the church of the non-elect. The last of these reads: "As God seals His Elect by vocation and justification, so by excluding those of us that are Non-Elect from the redemptive value of our Lord's limited sacrifice and the sanctification of His Spirit, He affords us as Non-Elect an indication of the judgment that awaits us, as vessels of wrath, yet even this is to His Glory, for which we are thankful." See the website at http://www.abercrombie.cc/doctrine.htm.

110

See Bayer and Wiemer 2005[1999]:895-896 for a discussion of the distinctions between Luther, Melanchton, and Calvin over the distinctions between Law and Gospel (and, tangentially, the "third use" of the Law [*tertius usu legis*]).

111

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God was delivered *after* the first open-air preacher of the First Great Awakening, the Calvinist Methodist George Whitefield, toured the thirteen colonies in 1740-41). Nonetheless,

Edwards would introduce, in *Freedom of the Will* (1754), a "compatibilist" view, combining moral determinism and the individual's "natural responsibility" for sin, in a move that many of his opponents read as a departure from (or modification of) proper high Calvinism. *Freedom of the Will* proposed that the individual had a "natural ability" to choose against sin, yet a "moral inability" to make such a choice. Because of this moral inability, the surrender of the (moral) will was necessary for God's saving grace to act according to *its* nature. This distinction would deeply influence Charles Finney and the Second Great Awakening.

Arminians, however, had none of the Calvinists' qualms about preaching universal atonement, rather than limited atonement (i.e., that God has made a universal offer of salvation to all men), and against a version of "total depravity" that rendered people incapable of choosing for God. Arminians like Wesley argued that God's prevenient grace was unlimited and offered everywhere, to all, rendering each person responsible for choosing it, cooperating with it, and not resisting it (in contrast with the Calvinist doctrine that God's grace is irresistible, known as "irresistible grace"). By the Second Great Awakening, even Calvinist revivalists like Charles Finney would turn in this direction, using Edwards's dichotomy but de-emphasizing human beings' moral inability to choose for God, and instead placing greater stress on the hearer's natural ability, and thus responsibility, for accepting salvation.

Outdoor preaching would also become entrenched in the phenomenon of revivalism by the Second Great Awakening; it began during the First Great Awakening, but it was not practiced by Edwards. John Wesley would follow the lead of the George Whitefield in preaching outdoors (part of a now defunct, Calvinist strain of Methodism). Wesley began to preach outdoors in 1739, one month after Whitefield had done so first, having been being inspired by Edwards's

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and despite the terror of the piece and the hysterics into which such sermons sent convicted believers (which later revivalists indulged in, as well), Edwards actually read the piece quietly and seriously.

aforementioned essay on the revivals.

Martin described Wesley's success with revivalism as a crucial moment (1990:273) in the history of the Methodist model. “The final shared Anglo-American incubation [of the Methodist model] came about when eighteenth century revivalism was poured along the channels of voluntary and independent religion dug more than a century before by classic Calvinist dissent.” However, Martin emphasized that while “[i]n British North America the Great Awakening(s) owed a great deal to a modified Calvinism,” “much of the power generated by the Awakening(s) eventually flowed in a Methodist direction” (*idem*.). It was thus that the term “Methodism” came, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to imply both the revival itself (as a “method” for converting nominal Christians to true faith) *and* the subsequent “methods” employed by the groups that Wesley founded for converts to further their sanctification.

In terms of methods for sanctification, the Methodist model included ethical practices of sanctification that were more relational than many of those found in the Puritan manuals. In instituting these more relational means of sanctification, Wesley borrowed from a Pietist model of “[r]eligious change... by way of... the emergence of cells and pressure groups,” as Martin (1990:14) wrote, “cells of intense and personal faith created by Spener and his successors and by the Moravian fraternity” (273, cf. Henderson 1997:33-81, Schmidt 1962, Watson 1987; see footnote 92 on de Renty). The emphasis on sanctification as the basis for these groups resonated not just with committed Arminians but with many Christians in the Anglophonic world, who had been influenced by the Calvinist-Arminian debates over sanctification that had rendered it a shared concern of both camps.

The Methodist groups may be interpreted as engaging in what Foucault prefers to speak of as *askesis*, a term that means something like “exercises.” Askesis is a more useful gloss than

the Anglicized "ascetics," as Foucault argued,[112] because "ascetics" seems to carry largely negative and self-negating connotations in English, while the concept of askesis has more positive, growth-oriented connotations and associations with the Hellenistic gymnasium.

These positive practices of *askesis* would play an important role in British social history, but they would play an even more central role in the North American context (much as it later in Latin America). In North America,

> the explosive power of Methodism and of Arminian evangelical Protestantism generally (for example the [general[113]] Baptists) provided the *differentia specifica* of the American religious and cultural ethos.
>
> [T]he difference between America and England [was] the American insistence on sincerity and openness rather than on form and privacy. The whole American-style was, and is, "Methodist" in its emphases, whereas in England the culturally prestigious style remained Anglican. "Enthusiasm" of all kinds, religious, cultural, and personal, became endemic in America… (Martin 1990:21).

This "American insistence on sincerity and openness" and "enthusiasm" would fuel the further development not only of revivalism but of Wesley's small groups. The ethical practices of these Methodist groups—largely practices of mutual sharing and reflection upon the moral struggles of oneself and one's brethren, as the reader will see—depended upon this sincerity and openness, an intimacy not present in services or in revivals. Methodist groups in this sense were much like most of the writing on support groups of all kinds, including the pentecostal "cell groups" studied in Guatemala City by Kevin O'Neill, whose practices of "self-reflection and efforts at ethical refashioning [were] made possible only because of... the kind of intimacy

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112 "For Foucault the equation of philosophical *askesis* with renunciation of feeling, solidarity, and care for one's self and for others... was one of our biggest wrong turnings" (Rabinow 1997:xxv). See also pp. 208-209.

113 Both "general" (i.e., Arminian/universal atonement-believing) and "particular" (i.e., Calvinist/limited atonement-believing) Baptists thrived in America, and congregationalist polities as well as the later principles of "soul competence" and the "perspicuity of scripture" later prevented any uniformity on these matters among Baptists churches or believers (except within particular, local churches).

generated in these settings" (2010:62) The Anglican liturgical style, and its emphasis on "form and privacy," was an obstacle to such practices. By the end of Chapter 9, it should be clear how the emergence of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Step movement went even further to make anonymity and confidentiality to participants central to Methodist model.

Before detailing the Methodist model's specific organizational forms during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it is worth noting something about their ethos. Although Sunday School "classes" persist in Methodism, and although the name "class" would seem to suggest a catechetical, doctrine-based approach, Sunday school represents a very particular and later development in Methodist societies and groups. Wesley experimented with and founded a number of forms of organization, including "classes," "bands," and up to four others. To develop these organizational forms, he drew eclectically from a number of Christian traditions. Wesley's pragmatic syncretism in developing not only his organizational forms but his theology seems to have reflected Wesley's appreciation for the Anglican patristics Renaissance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a movement which sought to educate and reacquaint western theologians with the work of early Church Fathers (i.e., "patristics") that was unavailable to the polemicists of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Wesley "devoted particular emphasis to Greek authors who had receded from western consciousness following the fourth century of the Church's existence" (Maddox 1994:23, compare T. Campbell 1991, 1992a, Keefer 1982, 1984). Wesley's pragmatic approach, which fueled the Methodist movement's organizational innovations, seems to have been related to a conclusion apparent in his extensive writings and drawn from his preference for a better grounded patristics over the over the systematic and scholastic traditions fueling most western theological debates—namely, his conclusion that that western Christianity had unduly exchanged orthopraxy ("right practice") for

orthodoxy, and in Wesley's mind it was a narrow understanding of orthodoxy. Wesley further charged that this concern for orthodoxy, as exemplified in the refusal of high Calvinists even to preach the Gospel to the general public, represented a complete abandonment of a "practical theology," focused on ministry (Maddox 1994, cf. T. Campbell 1992b).

To show his commitment to practical theology, Wesley often cited a well-known Pietist phrase in his writings: *In necesarii veritas, unitas; in non necesarii, libertas, in omnibus, caritas* (In necessary things, Truth and Unity; in non-necessary things, Liberty; in all things, Love). This *latitudinarian* approach (i.e., allowing believer a good deal of latitude in non-essential beliefs) was adopted by Wesley in the interest of cultivating a movement in which participants adopted a charitable, loving, supportive ethos, and it would also later come to characterize nineteenth century Liberal theology. Later, it would characterize perfectly the theology of the support group movement of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which carried this spirit even further by making the fulfillment of the spiritual program depend upon participants acknowledging a "Higher Power," "as we understand it," which might even be the group itself, as I have noted. The only attributes of this Higher Power that the Twelve Step program would insist upon were those that the group itself was supposed to reflect: the Higher Power was characterized by love, forgiveness, and healing.

The various kinds of Methodist groups that Wesley helped create in the mid-eighteenth century were, in explicit terms, modeled on the Anglican "societies," for which there was a precedence in the Anglican church. This itself is indicative of Wesley's express aim *not* to break with the Church of England. Like his Pietist Lutheran forebears, Wesley would ultimately die a member of the Anglican clergy. Methodist societies would only become "local churches" (and the Methodists a "denomination") when, in the wake of the American War for Independence, the

Church of England cut off America's Anglican churches from communion with the Church of England. The state of war created an emergency, especially for those who maintained Wesley's high-church view that the sacraments were crucial for the experience of faith.[114] This rupture between England and the American Anglican churches compelled not only Wesley but other Anglicans in the 1780s to found national organizations in the U.S. (eventually establishing, for instance, the Episcopalian Church as separate from the Church of England).

The Methodist societies, which later became local churches, were further organized into *classes*, the basic peer group of the Methodist movement. Each "class" held class meetings during the week to allow class members to review their moral and ethical condition with one another. A number of other organizational forms also proliferated under Wesley (see e.g., Watson 1987:93-123), the most notable of which were various forms of voluntary "bands," very small groups modeled partly on Wesley's experience with Moravian bands, designed to produce even more intimate forms of peerhood.[115] These bands were actually regularized earlier than the classes, by the late 1730s, while the first class began in 1742, initially in response to deeply pragmatic concerns (specifically, raising funds to rent a room in which to meet: see Watson 1987:93). In any case, the ability of such styles of organization to be applied to multiple, quite different ends is of course one of the primary findings of the social historical literature on the Methodist model and its influence on a number of non-religious forms of popular organization.[116]

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114 See Wesley's "The Duty of Constant Communion" (1964[1788]:332-344).

115 One well known example of this is the "band of four brothers" at Bethelsdorf, to which Count Zinzendorf belonged.

116 Martin articulates much of the growing literature on Latin American evangelicalism with this body of social history, but he was one of many scholars, especially in the 1980s and 90s, who wrote about the extent to which

Wesley eventually settled on a design for classes and bands that was intended to produce differing forms of accountability and support between members of the laity in either setting. "It could be said metaphorically," Wesley wrote, "that the society aimed for the head, the class meetings for the hands, and the band for the heart" (1906:112). However, the organization of classes and bands reflected these aims, and understanding these organizational differences will be instructive for understanding the emergence of the support group movement out of the Methodist model, as well as the tensions to which peer support groups responded.

These class-band differences may be summed up thus:

> - Classes were compulsory for all early Methodists (although Methodism itself was a voluntary movement), while bands were voluntary for Methodists.
> - Classes tended to be larger (often around twelve[117]) while bands were kept to a few members (rarely more than five).[118]
> - Classes might be single- *or* mixed gender, while bands were peer-segregated, according not only to gender but also the age and marital status of participants, to produce the greatest level of emotional intimacy possible.
> - Classes had leaders, while bands were leaderless.
> - Many class meetings became somewhat formalized over time (consisting increasingly of catechetical exchanges between leaders and members, which led to their decrease in popularity), whereas band meetings (and "penitent bands," often specific to male alcoholics), remained more informal, provided a less structured, more intimate and intensive confessional exchange in which the parties were construed as peers and equals (see especially Watson 1987:93-152, Henderson 1997:83-126).

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the organizational skills of group formation were, in and of themselves, a set of "portable practices" (to use Csordas's terms) that could be applied to other projects, political and otherwise. In this, Martin echoes the German ethnographer Willems (1967), who used a Weberian line of argument about the organizational capacities of small churches in Brazil and Chile in the middle of the twentieth century. See also Annis 1987 and the review by Virginia Garrard Burnett (1992) of the Latin Americanist literature on evangelicalism's organizational capacities.

117 Interestingly, twelve is also the ideal size for cell groups among evangelical churches (especially those cell groups influenced by a large South Korean church that is, by some measures, the single largest evangelical church in the world). O'Neill (2010) has written in some detail about the portability of this cell group organizational style in Guatemala, especially in the second chapter of that text. Cf. Chong 2011.

118 In this, bands may have echoed the limitations of the Conventicle Act of 1664 on Anglican societies, which forbade lay groups of six or more (much like the Holiness Club at Oxford in which Wesley participated). Moravian bands, however, we also of a similarly size.

Aspects of both classes and bands would later be reproduced in Christian group culture and eventually in support group culture, despite the transformations that classes, bands, and other groups based on the Methodist model would undergo over time. Below I discuss some of these changes, as well as the way in which support group culture ultimately derives from the Methodist model in a fairly visible historical genealogy (but see also Rack 1973-4, Dean 1981, Watson 1987:145-148).

Here I want to analyze how Wesley's effort to organize the laity and his overall sense of Methodist orthopraxy flowed from his theology concerning *sanctification* and *perfection*. Both classes and bands were designed to encourage different forms of accountability and affective support between members of the laity. Accountability and affective support for what? For sanctification, as I have mentioned above. (Later, these same goals of producing accountability and affective support would motivate the development of AA and the AA group as a kind of class or band organized around developing spiritual maturity in relation to *specific* "sins," and increasingly for a psychologized takes on "sins" like alcoholism and sexual addictions, until eventually the model was used to cope with entirely non-responsibilized conditions, like breast cancer.)

Wesley's experiences with the Holy Club at Oxford, with Anglican religious societies, and especially among the Moravians in America, Britain, and Germany, had persuaded him that sanctification required collective, *relational* efforts at accountability and support. Neither the individual believer in his penitence, nor the mass of believers in communion with one another—neither were adequate paths to spiritual improvement. Without a middle ground, an intimate group setting or an ethical relationship with another believer, as Wesley came to believe, Christians had struggled to achieve sanctification in first century Corinth, and they were faring

no better in eighteenth century England and America. This middle ground between the individual penitent and the church universal—the *ecclesiolae*—could become a means to the grace that could bless both the *ecclesia* and the individual believer. In setting his sights on this middle ground, between the Church and the individual view of salvation, Wesleyan Methodism (as a movement that had no desire to leave Anglicanism behind) would live the later image of the broader Anglican tradition as a *via media*, a "middle way" between oppositions that characterized the differences between Protestant and Catholic forms of Christianity.[119]

"Salvation through the Church"? Yes, Wesley argued. But experience had taught Wesley that, while the Church Universal (like the revival) could lead believers to belief, the *ecclesia* did not necessarily lead them to true saving faith, did not impact them in the same way or urge them toward sanctification. "I have found *by experience*," he wrote in an ongoing set of exchange with the ministers of the Methodist Connection from 1744 to 1789, "that one of these [participants in Methodist classes and bands] has learned more from one hour's 'close discourse', than from ten years' public preaching" (Emory 1835:V:V:214, emphasis mine, 211-240). (Here Wesley shows the influence of Puritan ethical exercises, citing Richard Baxter's teaching on the value of "close discourse" in evangelization.)

Of those that rely only on church services alone, Wesley exclaimed, "[H]ow few are there that know the nature of repentance, faith, and holiness!" (*idem*.). What they learned from this "close discourse" in Methodist groups, Wesley told the ministers, was not only repentance and faith, but a holiness that Wesley identified with "charity," or Christian love (more on that below). He paraphrased Paul on the insufficiency of preaching and revival alone to this Christian charity:

119
The Episcopal Church, as a branch of the Anglican Communion, sometimes describes themselves as "Protestant yet Catholic." See the archived page of the Episcopalian Church at https://web.archive.org/web/20110612013931/http://www.episcopalchurch.org/visitors_8950_ENG_HTM.htm.

"For what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels?" (*ibid.*:213, citing 1 Cor 13).

The kind of intimacy and ethical reflection that could produce not only repentance but Christian charity, Wesley argued, was only possible in a smaller group context, in the *ecclesiolae*. Wesley had come to believe that, while the Church Universal (like the revival) could lead believers to faith, the goal of the *ecclesia* must necessarily be to sanctify its members and lead them into ethical reflection. By experience, as he stated, this was only practical in a smaller group context, in the *ecclesiolae*, "wherever two or more are gathered" (Mt 18:20). The Methodist model showed a middle way to sanctification, organizationally speaking, avoiding relying *either* upon a wholly individual and quietist path to sanctification *or* upon a wholly vertical channel of grace to cultivate virtue in the believer.

The important of *experience* also was not only central to Wesley's claims about the Methodist societies. The experience of believers was the content of the group, the material that believers investigated in order to sanctify the unexamined aspects of their lives. Experience and the value of experience became so central to Wesleyanism and Methodism as a whole that its became part of what was later known as "the Wesleyan quadrilateral," which came to designate a fourth, Wesleyan contribution to an Anglican tradition of relying on three means of knowing God: through scripture, through tradition, and through reason.[120] (This was in contrast to the Calvinist reliance on scripture alone, *sola scriptura*, in contrast to the Catholic assertion that

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120 The "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" (a term coined by the Wesleyan scholar Albert Outler) was developed by adding "experience" to an Anglican tradition of a tripartite means of knowing God (through scripture, tradition, and reason) (see the introduction to Wesley 1964 by Alfred Outler, and see also Watson 1987, whose dissertation Outler oversaw). Just as the Wesleyan quadrilateral reflects his writings, but was not coined by Wesley, this "Anglican Trilateral" is sometimes (incorrectly) assigned to Richard Hooker. The concept accords with a then-existing Anglican emphasis on *reason*, in addition to scripture and tradition. Hooker, as well as later figures like Newman, played an important role in producing this emphasis on reason as a way to know God (Gunter *et al.* 1997:17, cf. Brantley 1984, Schlossberg 1998).

tradition was a second means of knowing God.)

Wesley did not come to this position of promoting revivalism and organizational innovations easily, possessed at a younger age what Martin calls the Anglican ethos of "form and privacy." He was certainly reluctant to preach outdoors at first, "having been all my life (till very recently) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order" (in Tomkins 2003:69).[121] And, again, it was only "by experience," as he said to his ministers, that he came to believe that this additional innovation of revivalism was not sufficient, that societies would need to be founded to carry the revived Christians onto sanctification and spiritual maturity (as I will show below). Thus, the turn towards experience that I describe in this chapter and the next was *doubly* represented in the founding of Methodist classes and bands: their initial organization was based on Wesley's own experiences, and they proceeded from the notion that the experience of accountability and support that helped the individual work toward "perfection" could only achieved collectively (and gradually[122]). Of course, as many have argued, that the turn to experience is visible across denominational lines and constitutes a fundamental characteristic of

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Wesley describes his reticence to partake in outdoor preaching, despite the encouragement of George Whitefield, who had read Jonathan Edwards's reports on the New England revivals quite closely. In a famous passage, Wesley recalls that "At four in the afternoon, I submitted myself to be more vile... to preach the gospel to the poor," preaching from Jesus's recorded first public preaching in the gospel of Luke:

> In the evening I reached Bristol, and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange new way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very recently) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done at church."
>
> At four in the afternoon, I submitted myself to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in the ground adjoining to the city about three thousand people. The Scripture on which I spoke was this... 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Tomkins 2003:69).

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The American Methodist Phoebe Palmer, in the nineteenth century, would seek a "shorter way" to sanctification that emphasized "laying it on the altar" to obtain "holiness now." See below.

modernity and modern epistemologies, not being unique to Wesley (e.g., Brantley 1984, Kelly 2002). Yet in Wesley's hands, the turn toward experience became a practical and organizational question as well, influencing not only his theology but the Methodist movement as a whole and all the forms of Christianity and Christian-influenced culture that have been touched by Methodism, including (and especially, for our purposes) the support group movement.

The differences between the classes and bands that I sketched above: the *voluntarism* of the groups; the *limited sizes* of the group; the extent to which members have *shared identities or peerhood* in a number of ways (age, gender, marital status, etc.); the question of *leadership;* the extent to which learning is *participatory and experiential*—all these variables played a role in the development of small group and support group culture (see Wuthnow 1994a-b). In part classes and bands differed because of the aforementioned, head-heart division of spiritual needs that Wesley saw each type of group serving: classes and bands worked on different aspects of Christians, and were organized somewhat differently to produce just the right atmosphere, suffused with enough love and intimacy, that Christians might honestly ask and answer one another, from the head and from the heart, the one fundamental question that he counseled them again and again to ask, which he saw as being the heart of the Methodist movement: "How does it prosper with your soul?"[123] Wesley wrote, for example, that "the particular design of the classes is… to [have believers] inspect their walking; to inquire into their inward state" in the presence of their fellows. Of bands, Wesley wrote that they were designed so that one's fellow members could "speak to each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed" (cited in Henderson 1997:110, cf.

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123 See several examples from his writings and sermons on pp. 98, 204, 216 of Watson 1987.

117).[124] Classes were likewise designed so that members could undergo self-examination with one another, in order "to learn what are their trials; and how they fall by or conquer them," but band-members were also to share even more intimately with one another and to describe in greater detail and with greater intimacy "the temptations we have felt since our last meeting" and "how we were delivered" (*idem.*). By addressing each aspect of the person, the cognitive, practical, and affective elements of their sanctification, Wesley taught that Christians might develop into greater maturity, or "perfection."

"Perfection" as a term does not mean what it would appear to mean and requires some explanation, since "Christian perfection" remains Wesley's most memorable theological argument. Indeed, the concept of perfection appears to have shaped the entire Methodist model by organizing it around an Aristotelean-sounding model of ethics, focused on an ethical *telos*, or maturity, that Wesley believes Christians can only strive for by cultivating ethical relationships with others who are willing not only to share an interest in mutual ethical development, but to hope for it in the other and encourage the other in achieving it as well.

Wesley took great pains to distinguish his definition of "perfection" in two major ways. First, he clarified repeatedly that, by "perfection" (or "entire sanctification") he meant a state of "perfect *love*" (for God and man), of wholly virtuous *intent* towards God and man; he did not mean a "sinless perfection" before God, as he sought to clarify. Second, Wesley referred his audiences repeatedly back to these terms as they are used in New Testament, where the words "perfect" (teleios) and "perfection" (telos) are used by Jesus in the gospels and by the authors of

124 The first citation cites a reprinted article in *Zion's Herald*, published in Boston on November 30, 1825, in section 3, on page 1, apparently reprinted from an earlier issue of the Arminian magazine Wesley published. The second comes from records of the conference revised many times between 1744 and 1791, but it reprints rules for the bands recorded as early as 1738 (see Emory 1835:VII:272-273). See Wesley 1964:180.

the New Testament epistles to define the goal of believers' sanctification—a pair of terms that is elsewhere defined as mature/maturity and complete/completion, both in the New Testament and in other Greek sources, as for example in Nicomachean Ethics.

On the first count, of "perfection" referring to a perfect love rather than sinless perfection (as many still commonly misunderstand the term), Wesley remained adamant through his career in public and in his instructions to Methodist ministers that perfection as it was used in the New Testament could *not* be taken to mean "excluding all infirmities, ignorance, mistake... and transgressions." Instead, Wesley argued, God asks of us "the pure love of God and our neighbor"—the Greatest Commandment (Wesley 1964[1758]:177). Wesley sometimes spoke of "perfect love" in his sermons, rather than "perfection," to avoid this misunderstanding.

But it is the second count—the way in which the terms "perfect" (*teleios*) and "perfection" (*telos*) reveal in New Testament passages attributed to Jesus, Paul, and other apostles a model of sanctification—that looks very much like virtue ethics, and suggests interesting parallels with Aristotelean virtue ethics in particular, given the latter's insistence that the cultivation of virtue required a "virtuous" or "perfect friendship" (*teleia philia*), in which friends guided one another onward toward greater virtue (1934[335BC]:1099b-1100a).[125]

First, there is the straightforward matter that the use of the word "perfection" to translate *telos* represents an archaic use of the term perfection. Other terms used to translate this term in the New Testament include "maturity" or "completion (i.e., of growth)." The term has a growth-oriented, or developmental, connotation. It is the same key term used by Aristotle to describe the "completion" or "end" of an action, both the "final cause" of Aristotelean physics and the "end"

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See especially Lowery's (2008) *Salvaging Wesley's agenda: a new paradigm for Wesleyan virtue ethics.* However, one reviewer suggests that it comprises "less a retrieval of Wesley than a correction" (Long 2009:233). Contra this assertion, see Mattingly 2012.

or “goal” of his ethics.

Some English translations of such verses still render the adjectival *teleios* as “perfect,” which is preserved in many translations in the commandment that ends chapter 5 of the Sermon on the Mount: “Be *perfect*, therefore, as your Father[126] is perfect” (Mt 5:48, NRSV; similar in NASB, KJV, and NIV translations). In other verses, translations differ in how to translate the term, as in Jesus's interaction with the Rich Young Ruler: “If you wish to be *perfect*, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven...” (Mt 19:21, NRSV; translated as *complete* in NASB, but *perfect* in KJV and NIV translations])).

In other verses, we see how synonyms for the term’s connotations of wholeness, fullness, completion, or maturity are added for emphasis, as in the opening verses of the epistle of James (1:4). Compare the KJV translation, which is similar to the NASB, to the NSRV [need to tell non-theology readers what these abbreviations mean]: “But let patience have her perfect (*teleion*) work, that ye may be perfect (*teleioi*) and entire (*holokleroi*, from *holos* for “whole,” cf. holism), wanting nothing”—“Let endurance/perseverance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.”[127]

That there is strong resonance with Aristotle should not be misunderstood as a Wesleyan innovation. The formation of Christianity, and Paul especially, was so suffused with Greek thought that an earlier generation's notions of recovering pre-Hellenistic Christianity (which was also attractive to many of the early Protestants) now seems untenable for modern biblical scholarship and contrary to what historical knowledge and textual analysis have revealed about

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126 Interestingly, most views of perfection do not consider it to be a characteristic of God in this teleological sense, as both Aquinas and Duns Scotus expressed.

127 Interestingly, the NASB uses “perfect” in both places: (similar to the NIV, though “mature” appears in the KJV and NASB translations).

the centuries of intermingling between Judean and Hellenistic cultures.[128] Throughout the later Christian tradition, the medieval church would maintain a high regard for Aristotle;[129] his work on logic would form one important basis for clerical educations, and his influence experienced a florescence in the late medieval period when his other works were recovered in the west, deeply influencing Thomistic and Ignatian brands of thought and spirituality that remain important even today.

Nor should we see this seeming Aristoteleanism as somehow out of keeping with Wesley's time, for although the sciences had seemed increasingly to reject Aristotelean physics in the two centuries leading to Wesley, their disputation for Aristotle was actually fairly narrow. Thinkers like Bacon and Galileo rejected Aristotle's *answers* rather than his probative *questioning*.[130] To borrow a Pauline expression, Aristotle's physics was seen as the letter of the law that kills, while Aristotle's tradition of inquiry was the spirit that gives life to science. This image was captured in Raphael's well known, early sixteenth-century painting of the School of Athens: Aristotle and Plato are the center, in conversation, the latter pointing upward,

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128 E.g., Wright 2013:xv. See e.g. where Paul is frequently read as directly addressing important strands of Greek philosophical thought, as, for instance, in the opening to 1 Corinthians, in his ontological disputation over "the things that are" and "the things that are not" (as in Caputo 2006, esp. 45-48).

129 Many know that for half a millennium, from the seventh to almost the fourteenth century, the west lost access to Aristotle, except through Boethius's translation of his work on logic, the *Organon*, which was the basis for education on logic. During this period, however, Aristotle continued to influence Jewish and Islamic thought, including leading thinkers in those traditions like Maimonides and Ibn Rushd/Averroes; they would in turn influence western philosophers throughout the late medieval period.

130 In the century before Wesley, Bacon and Galileo both urged Scholastics and the Church to reappraise Aristotle: the former insisted that knowledge must be made to serve the Christian end of charity, following the dual Aristotelean-Christian ethic of discerning the value of knowledge "by [its] fruits," and imploring, "Let there be therefore (and may it be for the benefit of both) two streams and two dispensations of knowledge [i.e. religion and natural philosophy]." In a popular legend of pastiche origin: see Newall 2006), Galileo begged Roman bishops to look through his telescope, appealing to their Aristotelean scholasticism: "Aristotle would look!" This apocryphal event may also be derived from the very name which Galileo gave to the telescope, which combines the Greek words for "far" (*tele*, cf. *telos*) and to see (*skopein*), placing in the voice of Galileo his insistence that Aristotle was interested in seeing the telos, unlike those who took him for a source of dogma.

presumably toward the Forms, while the latter points outward, at the physical world, as if arguing, as Bacon did, “We must lead lead men to the particulars themselves… [M]en... must force themselves for awhile to lay their notions by and begin to familiarize themselves with the facts” (1863[1620]:I:36).

For his part, Wesley's focus on the particulars of evangelism and organization, and his lack of interest, in all his voluminous writings, in producing anything like a systematic theology, meant that for a long time he had a reputation as a “folk theologian.” In this, however, he seems more akin to Bacon (and perhaps to Erasmus[131] before him): he preferred pragmatic to systematic theologies and tended to disparage, like Bacon and Erasmus, the dogmas and orthodoxies they produced. “Orthodoxy,” he wrote in his early, definitional account of the Methodist movement, “A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists”—“Orthodoxy, or *right opinions*, is, at best, but a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all” (1827a[1748]:328). Instead, as his project insisted, orthopraxy, with an eye on the highest more telos, was the primary aspect of religion to which Christians should dedicate themselves.

In this, Wesley sounds much like a man of his age, sharing something of Bacon's spirit in his disdain for “right opinions” and his preference for putting Christian knowledge to practical and charitable use. Other modern scholars have concurred with a portrait of Wesley as a child of the Enlightenment (e.g., Brantley 1984), noting not only Wesley's focus on method and inductive reasoning about sanctification, but his nearly Lockean explorations of the relationship between

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131 In a passage that may as well have been written about Wesley, Tracy (1996:105) writes that “Erasmus saw no point in 'teaching' or 'philosophy' that did not change the lives of those who professed it... [T]he study of theology really meant to follow Christ: 'to philosophize devoutly' in the New Testament, 'praying rather than arguing, and seeking to be transformed rather than to be armed for combat.' 'This kind of philosophy' was expressed 'more in the emotions [*affectibus*] than in syllogisms,' it was a matter of 'inspiration more than learning, transformation more than reasoning.'” See the following footnote.

emotions and reason and his pre-Romantic hope (preserved in the “Wesleyan quadrilateral”) that reason and experience might *jointly* govern emotion and guide it into more productive channels. It is also true that he showed a preference for Aristotelean, reformist approaches to Platonic, revolutionary ones. But it was his commitment to orthopraxy over orthodoxy, to practical action to charitable ends, that made his movement resonate with the spirit of scientific inquiry. And it is here we must look to understand how he understood Christian “perfection.”

Wesley sought to define perfection *specifically as Christian love*, and to thus distinguish the term from its more common meaning. The most explicit and elaborated instances of his effort to carefully define Christian perfection are probably in the doctrinal conferences of the Methodists from 1758 and in his tract entitled “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection” from 1767.

In the minutes from the conferences, Wesley recognized the dangers possible in misunderstanding these terms (and which would plague later misunderstandings of Wesley's meaning in some strains of holiness and pentecostal theology). He encouraged ministers not to preach Christian perfection “too minutely or circumstantially but rather in general and scriptural terms” (see Oden 1994:I:331), warning that according to scripture, Christian perfection should *not* be interpreted as “sinless perfection” “excluding all infirmities, ignorance, mistake” and “transgression,” but rather as “perfect love.”

Wesley went on the define what perfect love did mean: “the loving God with all the heart, so that every evil temper is destroyed and every thought and word and work springs from and is *conducted to that end by the pure love of God and our neighbor*” (Oden 1994:I:331; Wesley 1964[1758]:177, emphasis mine). What is important about this is its focus, in what I have italicized here, on the “ends” of ethical action. For Wesley, as for Aristotle (and for many of the

other Classical Mediterranean ethical systems analyzed by Foucault), any effective ethical system must keep the end, or telos, in mind. Wesley wanted his ministers to preach Christian perfection, or telos, not because blemishless perfection was possible, but so that their moral efforts would lead to the highest Christian virtue—the love of God and neighbor (Mt 22:35-40, Mk 12:28-31, cf. Lk 10:25-28, 1 Cor 13)—and not, idolatrously, toward some lesser goal.[132]

Moreover, Wesley had sharp words for holding Christians up to "unscriptural," worldly notions of perfection. What if, he posited, perfect love alone may "not [live] up to my idea of a perfect Christian"?

> And perhaps no one ever did, or ever will [live up to it]. For your idea may go beyond, or at least besides, the scriptural account… *Scriptural perfection is pure love* filling the heart and governing all the words and actions. If your idea includes anything more, or anything else, it is not scriptural: and then no wonder that a scripturally perfect Christian does not come up to it.
>
> I fear many stumble on this stumbling block. They include [in their account of perfection] as many ingredients as they please—not according to Scripture but their own imagination…
>
> *The more care should we take to keep the simple, scriptural account [of perfection] continually in our eye*: pure love raining alone in our heart and life. This is the whole of scriptural perfection" (Wesley 1964[1767]:293, emphasis mine).

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Many Christians of Wesley's age, he thought, elevated faith to the place of supreme virtue, since it was thought to lead to justification. Following Paul's elevation of love above the two other cardinal virtues, faith and hope, Wesley declared, in Aristotelean fashion, that faith was less important than the supreme "end" of faith, and that faith only *begins* men's process of coming to know God:

> Faith itself… [is] still is only the handmade of love. As glorious and honorable as [faith] is, it is not the end of the Commandment. God hath given this honor to love alone.
>
> Love is the end of all the commandments of God. Love is the end, the soul and, of every dispensation from God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. And it will endure when heaven and earth fully away; for 'love' alone 'never faileth' (1 Cor 13:8). Faith will totally fail; it will be swallowed up in sight, in the everlasting vision of God…
>
> Very excellent things are spoken of faith… Yet still it loses all excellence when brought into a comparison with love. What St. Paul observes concerning the superior glory of the gospel above that of the law, made, with great propriety, be spoken of the superior glory of love above that of faith… Yea, all the glory of faith… arises hence. It is the great temporary means which God has ordained to promote that eternal end [Love]" (Wesley 1964[1750]:226-227).

Perhaps there is no clearer account of his focus on telos in his preaching on Christian perfection than this. Like Aristotle, Wesley could not imagine the achievement of this telos outside of human relationships, since perfect love only exists in relationship with God and with others. And, as we shall see, Wesley's notions of developing this love in virtuous relationship echoes own Aristotle's model, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, of ethical friendship.

The model of moral development in Wesley's groups was also *gradualist*, much like the Aristotelean model of character formation, emphasizing the extent to which character formation (and the attainment of "sanctification" or "holiness") takes place over a lifetime, rather than being *subitist*, or being a sudden transformation of the person, as Phoebe Palmer, the English Keswick movement, later, non-Wesleyan holiness movements would later assert.[133,]

In sum, Wesley shared with Aristotle's model of virtue ethics the view that virtue (or sanctification) is primarily achieved *gradually, over time* and through *relational methods* (especially practices of moral reflection, sharing, and supportive love). This perspective guided the Wesleyan organizational synthesis of Christian fellowship styles found in the Methodist model.

Methodists would come to see this unity of the sanctification/holiness discourse with the practices, ethos, and organizational forms of the Methodist movement unravel. In the short term this appeared to be a loss of the Methodist model, but the end result was that many of the Methodist model's organizational innovations were adopted widely, adapted to different purposes

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The *subitist* aspect of this dialectic was to reassert itself in a non-Wesleyan holiness movement led by the American Phoebe Palmer, who sought a "shorter way" to sanctification that emphasized, not *active*, synergistic practices of holiness, but "waiting on the Lord," "laying it on the altar," and other "yielding" (if not passive) sacrifices of self and will that God promised to reward, Palmer argued. Later, the Keswick movement (pron. "kez-ick") would develop this line of thought further (in England—showing again the transatlantic, Anglophonic sharedness of these development); their catchphrases, including the well-known "Let go and let God," emphasize the practice of "yielding to the Spirit" for a shorter way to sanctification.

and discourses.

De-emphasizing doctrine had long been central to the Methodist model's design. Methodists did not see themselves as a new orthodoxy, as Wesley made clear. He also made clear that Methodists should not see themselves as set apart, or as an "elect" (like the Calvinists), and especially not as a new denomination or sectarian identification. Instead, Wesley depicted Methodists as irenic, ecumenically minded Christians like the Pietists, who merely aimed for "true Christianity"—not by strict adherence to a subtle orthodoxy, but by *organizing themselves for fellowship*, guided by an ethos of perfect love, a set of spiritual practices, and a form of organization conducive these practices and this ethos.

Wesley shared with the Pietists the notion that small group fellowship and the practice of "sharing" were not innovations, nor schismatic, but rather that they constituted a primitivist revival of "A First Century Christian Fellowship" (the name that was initially given to the peer groups that would become the Oxford Group, from Alcoholics Anonymous was derived). This primitive Christian fellowship was compatible with—indeed, was *conducive to* and *an integral part of*—active membership both in other institutional churches and in the Church Universal (*ecclesia*).

Likewise, if Christians accepted the highest Christian virtue as love, then "true Christianity" had always meant practicing this sanctification *communally*, for it was only in relation to others could practice this virtue (Wesley 1964[1751]:226-229). Wesley thus saw himself, not as an innovator, but a pragmatist reviving and revising organizational forms to help others follow to a commandment that was incumbent on all true Christians.

Wesley's focus on organization was the key to Methodist movement's success where other evangelists' movements died out with them. As Martin has written,

> The… poten[cy] of Methodism lay in its organization… It thus had sufficient backbone to survive and yet could express all the resonances of equality before God and before man. Methodism… was a *movement* and arguably one of the first mobilizations in the modern sense of that word (1990:32, emphasis original).

These words could just as well describe the evangelical and support group movements in Latin America (cf. Mäkelä 1996).

Even Wesley's competitors acknowledged that his focus on group organization was responsible for his movement's relatively greater long-term success over other revivalists. The revivalist George Whitefield, for instance, had been a longtime friend of Wesley's, having been a former member of his "Holy Club" at Oxford. Although Whitefield's pioneering role in open-air preaching earned him many converts, his Calvinist form of Methodism did not fare as well as Wesley's, a fact which he credited to Wesley's organizational skills.

Perhaps even more telling was that Whitefield used the precise Christian metaphors associated with *teleios* ("perfection")—metaphors of growth, and of maturity and completion as "bearing fruit"—in his statements about Wesley's comparatively greater success:

> I [now] know the propriety of Mr. Wesley's advice: 'Establish class-meetings and form societies wherever you preach and have attentive hearers'; for, where we have preached without doing so, *the word has been like seed by the wayside* (Etheridge 1859:189, emphasis mine).

And elsewhere Whitefield is reported to have acknowledged:

> My brother Wesley acted wisely; the souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand (*idem*., emphasis mine).

It would add little to this dissertation to produce an updated catalog of the historical evidence Martin marshals to show Methodism's wide-ranging social, cultural, and political effects across North America, Latin America, and Britain. Nor would it contribute much to review all the literature contesting this or that particular effect of the Methodist model, or

debating whether the Methodist model of evangelicalism inherently carries out the effects, or to what extent they may be absent or even reversed under different circumstances.[134]

But there are two more relevant factors about the Methodist model that I want to review before moving on to next chapter, which traces the ways the various threads of the Methodist model came unraveled and were re-entwined in the support group movement. The first issue has to do with Martin's analysis of masculinity (which I find prescient and deeply helpful to my own research on masculinity and spirituality in Latin America). The second issue has to do with the question of leadership and hierarchy in evangelicalism (where I find Martin's conclusions, in this early book [1990] to have been premature).

First, masculinity. Martin seems to largely agree with Willems (on Latin American evangelicalism) and Semmel (on the Methodist model more generally) that the Methodist model of peer group ethical training has had a particularly strong impact on men. Several years before Brusco's (1993, 2011[1995]) assertion that a (Protestant) “Reformation of Machismo” was underway in Latin America, Martin acknowledged a similar pattern, although he failed to draw the same level of attention to it. In presenting William Williams's research, Martin, in his chapter “Methodism: Latin American Versions,” notes that

> Williams... summarizes the reasons for [mass Methodist conversion in late eighteenth century American Maryland and Delaware] in a few sentences entirely

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See especially the conflicting accounts of Martin 1990 and Stoll 1990 for an example of this, despite the fact that both contributions are more moderated than (and written, like Freston 2002, to refute) some of the generalizations of earlier claims. But, for pre-iterations of this pattern, with far greater confidence in projecting potential trajectories, see also Willems 1966 and L'alive D'Epinay 1967 on Latin American pentecostalized Protestants (comparing the latter with Bastian 1983, but contrast Bastian 1993, 2001). A better-known body of research on this theme concerns Methodism (largely in the British context): see the earlier work on Methodism by Elie Halévy (esp. 1971[1906] and its discussions by E.P. Thompson 1968[1963] and others; but especially Bernard Semmel's argument against a pessimistic and simplistic reading of Halévy's thesis (as a tale of Methodism's opiate-like effects on revolutionary energies) (transl. *ibid*., Semmel 1973). Compare this with Martin's (1990:36-39, 42ff) summary of this research, especially his image of whether “the energies [that Methodism and now Pentecostalism] evoke[d] are drained away from the revolutionary of progressive political task” (44). Compare the review of Troeltsch (on church and sect, and on Methodism in particular), Halévy, Semmel, etc. in Watson 1987:134-145.

> applicable to Pentecostalism today. They underline both *the supportive nature of the community* and *the change in the male personality* (1990:38, emphasis mine).

Then, Martins cites Williams to this effect:

> The Methodist prescription called for a revolution in values... The Methodist message demanded the substitution of... cooperation for competition, compassion for brutality, and egalitarianism for deference (Williams 1985:103, cited in Martin *idem*., cf. Semmel's [1973] *The Methodist revolution*).

Each of these values is also central to support group culture today, of course, but, like Martin, I want to draw specific attention to Williams's conclusion, which Martin cites. Williams argues that Methodism "*idealized feminine traits* such as patience, love, gentleness, sensitivity, humility and submissiveness, and rejected the competitive values of the male-dominated spheres of commerce, politics, and sport" (Martin 1990:39, citing Williams 1985:106, emphasis mine). The "revolution in values" was a turn towards previously feminized values (cf. Eriksen 2005, 2007). Like Brusco, who perceived a "feminine ethos" at work in men's reformation, Williams tries to explain why these "feminine traits" appealed to men. Yet Williams points, not to the *initial* conversion (which often takes places in mixed-gender settings: cf. Smilde 2007), but to the new social networks and communities that men join afterward and the "continuous conversion" they subsequently undergo in these new relationships:

> *To those [men] seeking deeper human relationships* than found in the surface camaraderie and the boozy haze surrounding the card game, horse race, or gala party, Methodist societies offered a supportive community...
>
> Wesleyan societies... provided a real sense of psychological security as Methodist brothers and sisters offered physical and financial help, or lent a sympathetic ear in time of tribulation. Moreover, while the Methodist class [and band] meeting kept its members on the road to perfection, it also encouraged each member to bare the innermost depths of his or her soul.
>
> What a wonderful catharsis! *This type of activity could not go on in the outside world... which regarded self revelation, particularly among males, as a sign of weakness* (*idem*., emphasis mine).

Note Williams's emphasis on organizing men in particular n particular into peer groups

where they could “seek deeper human relationships,” in contrast with the usual “competitive” male-male relationships, under “the boozy haze” of the male-coded public sphere in eighteenth-century America. This recognition of the need to find new social networks in order to transform men and masculinity would re-emerge as important again and again throughout nineteenth- and twentieth-century North America and would influence the path that both evangelicalism and the support group movement took in Latin America, as Brusco (2011[1995]) and Brandes (2002) have demonstrated. In many of these efforts to reform men and masculinity, the Methodist model of sanctification, as a kind of continuous conversion, a continuous “turning towards” God and one's spiritual brethren for mutual support, confession, and accountability, would serve as an important alternative to the social worlds men might otherwise occupy and would reshape their approach to those spheres, like the family, pressuring them to occupy those spheres in a new spirit, following a new model of masculinity (cf. Lawrence 2011 with Brusco 2011[1995]). The Methodist model of group organization would play an important role in drawing men both into the evangelical movement and, later, into the support group movement, which would then return to influence anew the world of Christian group formations.

Second, leadership. Here I depart sharply from Martin's conclusions. While much of his analysis pays close attention to the Methodist model's diffusion of egalitarian, voluntaristic, and participatory models of lay organization from Europe and North America to Latin America, Martin's conclusion ultimately appears to backtrack on his earlier claims about egalitarianism and mutuality. He returns his gaze to the (pastored) congregation in discussing Latin American pentecostalization, concluding that, “Sheep may safely graze only where there are pastors, as well as folds and safe enclosures,” and he argues that only “a fraternity… under firm leadership” is able to “implement new disciplines, reorder priorities, [and] counter… destructive machismo”

(1990:287,284). Only under such “firm leadership,” he claims can “mutuality and warmth” flourish, allowing “for the practice of new roles” by men (*idem.*).

By contrast, most of Martin's research on the Methodist model, and my own primary and secondary research on the support group movement and its development, suggests that both the earliest developments of the Methodist model and its latest developments (in the support group movement) demonstrates the opposite: that small groups tend *not* to thrive under firm leadership. In the history of the Methodism *per se* (which is not Martin's main concern, in any case), the development of “mutual support” was in fact *hampered* by strong leadership and “formalism,” as I will show briefly.

Furthermore, where the Methodist model succeeded, its success was usually based on what I have called its “constitutional authority” as opposed to a model of personal authority (as it was in the model of “A First Century Christian Fellowship” that, in the Oxford Group, would gave rise to AA, and in the support group movement as a whole) (e.g., Henderson 1997:140-142). This egalitarian strain of organizing and the avoidance of personal authority remained rather in the spirit of the Enlightenment and ended up avoiding the problems that actually befell Methodist classes in later years.

What problems would befall these classes, once the best example of the Methodist model? In contrast to Martin's assertions about pentecostalism, the greatest challenges to the Methodist model for Methodists actually had to do with the *excessive* development of hierarchy and leadership. This growth of organizational hierarchy appears to have been related to the growth of the size of the Methodist class, and it contrasts with support groups that, or with cell groups (where mechanisms of fission kept group size small and moderated the function of cell group leaders, where they existed).

The decline of the class meeting has been the subject of extensive research (Rack 1973-1974, Currie 1977, Dean 1981, Watson 1987, etc.), all of which has been summarized by Charles White (2002), among others. White does not give quite as detailed a sociological account as others, such as Watson (1987).[135] Still, White's summary does pivot on an analysis of what Watson called "the dangers of formalism" that took place as the functions of the class changed during the nineteenth century.[136] The class meeting would later be abolished as a requirement for membership in the Methodist church in the early twentieth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Methodist class meeting had been fully formalized in terms of its pedagogy, usually offering a lecture analyzing of the verses that were the subject of the sermon that week.

In this catechetical and hierarchical role, the class no longer represented the Wesleyan model. Nor did it any longer represent, as the Methodist model had, the vanguard of Christian laical organization or of Christian lay experience. Bands persisted, but laical organization in Britain and in North America largely developed in the general direction of prayer meetings, which did not focus on mutual support (like those led by Phoebe Palmer) (see Dean 1981). The voluntarism and relative lack of structure of both bands and prayer meetings means, unfortunately, that few bands of prayer meetings left any historical records to assess.

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Watson used Troeltsch's Church-Sect distinction to trace the tensions between Methodism's existence as a nonsectarian movement designed to promote the Church, but which maintained an a Sect-like orientation toward sanctification in its "societies," only to later experience growing institutionalization as it became a Church (after the Revolutionary War against Britain)

Although this distinction is well-known (Troeltsch 1976[1912]:II;461-462), Troeltsch's assertion that the doctrine of sanctification was revived by Sect types of Christian religious organization is less well known. So too is his specific assessment of Methodism—that it combined the church and sect types—not well known (see Rowan Ireland for ethnographic demonstration of this in Brazil):

> "Nothing was altered in [Anglican] Church dogma [in Methodism], its supernatural character was only intensified, and its general meaning was summed up in conversion and its presuppositions, and in sanctification with heavenly results. The continuance of the Church was taken for granted, but in spite of that its spirit was denied. This necessarily lead to external separation, in England itself last of all." (*ibid*.:II:723)

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See Watson 1987:136-137/n182-183, and 145-148, cf. Rack 1973-74, Dean 1981.

White (2002) lists five major reasons for that led to the decline of the class meeting, *all* of which point to these problems of growth and of formal leadership:

> (a) "Paradoxically, the success of Methodism" meant that Wesley had to answer by the middle of the eighteenth century to claims that class leaders were not being adequately vetted for the task (208). Wesley's proposed solution to this inadequacy—that inadequate leaders be referred to him directly[137]—hardly resolved the issue much past his own lifetime, if at all. Furthermore, it suggests the importance of maintaining impersonal, constitutional governance in support groups (and the importance of established guides and guidelines in cell groups: cf. O'Neill 2010]).
>
> (b) Wesley reported that some class leaders apparently fought among themselves,[138] distracting from the intended, laical focus of such groups. "It is difficult to inculcate perfect love in one's class when one is engaged in a power struggle with the other leaders," White writes (*idem*.). Here too the rise of formal leadership in the class hindered rather than developed the Methodist model, for Wesley's prominence in the movement and his personal authority was often imitated by other Methodist leaders, which limited the classes' possibility of developing an autonomous, constitutional government. "After his strong hand was removed," White wrote, "these tensions helped to splinter 19th-century Methodism, [although] during his lifetime he was able to control them" (*idem*.).
>
> (c) The size of classes themselves swelled. Although Wesley largely succeeded in limiting them to around a dozen (the size of cell groups and many support groups across the globe),[139] mutual support and accountability became increasingly impossible. This growth was also strongly related to the rise of personal leadership in these classes. "By 1816," White wrote, "the classes in one locality averaged eighteen. Surprisingly, between 1886 and 1905 a model class averaged *seventy-three* members" (White 2002:209, citing Currie 1977:128, emphasis mine).
>
> (d) The class leaders began also to clash with pastors as Methodism settled into a denomination—again, distracting from the lay focus of classes.
>
> (e) Class tensions emerged, in a pattern that may remind the reader of the challenges that present-day support groups have in attracting college-educated members (Vaillant 2012:308-314, cf. 297, 298, 327). As Methodism grew, it both attracted middle-class members and encouraged a personal piety that helped many

137 See Wesley in "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists," where he answers (1827a[1748]:334), "If any of these [leaders] be remarkably wanting in gifts or grace... tell it to me, not to others, and I will endeavor to exchange them for a better."

138 Wesley's journals record one example which "stumbled the people... and greatly hindered the [work of God] .... It lasted for two years and caused the loss of a hundred class members" (1979[1872]:III:326-329).

139 See O'Neill 2010:26 and Mäkelä et al. 1996:56, respectively. Cf. Chong 2011.

> Methodists become middle class.[140] However, when this happened, the class meeting suffered from the problems noted by Burdick (1993) of the Catholic base communities: the Methodist classes no longer were sustained by a sense of peerhood, and tensions grew between members of different class backgrounds. In an inversion of the pattern Burdick observed in Brazilian base communities, Methodist class leaders, "who were chosen for their spiritual gifts rather than their social status, were [often] lower class [while] the members were middle class." White gives examples: one preacher was given charge over his former employer, and a "stuff maker" once led a class containing a "gentleman" (209-210, citing Rack 1973:15,n13). As a result of this, by the nineteenth century "a dislike to class meetings [was] spreading among the families of our more wealthy people," according to one minister. All the while, the Methodist model continued to spread to the working classes as a model of egalitarian social organization.

The analyses I will offer in the next chapter of the support group movement, and of a number of Christian lay groups, suggests two findings about leadership that our analysis of the support group movement and its adoption of the Methodist model will bear out: *first*, that the egalitarian structure of the group is best maintained by replacing leadership positions with a constitution of mutually enforceable rules, and *second*, that even informal styles of leadership should be de-emphasized in the group's discourse, practice, and the ethos. These findings, of course, confirm the egalitarian design that Wesley initially intended (cf. Henderson 1997:140-142), despite the fact that Methodism itself did not manage to carry this egalitarianism through much of the nineteenth century. In my own analysis of leadership in the groups I examined, there were countless examples of this constitutional governance, whereby ordinary members harnessed the rules and principles to govern the group according to its guidelines. Moreover, I observed ordinary members disavowing any leadership roles and emphasizing the acephalousness and equalizing qualities of the group, which was understood to be necessary to the group's

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140 This growth of wealth among Methodists greatly troubled Wesley. He observed, in his "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity," that an increase in piety "cause[d] diligence and frugality, which, in the natural course of things, must beget riches" (1979[1872]:VII:290). These riches were to Wesley and many others an obvious threat to justification and sanctification, it being easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than a rich man to enter the Kingdom (Mt 19:16-30).

functioning. I observed this especially in *Wém*, where the "facilitator" of some of the therapeutic exercises is sometimes a titled psychologist (although quite often it is simply an experienced member)—a fact which might have caused the specter of authority to loom over the group in some moments. Not only the term "facilitator," but a number of deferential gestures of the part of the facilitator towards others were intended to emphasize members' peerhood, as I will show, and I also observed members themselves asserting this equality vis-à-vis facilitators. These efforts to de-emphasize any authority or seniority was particularly strong AA, as in the example with which I began Chapter 6, of Carlos good-naturedly deflating the preacherly role Quentin's admonitions had begun to assume.

Both issues—the way the Methodist model dealt with masculinity, and the way it grappled with the dangers of formal authority—will be important in the following chapter, in which I show some of these historical dilemmas that the Methodist model faced. These dilemmas are in some ways "resolved" in the support group model. In particular, the support group model managed to cultivate the exact narrative ethical methods, the mutual accountability, and the practice of gradual (inter)personal transformation that were Wesley's aim in developing the. The support group model does this by expanding upon the band-like conditions I listed above, in contrast to the conditions in Methodist classes (i.e., the bands' voluntarism, their acephalousness, their small group sizes, their emphasis on peerhood, and their cultivation of mutual confession). Support groups went further, though, in doing away with the Methodist practice of restricting band membership to those who had *already* obtained some "Christian maturity" (Watson 1987:116-119,121). By not demanding participants to undergo the extensive catechetical functions of the class (and by foregoing the growing leadership structure of the class), the strengths of the Methodist model, best exemplified in the band, were fully elaborated.

Chapter 8: The further development of the Methodist model in support group culture

Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Methodism continued to be among the fastest-growing denominations in the United States, due in no small part to its evangelical method, which paired revivalist preaching with voluntaristic social networks that organized the those who took part in the revivals. As I discussed in Chapter 7, a number of other religious and political movements and institutions borrowed the Methodist model, the Methodist method of revival, and various aspects of what made them both work (including the "three turns" towards lay organization, sanctification, and experience, as well as their styles of affect and social organization). Only by the twentieth century had it become clear that Methodism and the class meeting had plainly lost ground to newer developments in evangelical, Pentecostal, and other charismatic movements; and its influence on political and social organization of a purportedly secular type would be mostly forgotten in the public consciousness, only preserved in historiography, like Halévy's, which was misunderstood until the 1970s (when translations and revisitations of Halévy's work by Bernard Semmel and others forced a reconsideration of the role of Methodism, in a manner analogous to Weber's analysis of Calvinism and capitalism.)

To understand the aftermath of the Methodist model in Methodism and its diffusion into other movements (even as the model waned in Methodism itself), it may help to think again of the way in which the Methodist model aligned the three "turns" in Christian thinking that I have described above. By the twentieth century, these three turns may be seen to have become unaligned. My argument is that, in the support group movement, these three turns were realigned once more (and indeed much of the discourse, practices, ethos, and organization of the Methodist

model).

The turns to experience and to sanctification (or *holiness*, as it was more commonly known in the nineteenth century English-speaking world) unraveled in the specific forms of Methodist lay organization I have described. In particular, the Wesleyan emphasis on holiness took on a life all its own.

The Holiness movement in Britain and America has its origins in Methodism, its founders being Methodist and citing Wesley as their influence. However, the notions of sanctification they developed were quite distinct. The British and American Holiness movements would come to subscribe a view of holiness/sanctification that was *monergistic*, *subitist* (sudden or immediate), and *individual*, in direct contrast with Wesleyan notions of holiness as synergistic, gradualist, and collective or communal.[141] More to the point, the Holiness-Pentecostal movements came to identify sanctification, not with the methodical practice of communion, mutual confession, and gradual development, but with ecstatic experience of revival and of private surrender to God.

In somewhat of a reverse order from Methodism, the Holiness movement began first in North America and then spread to Britain. (The support group movement would reverse the directionality of this flow once more, but with a twist: an American Lutheran pastor, Frank Buchman, would undergo an experience conversion while in Keswick,[142] England, the birthplace of the British Holiness movement.) Also notable was that the American Holiness movement was begun by a woman, like many religious leaders and innovators in American religious (and

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141 This is not to say that the Holiness movement preached that one received holiness individually, without God. Rather, the Holiness movements did not teach that one became increasingly sanctified through relational activities with other believers, such as mutual confession, accountability, and ethical friendships. In this, the Holiness movement contrasted not only with Methodism and the Methodist model, bb ut with the later support group movement as well.

142 Pronounced “kez-ick.”

religio-political) life from the seventeenth century to the present.[143]

Phoebe Palmer grew up in a Methodist household headed by a devoutly Methodist minister for a father, and she herself would marry a Methodist preacher. Yet, after she had an experience that she believed was the perfection or "entire sanctification" that Wesley described in 1837, Phoebe took over the Methodist women's prayer meeting, originally headed by her sister, and the group is usually considered the core of the American Holiness Movement. This American Holiness movement would in turn give rise to a British variant (sometimes called the Higher Life movement or the Keswick movement). [144]

The origins of the Holiness movement—in Phoebe Palmer's prayer meeting, rather than in a Methodist class or band setting—demonstrate that, while small groups were still a crucial form of organization for North American Christian movements, otherwise the locus in which sanctification was held to took place, as well as the meaning (and experience) of sanctification, had changed significantly in the nineteenth century. "During the 1830s," as David L. Watson writes in his history of the Methodist class meeting:

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See e.g. Keller *et al*. 2006, esp. I:3-11. These include leaders like Ida B. Robinson, Ellen White, Mar, Aimee Semple McPherson, and countless others more and less recent, especially among Methodists, the Quakers, various evangelical, pentecostal, and charismatic movements, and a number of dissenting religious groups (including not only the Quakers but the Seventh Day Adventists, the Christian Scientists, and others). Even this characterization entirely misses the dual religious-political role of many female political leaders, leaders of early women's movements, charismatic public actors in these movements (like e.g. Carrie Nation), and, perhaps most importantly, several large politically axial movements and organizations in U.S. history like the female leaders of the temperance movement, the abolitionist movement, the Salvation Army, the populist movement, and the progressive movement.

144

A note on this trend, and then one on Palmer: Just as women could lead (all-female) classes in eighteenth century Methodism, and women held important role among Quakers from the seventeenth century onward (among whom women preached in prayer meetings and played founding roles), many women played important roles in nineteenth century Anglo-American religious movements and developments, and would go on to do so in the twentieth century (e.g., Aimee Semple McPherson, etc.) As for Palmer and her gender identity, it is known that she herself refused to hold her meetings outside her home (and that her home was enlarged to accommodate this: Howe 2007:190). Men were not initially permitted, according to the Methodist tradition just noted, but beginning in 1839, when they were, they would include some of the most significant voices in nineteenth century Methodism.

> references to class meetings in early Methodist autobiography decline quite abruptly… and the role they had hitherto served as a door into the [Methodist] societies [i.e., into local Methodist churches] was taken over by the prayer meeting…
>
> Indeed, spiritual vitality in general became more frequently related to prayer meetings than to classes. *They were less structured and more spontaneous gatherings*... (1987:137, emphasis mine).

The lack of structure in these prayer meetings (unlike the growing structure of Methodist classes) was intended to leave believers open to the spontaneous inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which might bloweth where it listeth (Jn 3:8). These meetings might be compared with the Quaker's "unprogrammed" prayer meetings, which also practice this openness to inspiration and have a long history of influencing U.S. lay religiosity and female participation. Prayer meetings may have allowed allowed some charismatic women like Palmer to assume important roles, as they did among Quakers and later in the evangelical and pentecostal movements (cf. also Eriksen 2012). Indeed, much like in Quaker circles, the Holiness movement of the nineteenth century made use of a monergistic language about God, full of pneumatic depictions of the Holy Spirit acting suddenly upon believers. This emphasis on God's unexpected action increasingly displaced the Wesleyan-Arminian focus on bringing the will into cooperation with God (as well as the Arminian emphasis on sanctification through good works).

However, there remained within the American Holiness movement, begun by Palmer, the turn toward experience. In fact, the emphasis on experience appears to have gotten deeper and broader in some ways throughout the nineteenth century, the focus of important religious movements among the popular and elite classes over the century (more on which below).

Palmer's own experience of "entire sanctification" occurred in a singular, dramatic moment in which she had been praying for the "gift" of holiness (language that signals her monergistic view of sanctification) (see White 2005[1986]:102-160, esp 129ff.) Explaining this

sudden experience, she taught that, in the Biblical account of Pentecost—of believers, in the wake of Jesus's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)—God had “furnished a model for all future generations of disciples.” She called this model of sanctification the “shorter way” to holiness (Palmer 1984[1868]:xii, 1985[1843]:17). Wesley's gradualist approach to sanctification was gone. Instead, in a parallel with Luther's conversion narrative, in which Luther, hearing the sacrament of reconciliation, came suddenly to believe the scriptural promises about justification as already being fulfilled, Palmer likewise came to believe that the scriptural promises for sanctification upon which she reflected were themselves proof of this sanctification in herself, and then she reported feeling sanctified (see White 2005[1986]:23-24).

For Palmer and the Holiness movements after her, the dynamics of entire sanctification were like Pentecost in that, although the experience was sometimes experienced with others, it did not proceed through collective effort, or any human effort at all. Palmer's sanctification was not the product of cultivated experience of mutual confession or interpersonal communion. It was an experience of rupture and individual empowerment in the Holy Spirit.

To achieve this experience, one did not “struggle” with God, as in the case of Zaca, but *surrender*: first one's life, Palmer taught, and then one's will (White 2005[1986]:136-138). Rather than being counseled to “cooperate” with God's will, as in the synergistic model, the believer should, in the words of the Keswick movement, “let go and let God.” This Keswick language comes from Palmer's own language of passivity and patience, of “waiting on the Lord,” “laying [her life] on the altar,” and other “yielding”—sacrifices of self and will that Palmer believed that God promised to reward in scripture (similar to the Keswick motto to “name it and

claim it").[145]

This language and imagery, and the Holiness movement's overall depiction of sanctification as being a sudden surrender—as being monergistic, subitistic, and individualistic—remains deeply important in global evangelicalism and Pentecostalism today. It may help explain why, despite agreement on the Methodist origins of the Holiness-Pentecostal movement (see also e.g., Synan 1997[1971]), the movement's model of sanctification stood in such stark contrast to the synergistic, gradualist, collective model of holiness that motivated Wesley to organize his movement.[146] That the Holiness model of sanctification, more reminiscent of the Calvinist model than an Arminian one, actually derives from Wesleyan concerns and models of religiosity is perhaps as counterintuitive as the fact, as Martin points out, that Arminian revivals overtook Calvinist revivals in North American by adopting one of its key methods, revivalism, and combining it with a theology that encouraged its use.

Despite the fact that the support group model maintains much of the Wesleyan approach to spiritual development, the Holiness movements were also crucial for the historical development of the support group movement—and not only because of the fact that Frank Buchman, the founder of the organization on which AA modeled itself (the Oxford Group), modeled it on the conversion experience he underwent while at a Keswick revival. Palmer's model of surrender pivoted upon a model of powerlessness, of belief in God's promises of sanctification, and of surrender to God that follows exactly the first three steps of the Twelve

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145 "It" being sanctification, and "naming" being the recognition of the promises for entire sanctification that Palmer found in the scriptures). Alcoholics Anonymous likewise pioneered a number of proverbial saying likes this, such as "stinking thinking," "yesterday's history, tomorrow's a mystery," "meeting makers make it," and their many equivalents and counterparts in AA groups around the world.

146 The Keswick movement seems to have felt less of a need than Palmer to identify with Wesleyanism, reducing this tension between their contrasting takes on sanctification.

Step program (probably due in no small part to the influence that Keswick theology had on the Twelve Step program through Buchman).

As some have noted, Palmer held the idea, shared with some Calvinists,[147] that not only justification but *sanctification* was accomplished by faith alone as well. This model of sanctification-through-surrender, in turn, also came to define some strains of global evangelicalism and pentecostalism in a number of ways (Martin 1990, Synan 1997, Robbins 2004b). However, in the the support group movement, as in the model of sanctification implicit to the Methodist model, this surrender (as well as the belief in a forgiving God who wants to heal you) is the beginning of the "process," as support groupers influenced by AA and the Twelve Step program will usually say.

In Protestant Christian theological terms, then, the model of sanctification implicit in most support groups (as exemplified and influenced by the Twelve Step program) places justification and sanctification in "order" and synthesizes Calvinist and Wesleyan-Arminian strains of concern. Justification, Twelve Steppers emphasize, requires surrendering entirely to God. However, that surrender in itself requires a choice, and usually follows upon a participant seeing those who have been redeemed and believing in God's loving nature and promises to heal the sick. (Support groupers, like many evangelicals, have the benefit of "proof" in the form of the testimonies of the converted, which makes surrender an easier choice.) After one has fully worked through this surrender and committed to "working the steps," this very surrender of the will, in a twist, becomes the ground for the reassertion of the will whenever one begins to lose

147 Sanctification by faith alone has also been supported within Reformed/Calvinist circles, revealing the similar views Holiness-Pentecostal forms of Christianity and Calvinist forms (regardless of any other differences between them). See e.g. Fesko 2010. However, in this and other Reformed traditions, good works are *indicative* of sanctification, if *not productive* of it.

perspective.

The support group system not only attempts to unite the concern for surrender that suffused nineteenth-century evangelical Christianity; it also appears to resolve some of the organizational failings of Methodist bands and classes. While bands were usually reserved for experienced members, Wesley had also experimented with “penitent bands” for newer members who were alcoholics (Watson 1987:121, Henderson 1997:80,125-126). However, this insight about the importance of bands even for less experienced members was not further pursued for Methodists in general.

The support group model also extends Methodism's neo-Pietistic latitudinarianism in “non-essentials.” For example, while advocating complete surrender of the will to God's will, the support group model has usually adopted the non-sectarian, Twelve Step approach of defining God minimally, “as we understand it” (in the Third Step: AA 1986[1953]). The qualities of God—“a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience,” according to the Second Tradition: AA 1986[1953])—and not the complex and systematic (and divisive) theologies to which churches subscribe, is what support groups focus upon.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the turns towards sanctification, experience, and lay organization, aligned in the Methodist model, nonetheless continued to be elaborated in new ways that would come to influence both support group culture and evangelical culture. In particular, the turns toward experience and sanctification infused the revivalism and apocalypticism of the Second and Third Great Awakenings in Britain and America (roughly occupying the first and second halves of the nineteenth century). The best known of these revivalists is Charles Finney, a Presbyterian minister who not only strove to evoked enthusiasm in his listeners but projected this enthusiasm himself in his dramatic sermons and performances.

The apocalypticism of the nineteenth century also tended to emphasize the experience of God and, to varying extents, God's monergistic acting in history as independent of and often in direct contrast to the workings of men (rather than a process of cooperating with them). On the one hand, many abolitionists and progressives before and after the Civil War participated actively in apocalyptic imagery. Some harnessed postmillennial views embraced by many Protestants of that era—that is, beliefs that the apocalyptic events described in the Book of Revelation refer to God's victory over Satan through Christ's resurrection, which began the millennial Kingdom of God that is growing presently, they believed, as in the Kingdom of God parables, or the image of a rock destroying the world's empires and filling the whole earth in Daniel 2). Others adopted premillennial views, in which the Book of Revelation was held to portray future events, heralded by signs that Christians should watch for. The latter, which has now come to dominate popular media depictions of the apocalypse, started to become more popular in the nineteenth century.

One memorable instance of this premillennial apocalypticism, and one sometimes wrongly portrayed as a high-water mark of apocalypticism in general, is the Great Disappointment of 1844. The disappointment derived from the great excitement and expectation that from those who believed the American Baptist preacher William Miller's prediction that the second coming of Christ and rapture of believers would occur on October 22, 1844.[148] A number of religious developments would spring from this disappointment among Millerites, including the independent development of the Seventh Day Adventist and Jehovah's Witnesses and the renewed popularity of postmillennial eschatology. However, premillennialism remained popular. The Third Great Awakening, in the latter half of the 19th century, would be dominated by

148 Miller used a premillennial, day-year reading of Daniel, Revelation, and other eschatological Christian texts (e.g., 1 and 2 Thessalonians) to predict the second coming of Christ and the rapture of believers in October 1844.

Holiness movements (and, as the century turned, Pentecostal movements), which regularized something of the revival atmosphere during weekly services. Although both of these movements focused a bit less on predicting the precise date of the apocalypse, the majority of the Holiness-Pentecostal movements remained committed to premillennialism and the expectation of God's monergistic, sudden irruption into the lives of believers and into history.

Organizationally speaking, prayer meetings and bible studies continued to predominate as key social forms during the nineteenth century. Yet so did larger organizations, including the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Young Men's Christian Association (i.e., the YMCA), and other Christian reformers involved with abolitionism, temperance, and the progressive and populist movement. These organizations were, of course, significantly larger than anything the Methodist model had directly organized, certainly a far cry from the small group organization that Wesley had envisioned.

What these movements did share with Methodism was the belief that holiness could only be developed in communion with others. For the most part, these large movements were pursuing sanctification on a grand scale, many of them imbued with a progressive, postmillennial theology, in which believers were helping take part in the ongoing victory of Christ through history and through his Church. Thus the reader should not be surprised to find that the thread from Wesley to the Holiness Movement to the support group movement runs through this postmillennial activism and through the YMCA in particular, as I will show.

Compared to these large Christian movements and organizations, and in the wake of the Great Disappointment, Methodism could appear moderate, even liturgical, in comparison to its enthusiastic roots, so that in the 20th century the members of the denomination would sometimes come to be known, in joking tones, as “the frozen chosen.” Surely this cultural stiffness, the

increasingly Anglican feel of much of Methodism against the background of more enthusiastic movements, had much to do with the fact that the average class position of the Methodist faithful continued to rise, which Wesley decried, and which was described in my account of the demise of the Methodist class meetings. “While we are now more likely to associate modern Methodism with middle-class morality, conservative denominationalism, and temperance,” Anna Lawrence (2011:3) writes, “Methodism is historically rooted in dissent.”

This growing gulf between economic classes was only partly softened by the growth of progressive (largely postmillennial) strains of Christianity that, from the mid-nineteenth century onward, had some cross-class appeal in broad movements dealing with slavery, prohibition, and a wide array of social ills. The Great Disappointment had popularized a ridiculing of premillennial views of a rapture or imminent eschaton, yet this ridicule was somewhat muted by the fact that postmillennial theology had adopted much of this apocalyptic language and imagery, leading many if not most Protestants to see America as playing a millennial role in extending the Kingdom of God (see e.g., Niebuhr 1937, Tuveson 1968, Hatch 1977, R. Bloch 1985). Among these were abolitionists who would feel vindicated by what they perceived as the divine approval of their movements revealed by the Union's victory in the civil war. This strain of postmillennial progressivism would remain an important social force for a century after the American civil war, being somewhat humbled by the failure of prohibition, but remaining important in American Protestantism through the eras of the Social Gospel, the progressive movement, the New Deal, and the civil rights movement.

In spite of this class divide, similar trends can be observed in the meanings around sanctification and experience, with emotional experience increasingly coming to define sanctification among upper class Christian movements as well. However, in the nineteenth

century, Wesley's dual emphasis on reason and experience fell away. Both the eclipse of reason by experience and the association of sanctification with strong emotional experience can be observed in American religious culture—not only in the Holiness movements, but among elite, liberal Protestant theologies in the West that responded to the popularity of Romanticism by embracing emotional experience as well.

The major figure of liberal Protestantism, Friedrich Schleiermacher, had emerged by the end of Wesley's life as an important voice. He enshrined for liberal Protestantism not only the value of experience to Christian faith, but also a version of holiness that was more amenable to the middle and upper classes. His project has often justly been called "Christocentric liberal theology," and it is most famously explicated in his work, *On religion: speeches to its cultured despisers* (2002[1799])—a title which suggests his audience and the role liberal theology played in trying to bridge the divisions in Protestant Christianity. Understanding the appeal of Romanticism to his elite audience, Schleiermacher argued that Christian faith was not only compatible with the sublimity of art and nature but was their very source. Below the "accretions" of the Early Church, he argued, the religion of Jesus was fundamentally about attaining "perfect God consciousness," of perceiving God everywhere and as the truth of all things. Notably, "consciousness" here was defined by Schleiermacher primarily in emotional terms, even if the appreciation of this emotion appeared to deepen with learning and cultivation.[149] However, this

149 In this, Schleiermacher's notion of "perfect God consciousness" resonated with Erasmus's *philosophia Christi/*"mind of Christ"). Though Erasmus gave a special place to reason, for him "the study of theology really meant to follow Christ: 'to philosophize devoutly' in the New Testament.'" "This kind of philosophy", he wrote, was expressed "'more in the emotions [*affectibus*] than in syllogisms,'" and he considered it "a matter of 'inspiration more than learning, transformation more than reasoning'" (Tracy 1996:105). Yet, as Tracy also writes of Erasmus:

> A further [characteristic of] Erasmus's *philosophia Christi*... is the ideal of learned piety (*docta pietas*), as expressed when the letter to Paul Volz praises the abbot and others like him: "Being yourselves endowed with pious learning [*pia doctrina*] and with learned piety [*docta pietas*], I know that you would approve of nothing that is not equally pious and learned." In a general way,

emphasis on the "feeling of absolute dependence" was, likewise, to survive as a key element of what would later emerge in the support group movement and its emphasis on surrender. So, too, was Schleiermacher's distinction between perfect God consciousness and "sin consciousness," which obscured this dependence upon God, become important in this general strand of liberal theology, which would later influence the Twelve Step program and the support groups movement as a whole.

On the other hand, despite Schleiermacher's interest in personal transformation (cf. Mariña 2008), this was largely a question of individual transformation. This and other aspects of his project would lead him even further than the Holiness movement and from the style of peer group organization and mutual confession found in the early Methodist model.

Still, the nineteenth-century development of liberal theology shows the deepening of a concern for experience that was important in the Methodist model. This concern for experience would continue constituting an important part of Western Christianity and Christian theological schools into the twentieth century, including Christian existentialists like Kierkegaard and Tillich.

Despite the fact that this focus on emotional experience seemed to steer Christian concerns towards questions of individual, emotional experience, there were some who tried to develop a more regular, organizational solution to the problem of sanctification and to adopt a rather Wesleyan approach to bridging class divides among the laity and joining them in sanctifying, ecumenical communion with one another. Perhaps the best example of this trend during this period is that of the Young Men's Christian Association, or YMCA (which would lead

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phrases like "learned piety" and "pious learning" convey the root notion with which Part II of this book began, that is, the notion of a *doctrina* that offers nurture for the heart as well as for the intellect (106-107).

indirectly to the founding of AA).

The YMCA began as a mid-nineteenth-century organization designed to develop a new style of masculinity in young men afflicted by the dissolution and atomization of many urban contexts. As with other examples of the Methodist model, the YMCA tried to transform men and masculinity by engaging young men into healthy Christian fellowship with one another—"manhood factories," as historian Paula Lupkin (1997, 2010) has called them (see Zald 1970, Mjagkij and Spratt 1997, Winter 2002, cf. Chang 2014). Whereas American Methodism had addressed the *rural* social dislocation of Americans as they spread westward, paying close attention to men in particular, the YMCA spoke to the same *urban* social dislocation that had spurred British Methodist movement. Like Methodism, the YMCA addressed this dilemma by tackling male gender identity directly, in groups of men, as its name suggests.

The YMCA focused in its initial years on developing athletic activities and other healthful pastimes for these young men. Many of its programs promoted abstinence from alcohol. It also developed an emphasis on exercise (often called a "muscular Christianity") that would also have an immense influence on how AA and on the support group movement would come to focus, not on "asceticism," as that term is now understood (as a synonym for self-abnegation), but instead on what Foucault would prefer to call *askesis* (or *gymnazein*)—an athletic metaphor and a vaguely Aristotelean focus on the positive development.[150]

Likewise, the insistence of the YMCA organization on not interfering with denominational affiliation and respecting the autonomy of local YMCA chapters also echoed Wesley's desire to avoid schism by organizing the laity into *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*. As with Wesley, and as in the later support group movement, the strategy of the YMCA was on

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150 See footnote 114.

developing groups among men that did not compete for their religious loyalties or to adopt new ones. Instead, the focus of the YMCA, as for the Methodist model, was to be on spiritual growth.

However, over the course of the nineteenth century the YMCA would grow dramatically, and as it grew its attention would shift toward evangelization and missionization and away from organizing the laity into groups for ethical development—much as the Methodist movement had, over the course of the nineteenth century. It was this shift toward evangelization and missionization, and away from cultivating the spirituality of these evangelists, that would lead one member of the YMCA to found of the precursor to Alcoholics Anonymous, the Oxford Group (first named the "A First Century Christian Fellowship").

Just as Wesley, as a young evangelist, found himself spiritually unprepared for his early mission to Georgia, so did the Lutheran pastor and YMCA evangelist Frank Buchman, founder of the Oxford Group, discover that he had traveled to the missionary field (China) ill-equipped for the task.[151] Although he had undergone an unexpected, personal conversion at a Keswick (British Holiness) conference in 1908, which had convinced of the need for greater humility (and of the practice of humbling himself through apology and restitution—key Twelve Step principles), Buchman found that he still struggled with his superiors at the YMCA and was disappointed that the organization had not provided him with the training he felt he needed for his mission work.

In China, Buchman would first discover in China that revival was an inappropriate and ineffective means of evangelism in many settings, just as he had found it insufficient for his own moral formation. However, he did strike upon *fraternal confession* ("personal contact of man with man") as the crucial element missing from revivalism. Buchman found that such person-to-

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See Peterson 1992 and Boobbyer 2013 for the more on Buchman and his legacy.

person discussions (or “close discourse,” as Wesley had said, citing Richard Baxter) were uniquely successful in encouraging others to confess and convert. “I have found a way to draw confession from others,” he wrote to his missionary friend and future leader of the Oxford Movement in America. “It is to confess first myself” (Peterson 1992:57,58, cf. Pittman 1987:113-120).

To encourage the practice of mutual confession, Buchman developed peer groups in China (including “house parties”), which he would later bring back to England and the rest of Europe, and to America (Pittman 1987:123-127, Peterson 1992:58). Though he would initially call these groups “A First Century Christian Fellowship,” the movement would become known as the Oxford Group, one of the most significant lay religious movements in the early twentieth century.

The Methodist origins of the movements were not entirely obscured by its primitivist claims that its peer groups formations represented the Christian fellowship of the early church. As one chronicler of the Oxford Groups wrote:

> It is a bit difficult to place the Oxford Group among the religious movements of Christian history. They [sic] claim no historical roots other than the Christian Fellowship of the first century[, whereas] actually, its resemblance to the first century Christian ecclesiae is rather slight…
>
> Perhaps the closest historical precedent for the Oxford Group, however, is found in the sweeping enthusiasm of the Methodist movement... especially in the similarities between John Wesley and Frank Buchman [and the conditions of their personal conversions]...
>
> Wesley, like Buchman, was opposed to organizing [ordained ministers] in the church, choosing rather to organize societies consisting only of “converted [lay]persons” (1987:121-123).

And, like Wesley, Buchman would find that it was in America where his innovations would grow dramatically and take on new life. For it was in America that the co-founder of AA, Bill Wilson, would undergo a spiritual conversion after being invited to an Oxford Group house

party led by the Episcopalian minister and interdenominational revivalist, Sam Shoemaker.

Bill Wilson's story has been told and retold by the AA movement, but it is closely linked with the story of the YMCA, its efforts to convert men to teetotalism, and the failure of Prohibition in the U.S. Given the apparent failures of both the tee-totaling movement and legal prohibition, the solution for male alcoholism in the U.S. seemed ever further away in the 1930s.

However, thanks to a rapprochement between religion and science, effected over the course of a long 19th century (and due as much to the popularity of William James as to Schleiermacher and his liberal theological successors), many began to suggest that medicine, rather than law, might be a better framework for resolving male alcoholism (Peterson 1992:55-56, Pittman 1988:82-112). As the co-founder of AA, Bill Wilson was in fact counseled by Shoemaker to read James and to appreciate the link he drew between spiritual health, psychological health, and alcoholism.

While many have rightfully charted the relationship between the growth of North American feminism in the midst of widespread male alcoholism, and the key role of feminists in leading the Prohibition movement (first as a moral movement, then as a political one), the Oxford Group developed an alternative framework. It developed a medical-religious model of alcoholism—of alcoholism as sin, and of sin as an illness—and proposed that alcoholism be treated along these lines. In a collection of essays that became the basis for the basis for techniques used first by the Oxford Group and then by AA, H.A. Walter (1940) cited a disease model of sin directly from Christian thinking: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick” (Mt 9:12).

The move that Walter makes here is crucial for the operation of AA and its supportive ethos. Because of the way that Jesus chose to depict sin as a sickness, Walter argues, “Would we

not . . . be wise to discard, for practical purposes, the old classification of 'the saved,' and 'the unsaved'...?" Would it not be wiser "to divide men rather into two classes, suggested by the Master, of the morally whole and the morally sick? (1940:54-55, cited in Peterson 1992:60). This whole/sick division would constitute the basis for AA's non-sectarian view of spiritual relationships among people, as well as a gradualist model of sanctification, along the model of healing. (It also suggests another analogy with Aristotelean ethics as a question of healing.)[152]

The fraternal pro-social, non-hierarchical view of healing in AA has sometimes been obscured by the what John Peterson called "the medical analogy" of alcoholism that it promote, since, for many contemporary people, the "disease model" of alcoholism suggests a disease, which in turn suggests that expertise is required. Instead, the "soul surgery" that AA took up, first promoted by Buchman and Walter in the Oxford Group "refers to the need for the personal worker to promote confession, thereby permitting the removal of the sin (disease)." This confession is produced not by treating someone as a patient, but by making oneself a peer, by confessing first, as in the practice of contemporary support groups. Though the disease model "emphasizes the similarity of the task of the religious worker to that of the more scientifically acceptable medical doctor," the metaphor has diverted attention from the non-hierarchical nature of this healing, which is in this respect quite unlike most contemporary medicine (*idem*.).

Instead, the primary "disease" from which alcoholic men suffered, in the account by Walter that would influence the support group movement, was the disease of men's isolation from one another. In Bateson's (2000[1971]:326-332) study of Alcoholics Anonymous, he describes this isolation as a sort of "alcoholic pride," strikingly similar to what Stevens (1973)

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152 Within a broader view of ethics and politics as intimately connected, Aristotle, in *Politics*, famously draws the analogy between the practice of governance and the practice of medicine, arguing that the good government acted like a doctor, wishing only good and healing for the body politic.

account of machismo as exaggerated aggression. Alcoholic pride, in Bateson's analysis, “progressively narrows the... 'self'” until the self contains only the “conscious will,” reduced to “an obsessive acceptance of a challenge” (328, 319, 327)—the proud, drunken declaration of a man who feels challenged by his machismo to swim with crocodiles being an extreme example. Bateson argues that many of men's addictions, compulsions, and obsessions cannot be understood without grasping this experience of the challenge to their willpower, an internalized “logic of challenge and riposte” that also structured early Mediterraneanist depictions of masculinity (e.g., Bourdieu 1966), and which has been analyzed in Central American versions of machismo as well (Lancaster 1992:235-278). Martin and Williams saw how the Methodist model freed men from this logic of challenge and riposte, “the supportive nature of the community” helping to produce a “change in the male personality” (Martin 1990:38) that let men “reject the competitive values of the male-dominated spheres of commerce, politics, and sport” (Williams 1985:106), “substitut[ing] cooperation for competition, compassion for brutality, and egalitarianism for deference” (Williams 1985:103).

Likewise, Walter, in *Soul surgery*, explains that, without a sense of connection to others, men could not experience the liberation of fraternal communion. “Sin is essentially selfishness,” he wrote. “The sinful mind, then, is the un-social and anti-social mind” (1940:72). Just as AA would teach, in its Twelfth Step, the Oxford group would taught men that, “I must continue to share what I have found so valuable to my own growth” (36). The sentiment appears preserved in the AA proverb about spiritual growth, “You can't keep it if you don't share it.”

The Oxford Group would eventually evolve away from small group meetings and intimate peerhood and towards mass rallies and evangelization,[153] in a similar shift to that which

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153 In 1938, four years after Bill Wilson's conversion, he would rename the movement “Moral Rearmament,”

the YMCA underwent, and similar as well to the way in which Methodist classes lost their egalitarianism over time. Yet most of the Oxford Group model, especially the parts of it that most echoed the Methodist model—its egalitarian organization, its peer confession, its practices of mutual support, and its view of sin as a sickness—would endure in Alcoholics Anonymous (see Peterson 1992:60-62).

Peerhood, for instance, continues to be emphasized and achieved in the support group movement in a number of ways. In Latin America, men and women continue to meet separately in AA and Al-Anon in many places in Latin America, and this difference extends across most other support groups as well. For instance, in addition to the extent to which "Al-Anon... function[s] as the 'women's section' of AA" in Latin America" (Mäkelä *et al*. 1996:171), a number of anthropologists and other scholars have carried out fascinating research on all-female groups of Neuróticos Anónimos (Baer *et al. 2003,* Ramírez Solórzano 2003, and Duncan 2013), a Latin American Twelve Step group dealing with various gender- and culture-bound issues surrounding *nervios*, a folk diagnoses related to anxiety, panic attacks, and sometimes depression.[154] In conjunction with the work done by Brandes (2002) on all-male AA groups and by Gutmann (1996:198-213) on all-male support groups for anger management, which I have mentioned, these illustrate the regional pattern of gender segregation in support groups. In all of these accounts, this gender-segregation and other forms of peerhood seem to provide to the basis for the intimacy and support of these groups (as does the fact that they are defined by shared problems from the outset).

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marking its shift in emphasis.

154 Cf. De Vidas 2000 on abuse support groups exclusively for LGBT Latinos. See Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013 on Jesuit- and evangelical-led support group recovery programs. See also Peris 2003 on the impact of NA on popular culture and its relationship to consciousness raising groups and base ecclesiastical communities associated with liberation theology.

Support groups in San Carlos, however, also tend to subdivide on other grounds, including age and social class, with men in the group that I studied sometimes saying that they preferred it because of its working-class origins, or because of the higher number of older members. And San Carlos was also not alone in its peer groups tending to further subdivide along other lines. Many if not most studies of small groups and support groups, including the massive U.S. study conducted by Wuthnow's (1994a-b) team, or the recent study by Mercadante (2014), or the comparative study on AA conducted by the international team assembled by Klaus Mäkelä *et al*. (1996) (see below)—each of these finds that in areas where there are a great many support groups on a given issue, people select based on their affinities and identifications with the members. Indeed, this was one of Vaillant's findings as well: that college-educated men could often not comfortably carry out support group practices, in part because of their "lack of fit" with their own class culture, but also because they failed to feel that they "fit in" with working class men in these groups.

Instead, peerhood is the most important organizing and spiritual principle of the Twelve Step program, and it is *the peerhood created by a particular sin/disease/addiction* that is the fundamental kind of peerhood. All other forms of peerhood radiate outward from this starting point, this emphasis on the peerhood of participants. Some further forms of peerhood, like gendered peerhood in Latin America, are apparent in striking across almost all groups. Other forms of peerhood are less apparent, but certainly an ethnographic analysis of these groups must account for why someone joins one support group rather than another. I tried to do this in my own interviews, and indeed most of my interviewees described trying more than one group (and I listed in one column the different groups which the interviewee has tried). If the reasons they preferred one group over another were highly variable, what seemed to unite this reasoning was

the common theme of identifying with one program and one set of people, or even one important relationship in the group, more strongly than the they identified with others.[155]

Silvio, for instance, tried La Fraternidad, Narcotics Anonymous, and a number of "sectas," he said (using a term common to refer to non-Catholic groups among Catholics, especially non-denominational evangelicals). When he went to AA, though, he reported "identifying" with the texts and with the problem of alcoholism and machismo that was presented there. Likewise, he said that he later "identified with" the Methodist church in town that he began attending. He repeated throughout his interview that what he most appreciated was the "clarity" of AA and Methodism, their methodical approach to spirituality and to worship, respectively (cf. Keller 2005). Tomás, likewise, "liked the question of identification" with others that was stressed in his earliest visits with Wém: "I identified myself more with (*me identifiqué más con*) others" in Wém, he said, than with members of other groups, although he tried La Fraternidad, and he still occasionally went on Catholic retreats that accorded more easily with his "self-vision," he said, as a Catholic whose faith had been reconfirmed for him through his growth in Wém. Ugalde, by contrast, tried AA and La Fraternidad but left both groups before coming to participate regularly in Wém, but "I was the problem," he said. As he elaborated, what he appeared to mean was that his inability to find peerhood was unwilling to see himself in others, criticizing them as they spoke just as (like Zaca and Quentin) he reported insulting himself in his machista past, and in his attempts at recovery.

This emphasis on peerhood and close identification with others based on a number of levels of similarity (gender, class, age, etc.), which varied somewhat from region to region and

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155 I would need to produce a different type of data, with a much larger sample set, as with Smilde's [2007] study of micro-network effects, to draw further conclusions.

place to place, was one of the major findings of the team of eighteen Alcoholics Anonymous researchers led by Klaus Mäkelä (1995:52-72,157-161,170-182). Although the study did not review much of the anthropological analysis of AA extant at that time (e.g., Bateson 2000[1971]:315-344, Sadler 1979, Cain 1991), or dwell on the religious significance of the groups, it remains one of the few internationally comparative, collaborative, and cross-disciplinary studies, supported by the World Health Organization and dozens of other international health organizations, so its findings help ground my ethnographic study in broader regional patterns and more longstanding trends, including the strongly gender-segregated nature of Latin American support groups I have mentioned. As of its eighteen authors, the anthropologist John H. Peterson (1992), concluded elsewhere, the international spread of AA is related, like the story of Buchman, to its international origins, and the movement spread precisely because it continues to be shaped by and to adapt to the different places it has been taken up.[156] Much as anthropologists began to discover about evangelicalism by the 1990s, the growth of the support group movement as a whole has to do with the flexibility and adaptivity built into the program's norms and constitution.

An central part of this constitutional governance is *group autonomy*, which allows groups to define themselves in any way that does not contradict the basic tenants of the group (although this, too, varies, as the proliferation of non-Twelve Step groups shows). Locally the groups have sufficient autonomy in defining themselves that local groups are easily and commonly "autochthonized," adapted to some extent to local cultural norms, which may in turn result in a regional effect, like Latin America's gender segregated support groups. Examples of this

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156 Christensen (2014) has shown how the introduction of AA to Japan, and its apparent clash with local notions of alcoholism, masculinity, and self-disclosure, fueled the growth of a local program dealing with alcoholism. Cf. Chang 2014 on the YMCA's encounters and adaptations in Korea under colonialism.

localization and de facto regionalization was also discovered in a study of AA in Brazil (Jarrad 1997) and by Brandes (2002), who found that the *autonomía* of the group was focal among the AA group he studied in Mexico City.

What the study by Mäkelä et al does not explore about AA and the support groups movement, particularly concerning their religious qualities, has been explored somewhat by anthropologists and sociologists elsewhere and can be briefly reviewed here. The sociologist Mariana Valverde and the anthropologist Stanley Brandes have both argued that there are clear parallels not only with the Methodist model but with Protestantism in general. However, Brandes does more than anyone to point out the general adaptations of AA to a traditionally Catholic cultural setting (e.g., 2002:25-52). Valverde, by contrast, argues (as I have in the previous chapter) that while the voluntarism in AA involved may resonate more with Arminian theology than with Lutheran or Calvinist anthropologies that deny the will's freedom, the concept of surrender in AA seems indebted more to Calvinism than to Arminian ideas about synergism and cooperation (Valverde 1998:14,34). Brandes, despite his important work in pointing out the Catholic ethos and practices that are involved in support groups (including the importance of confession), goes on to cite Jarrad's study of the "Brazilianization of AA" in order to argue that "a few of the central philosophical underpinnings that link Alcoholics Anonymous to Protestantism" across the Latin American region "include 'the concept of surrender (akin to conversion), the confession and testimony of the saved, the personal relation to God, the individual's voluntary decision to seek help, the individual's responsibility for his or her own recovery, and AA's egalitarian structure that rejects authority'" (Brandes 2002:31, citing Jarrad 1997:213) Jarrad neatly summarizes what I have shown so far about the way the Methodist model, as it has developed in Latin America through the support group movement, has managed

to bring together the Calvinist-seeming concepts of surrender, testimony, and individualism with mutual confessional practices, personal relationships, and notions of individual volition/voluntarism and responsibility/responsibilization that resonate with Arminian and Catholic theologies.

Despite the adaptivity of the support group movement, and of the Methodist model in general (which I have tried to emphasize here), the gender-segregation of Latin American support groups is entirely in keeping with findings about the Methodist model in general. The Methodist model, as I have noted in Chapters 7 and 8, has also tended to segregate by gender not only in early North American AA groups, but in the YMCA before it, and in the Methodist movement's groups themselves. This is an example of what may be added by historians and anthropologists to the analysis of this social movement in Latin America and its relationship to the restructuring of religion and the reformation of machismo in the region. For instance, the authors of the research team led by Mäkelä speculate that where women's groups are common it may be in part because “women may also feel uncomfortable about being 'hit on' by men for dates and sexual favors, and competition between women to the attention of men may be a distracting factor” (Mäkelä *et al*. 1996:177). This is undoubtedly true, and in fact I heard this opinion expressed several times in Costa Rica. However, my integration of the study of the Methodist model and of the history of social and religious organization into an analysis of these groups suggests that an additional possibility may be that, in fact, men are also uncomfortable in the presence of women, if not for the same reasons. In fact, several of my interlocutors offered concrete examples of this discomfort in support groups when women enter, and in one case it was suggested to me that women-only groups are *less* disrupted by a male presence than men-only groups are disrupted by a female presence. One of the facilitator-psychologists who worked

with Wém during 2011 described in an interview how he had been invited to attend a women's support group dealing with similar issues as Wém (and out of which Wém grew, as I mentioned in Chapter 3). The women's groups dealt with everything from arguments with loved ones and emotional management to abuse of various kinds. When he had attended the group himself, he felt that his presence had gone mostly unnoticed: the group noted and thanked him for his presence and then set about it usual business, with his female colleague confirming afterwards that she felt that the group had proceeded normally. By contrast, he said, when he had invited that same female colleagues to attend Wém, her presence seemed to put a halt to the usual flow of intimate sharing, making for an awkward visit for her—in spite of the fact that the group had agreed in advance to welcome her and seemed excited by the possibility of having a female therapist visit.

Of course, once the support group movement (like the Methodist model itself) is understood in gendered terms and in religious terms, and once the mutually formative relationship between religion and gender in Latin America is understood to shape the crises of masculinity and of the family, the importance of all male environments is much easier to appreciate. The contemporary shape of these crises have rendered the capacity of the Methodist model to produce a "change in the male personality" all the more attractive (Martin 1990:38, on the main effect of the Methodist model). Of course, the Methodist model has also had a similar appeal elsewhere, and psychologists have noted other that group therapy's special effectiveness with men may not be unique to Latin America or to religious questions (Addis and Mahalik 2003, Andronico 1996). In the following chapter, I will show how the Methodist model and its further development in the support group movement have worked in San Carlos, returning to the three scenes I introduced in Chapter 6 to show how these groups work to reform machismo and

reshape Latin American religion.

Chapter 9: Support groups and the development of emergent masculinities in Costa Rica

9.1 Introduction

In Part II, I have traced the history of the support group movement (and to a lesser extent the evangelical movement) through the lenses of the Methodist model, of the "restructuring of [Latin] American religion," and of the evangelical "reformation of machismo" (Martin 1990; Wuthnow 1988, 1994a-b, 1998; Brusco 2011[1995]), emphasizing throughout how religion and gender are co-constructed and how the support group movement grapples directly with this co-construction. In this, the final chapter of Part II, I want to return to contemporary San Carlos to show how this model of social organization has been adopted not only by the support group movement but increasingly by religious movements and other social movements and institutions throughout the area—especially in their efforts to address men, masculinity, and the crises of the family and of machismo.

The historical approach I have taken here has presupposed that men arrive at these groups as they are—and that the support group form has arrived in Latin America the way it is—as a result of historical processes that are different from, if sometimes comparable to, those that have affected gender and religion elsewhere. The consequences of failing to take this historical approach to individual lives or to social movements and organizations has been that many comparative analyses of religion or gender in the region miss the ways in which gender and religion are co-constitutive, mutually informing categories in Latin America. Thus, most analyses of religion and gender have not included the history I have assembled here: the history of the Methodist model and its organizational innovations in the region, the history of men's

relationship to Catholicism in relation to ideas about masculinity and religion, and the recent history of contemporary changes to masculinity and men's lives being expressed and understood in religious and spiritual terms.

Likewise, the comparative approach I have taken, by examining three distinct options when conducting participant-observation in San Carlos' churches and support groups, or in the contrasting the narratives of Zaca and Isaac above, presupposes that men have various choices as to the groups in which they participate (although they encounter these choices at different moments, in ways that may be contingent to their individual lives). As such, I want to look here at some of the choices men have about gender identity, the constraints that influence these choices, and the ways in which these choices are attractive or repellent to men in various ways based on their histories.

In the three sections that follow, I aim to illustrate in greater detail each of the men's support groups I studied and to show how this new model of spiritual masculinity emerges within each of them. Before I move on to these groups, however, I want to show how these support groups articulated with other forms of peerhood in San Carlos, which have only been described in general terms in the Part I.

As I have shown, in the support group movement in Latin America (and in most places that have adopted the support group as a model of group organization), a spiritual model of masculinity is being constructed in an explicit opposition with machismo—and yet this spiritual masculinity is being constructed (a) in spaces that share certain qualities with those where machismo is thought to be fostered, and (b) by preserving, appropriating, and reconfiguring symbolic relationships that are key to the construction of the stereotype of machismo. However, I have also mentioned some of the differences between support groups, and between support

groups and other peer groups, and these differences should be explicated, given the search for peerhood that takes place in choosing a particular group, and which guides the self-segregation that takes place between these groups. I deal with these inter-support group differences in the following sections, partly to show how the *differences between* support groups actually play an important role in *unifying* these groups, as Wuthnow has argued (1994a:78-83, esp. 82-83, 86). Moreover, the differences between groups also play a role in *diffusing* and *cohering* this movement, generating the kind of peer support that the groups promise (cf. Mäkelä 1998:60-67).

One of the reasons that these groups have appealed to men in San Carlos is, I have argued, the fact that they flesh out an alternative model of masculinity that men can come to know in individual men, who become their friends and sources of support—their peer group. Whereas machismo is widely derided in Latin America, there is room for the claim by Mannon and Kemp (2010:485), which I cited earlier, that the young men of Latin America "lack... alternative model[s] of manhood that [are] reasonably attainable" for them. Part of this "attainment" is, as I have mentioned governed by political-economic changes over which they have little control. However, these groups show that another part of the problem is seeing these alternative models lived out by men like them.

José Olavarría, the Chilean sociologist who has pioneered a number of studies on men and masculinity (e.g., 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2006, 2009a, 2009b), provides an excellent example of sophisticated work on masculinities, employing large numbers of life history interviews. Nonetheless, he struggles, as do Mannon and Kemp (2010), to see where alternative models of masculinity are actually being lived out in contemporary Latin America. Along with scholarship by leading Latin American gender scholars studying masculinity like Mara Viveros Vigoya (2002, 2003), Norma Fuller, and Sylvia Chant (2001, 2002a-c, 2007, 2008) (see Part I), Olavarría

tries to capture the dramatic changes to masculinity that I discussed in Part I.

In a section on "masculine resources" in his early book, *Hombres a la deriva?* (*Men Adrift?*), Olavarría argues against a simple understanding of political-economic change having upset "traditional" (i.e., dehistoricized) models of masculinity. While such changes have deeply impacted the viability of men's roles in Latin America, many anti-machismo discourses are being constructed by men themselves, often through their interaction with mass media images of different masculine ideals. Media networks, along with international flows of people, "allow men to observe other ways in which men and women, and men and their children, may relate: ways that are more *egalitarian*, more *horizontal*, and with *greater emotional closeness* (Olavarría 2001a:115, translation and emphasis mine).

Yet Olavarría, writing at the turn of the century, did not perceive *local* social networks in which these new models of masculinity might be lived out in less individualized ways. In fact, the example that he *does* raise suggests exactly the blind spot I have been mentioning with regard to support groups: the failure to see in support groups a broader religious and cultural transformation. Olavarría suggests that many men "still perceive [the search for a new model of masculinity] to be [a] question to deal with in therapy sessions, but slowly questions are being raised that move beyond the private realm, possibly ending, sooner or later, in public, political demands" (*idem*.). The notion of therapy as "private" shows the basic problem of categorization that not only allows the support group movement to cross the religious/secular boundary and other boundaries, but also allows it go unobserved and un-conceptualized as it is by scholars who study it.

Yet Olavarría's conclusion—about therapy being the main site for grappling with new models of masculinity—comes closest to acknowledging what I have tried to show throughout

this dissertation, which is that seemingly psychological settings are pioneering new masculinities. Moreover, these groups also contest the public/private divides that might render this therapeutic effort (or gender and the family in general) to be part of a "private realm" (cf. Cucchiari 1990, Brusco 2011[1995], Lorentzen and Mira 2005) In fact, the evangelical and support group movements find themselves explicitly arguing against the conclusion that economically out-of-reach, private therapies are the only hope for men. Olavarría (2001a:115), basing his study on over 100 interviews with Chilean men of all ages, was certainly not mistaken that *some* men may perceive these as "questions [for] therapy sessions." However, many men with whom I spoke did not consider individual therapy to be either affordable *or* attractive, even if it were affordable.

Much like Vaillant's (2012:320-321) findings that college-educated men found support group culture unattractive, most working class and even middle-class men in San Carlos, by contrast, remarked upon not only the expense but the stigmatizing effect of therapy, and especially of psychiatric medications. Perhaps, with the costs of such treatments being out of reach for them and many of their peers, professional psychiatry was understood as largely the domain of psychological issues that were more uncommon and needed greater professionalization than the "ordinary" problems many of them faced. By contrast, I have in my field notes a number of interactions with upper class *sancarleños* and Costa Ricans from the Central Valley who, like Tristán, expressed what I am tempted to call a mild sense of horror when I explained the methods of support groups. To such individuals, both private psychology and the (private) taking of expensive drugs seemed *less* threatening and *less* potentially stigmatizing than these groups (much like private confession). My impression was that most of these non-working-class interlocutors may have had a certain class consciousness or sense of

distinction similar to that which Vaillant observed as being responsible for avoidance of such groups by college-educated alcoholics in his longitudinal study, and which may have made both support groups and evangelicalism appear as undesirable. Offhand comments about the "amateurism" of these groups and the "shamelessness" of their weeping participants only made this explanation of class distaste seem more probable.

It was no coincidence that the attitudes many of the upper classes had about evangelicalism and the broader "charismatic" movement also determined their judgment of the support group movement. The view of evangelicalism as insufficiently *digno* ("dignified," "solemn," but also "worthy") in its stance and attitude towards God and towards Sunday services overlapped considerably with the view that evangelicals were led by insufficiently trained religious specialists. (Also, such opinions seemed, like working class opinions about psychiatry, especially true of those who were least familiar with support groups and evangelicalism.) All of these attitudes also colored many of my upper-class interlocutors' views of support groups. Perhaps the truth in Olavarría's claim that many Latin Americans think of family matters to be dealt with in "private realm" of (private, one-on-one) therapy is largely accurate—among the upper and aspirational classes.

It may be noted that attitudes about evangelical movement and the support group movement among different classes seemed to be guided primarily by the perceived *organization* and *ethos* of both movements. Truly this was another of the anecdotal findings that led me to conclude that my analysis would have to stress these parameters.

However, the organization and ethos of the evangelical and support group movement are also expressed by the discourses and practices of these groups, all four of which challenge the norms expressed by many of my upper-class interlocutors: their discursive and practical norms as

well as the norms that govern their ideas about proper affect and social organization. For this reason, both the evangelical and support group movement have rightly been analyzed as popular social movements. These challenges often center, as Olavarría's analysis suggests, on the deconstruction of private and public spheres and on changing models of gender and religion. Evangelicals and support groupers question openly whether therapy or religion is ever "private," in a number of senses. First, the psychologist and the priest, from the popular perspective of these social movements, are both representatives of public, institutionalized hierarchies, even if they appear to examine material from the "private," domestic sphere.[157] Second, the evangelical and support group movements have semiotically constructed their relationship to God in a way that challenges a number of binary divisions, including private and public. In many ways, the fluid, boundary-traversing language of the Spirit and spirituality is the clearest expression of this challenge to the boundaries between these terms. With regard to this public-private division, these movements seem to privilege the domestic sphere, but they simultaneously expose it to careful inspection and argue that it *should* be inspected thoroughly, a practice of self-governance that participants are encouraged to undertake from the perspective of the church and/or God, to ask what God or the church might want for their homes (Mariz and Machado 1997, Smilde 1997, Lorentzen and Mira 2005; cf. Bartkowski 2004, Wilcox 2004). Perhaps the weight of this challenge to earlier norms may be hard to imagine for North American readers, whose history has rendered evangelical movements and support groups "traditional" in some senses. Yet in the Latin American context these movements have at times resonated with norms that seem to place them "on the right side of history," part of a progressive movement *away* from hierarchy and monism and towards pluralism and egalitarian ideas about gender, public and private space, and

157 And even if this notion of public is much broader than the political sense of these institutions as res publica.

religion. These movements popularize the practice of greater openness, or “sharing,” about one's personal identity, which might also be traced through the rise of new social networks or any of the hundreds of studies on arenas where the once-lauded distinction between public and private life (presumed by ideas about religion or therapy being public or private) has broken down or is at least in the process of being radically reconfigured.

Lastly, an interesting fact about Olavarría's claim has been somewhat obscured my English translation of his public/private distinction.[158] His actual expression, *el espacio íntimo*, is not really a direct cognate of the more common English expression “private sphere.” It more literally translates as “the intimate space.”

Whether or not he intends it, this framing of “the intimate space” better captures what is actually essential about how the peer group meetings function (much like the individualized therapy sessions Olavarría mentions). *Intimacy* is what is required to allow for the delicate but dynamic discussion of participants' identities and experiences that unfolds in the practice of sharing—and this intimacy is created by *trust*, especially (but not merely) in the confidentiality[159] of what is being shared. Such intimacy in support groups is premised on a peerhood that AA's literature usually refers to as “fellowship” or “brotherhood” (i.e., *fraternidad*, also the name of the support group La Fraternidad). This model of intimacy and community has

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The chapter that this quote appears in is entitled “Politics, publics, and relationships between men and women,” and the final sentence reads, in its entirety: “Muchos todavía lo perciben como cuestiones a tratar en sesiones de terapia, pero lentamente se comienza a vislumbrar interrogantes que van más allá del espacio íntimo y que posiblemente terminarán, más bien antes que después, en demandas de políticas públicas.” That is, “Many still perceive this [i.e., new ways of relating to others] as questions to deal with in therapy sessions, but slowly they are beginning to make out questions that move beyond *el espacio íntimo* and which may possibly end, sooner than later, in public political demands” (Olavarría 2001a:115).

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Confidentiality may not mean the absolute anonymity sought by some—but hardly all—members of Alcoholics Anonymous (see Mäkelä et al 1996:48-51). In small towns like Quesada, neither men's alcoholism nor their participation in Alcoholics Anonymous approaches anything like anonymity, although members expect that the stories that they share in AA and other support groups will be held in confidentiality.

served as the model for the support group movement and much of contemporary non-religious "spirituality" in the West (Wuthnow 1994a:150, Mercadante 2014:176). This intimacy is based on a feeling of safety from judgment and is conceived in the fraternal, egalitarian language of family, of mutual protection and mutual support. The ritually invocation of codified rules in the rituals that begin each meeting make explicit these norms of non-judgmentalism and of the ultimate equality of all participants, marking these spaces as *intimate* spaces.

This peerhood and the "safe space"[160] that these groups provide make it worth noting that the stigma of machismo is learned early in life (like the behaviors that typify it), much as Willems claimed about mid-twentieth century masculinity in Brazil, Chile, and much of Latin America. In many contemporary contexts, boys experience the term machismo being used to deride males for their backwardness, for their being "unevolved," and (in many Latin American contexts) for being insufficiently urban(e) (e.g., Gutmann *ibid.*:62-63).

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160 Given the importance of mutual identification, peer identity, and gender-organized groups in this dissertation, the reader may already have thought of the LGBTQIA community's use of "safe zones," and their similarities to the use of peer support groups. Gilbert Herdt (1992) long ago noted the comparative possibilities of analyzing how such LGBTQIA safe spaces might facilitate identity transformation in a way similar to the functioning of ritual peer groups long studied by anthropologists. Such comparisons should be handled very delicately, of course, and it would be foolish to ignore the different kinds of "safety" afforded by the "safe zones" of the LGBTQIA community, on the one hand, and the peer groups of the evangelical and support group movements on the other.

Still, perhaps there may be at least this much in common between the respective sorts of safety provided in these two sorts of spaces: gender identity may be "troubling" whenever it is foregrounded, and this is especially so when the particular gender identity in question is widely stigmatized. Without ranking these kinds of stigma, there is no real argument among those who study gender in Latin American that machismo has become primarily a stigmatizing discourse, one which almost never used self-descriptively but instead to pejoratively label others. (See e.g., Gutmann 1996, 1997b, Ramírez 2008, cf. Mannon and Kemp 2010).

When an identity in thus stigmatized, a ritually-delimited zone of shared identity and non-judgmentalism—such as the "safe zone" or any other type of peer group—may relieve some of the anxieties that are associated with that stigma. By alleviating those anxieties, narrative practices like "sharing," in which one makes explicit the experiences of having inhabited a stigmatized identity, may also allow for a new, reformulated sense of personal identity—such as in the shift from a stigmatized "homosexual" identity to an unashamed "gay" identity revealed in Herdt's (1992) decades-old research on safe zones and "coming out," or as in the abandonment of machista identity for an emergent, spiritual masculinity in the evangelical and support group movements.

For comparison, see De Vidas 2000 on abuse support groups exclusively for LGBT Latinos, and Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013 on Jesuit- and evangelical-led support group recovery programs for men.

For that reason, I want to examine how these anti-machista discourses emerge in peer settings that are different from the groups that have been my focus. Although I must admit that I did see male toddlers and preschoolers rewarded for stereotypically machista behavior on a few occasions, what was more noteworthy is that, when such instances of reward were apparent, they usually seemed to be contested by others present. Moreover, in an important lesson on the power of words to identify a problem attitude or behavior, this contestation often included the word machismo itself, which carried a special moral force by tying the behavior or attitude to a widely stigmatized label.

According my observations, such contestation of machista behavior seemed to begin by the time male children were thought to be old enough to be effectively discouraged, so that by the age of four or five, *agresión*, *egoismo*, or any of the other child-relevant forms of machista behavior were discouraged by most adults (cf. Gutmann 1996:104, but see 103). In general, I saw this discouragement come more often from women in the children's lives (and certainly the majority of adults in many children's lives were women, as were the suppliers of most childcare) (cf. *ibid*.:102). However, I also observed men correcting or trying to steer boys away from machismo. Of course, parents, teachers, and other caretakers are not alone in helping young people develop anti-machista attitudes, as most of the above studies about machismo and young men suggest. By the time of secondary school, I imagine that most boys know to avoid the stigma of machismo when possible (see Ramírez 2008, cf. Gutmann 1996:221-222).

I once had the memorable opportunity to observe the stigmatizing power of the word machismo when I was volunteering in an English-as-a-Foreign-Language course in Quesada. The students were middle school and early high school-age students.[161] One of the boys had done

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The middle school/high school division does not obtain in Costa Rica. The sixth year of school, called

something to tease a girl who was practicing her English with a nearby partner, although I missed what he did. Whatever else I may not have understood about the situation, the people, or the motives involved, the girl made it clear she did not welcome his comments, and she told him so irritatedly, glowering "¡No seas machista! (Don't be machista!)"

As the insult hit its mark, the boy's face crumpled and reddened. He appeared to look for a rebuttal but could only blurt out "Yo *no* soy machista! (I'm *not* machista!)." With a slight modification, she reformulated the claim: in any case, he was *being* machista. When he only repeated his denial more loudly, saying he had not, she huffed and rolled her eyes, blowing the matter off, after which the boy denied being a machista a third time before the matter appeared to end. The boy appeared sufficiently upset by the stigmatizing accusation of machismo, or unsure enough of his ability to counter the accusation in the eyes of his classmates, than he was unable or uninterested in defending the behavior that preceded the accusation. The girl, too, showed little interest in arguing for a particular definition of machismo or for highlighting a boundary between machista and non-machista behavior.

The classroom in the above situation is a kind of peer group, but, like the all-male peer groups where many men learn machismo, the classroom should not be thought of as a "peer group" in the same sense as we used it to describe groups organized around the support group as a model. This bears stressing, especially since Spanish speakers may have considered that the term used to refer to "classmates" (*compañeros de clase*) includes the same word for "peer" used in peer groups (*compañeros*). It is true that classrooms are made of *age* peers, to some extent. However, the classroom rarely had the ethos of intimacy and egalitarianism that characterized the groups I was studying, nor did this seem to be the normative state for which students were

"sixth grade" (usually at the age of eleven or twelve) is the final year of *escuela primaria*, after which there are five years of high school (*escuela secundaria*, or *colegio*).

striving. Without wanting to generalize about middle school- and high school-age experiences in Costa Rican schools (certainly not from the viewpoint of the stereotyped North American high school, whose all-consuming importance has been memorialized by generations of American film), I can say that my observations of the EFL classrooms where I volunteered did not operate with anything like the norms of mutual support I saw in support groups, regardless of the participants' ages, and regardless of whether their instructors would have preferred a more egalitarian or supportive set of norms.

On the contrary, this classroom, like many classrooms I observed, constituted a space for social *differentiation*, rather than one in which social differences were ritually muted or suspended, as they are in the support groups I observed. Other salient identifiers also divided the class and differentiated it from the peer groups I examined: the students varied not only in terms of their gender identities and their class positions, but also in terms of the markers of social and cultural capital around which the class revolved (and over some of which the teacher exercised control).

I set up this contrast between the nominal peerhood of the classroom and the more substantive peerhood of the support group in order to illustrate that the effects of peerhood may be obscured if we do not focus on the many *grounds* on which peerhood can exist, including both the gender- and class-segregation of support groups I mentioned above and also the egalitarian rules, norms, and ethos that govern this peerhood.

In the rest of this chapter, I will usually begin with and return repeatedly to the ethos of peer group participation, since my research seems suggests that this ethos is particularly important in allowing the peer group to function as an "intimate sphere." Moreover, this ethos is perceptive even before newcomers come to understand or identify with the new discourses about

masculinity being promoted in the groups, or with the entirety of the "moral worlds" they promote. In particular, I will focus again on the sense of humor and easy laughter that are an integral and telling part of the ethos of these groups, showing how this mood contrasts strongly with the ethos of liturgical religion. However, the ethos of these groups does display some interesting parallels with the ethos of many *irreligious* men's spaces and with the ethos of the evangelical movement, where humor is also important (and where it also seems to perform a contrastive function with regard to liturgical religion).

Beginning from the centrality of this humorous ethos, I will then branch out to discuss the differences between these groups in terms of their practices, their discourses, and their social organization—differences that are relevant in determining men's participation in such groups, in terms of which group they join. For example, concerning the practices of these groups, there are some important distinctions between the "outlier" activities of each group that are not commonly practiced by the other two groups I studied: the "facilitated" therapeutic exercises of Wém, the sermon-style lessons given on occasion by Jaime in Hombres Íntegros (sometimes with powerpoint slides), and the endless discussions of proper group commitment and self-governance in AA. However, I will also focus on all three groups' reliance on the practice of "sharing" and listening carefully to such sharing to produce a sense of transformation and to produce alternative models of identity (and which both depends upon and generates the reassuring, supportive ethos of these groups).

Because the ethos of the peer group is an extremely important yet easily overlooked part of these movements, I will also endeavor to show how the ethos is maintained in part by the groups' linguistic ideologies, or eidos (including their reliance on the metaphor of spirituality as being progressive and relational), and in part by their social organization (i.e., their organization

by rules, or a constitution, rather than by hierarchical authority). In terms of social organization and the social practices that establish them, I will draw attention in the following three ethnographic accounts to those instances in which the recital of the rules of organization, or some other activity (such as prayer), is used to effectively sacralize the ritual space of the group, invoking an egalitarian norm in an effort to level even the most clearly unequal interactions. These ritual acts are often undertaken with an apparent aim of creating the proper ethos, the proper sense of security and intimacy that these norms of support group organization hope to cultivate, and upon which their power depends. Given that every such group will be distinct, perhaps it will be enough if I succeed in showing how these four parameters of the peer group (their discourses, practices, ethos, and organization) work together to render it, like some other ritual spaces, an ideal space for being born into new identities and dying to old ones.

9.2 *Hombres Íntegros* and the "spiritual retreat"

The men's group Hombres Íntegros is hosted by an evangelical church in Quesada named *Dios es Fiel* (God is Faithful), where I have conducted participant observation during every field visit to Quesada since my first in 2003. However, Hombres Íntegros does not "belong" to Dios es Fiel, nor are all its members also members of the church. Nonetheless, the group is facilitated by the church's pastor, Jaime, and is shaped by his passions for biblicism,[162] for the practice of sharing testimonios, and for small group fellowship. In 2008, Jaime invited me to attend the men's group. On first coming, I recognized some of the members from services. Several of them mentioned that such groups were an important site for me to see, being important to *creentes*

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That is, biblicism rather than charismatic worship, the latter having been described by Jaime in conversations as a "young" (i.e., not "mature") practice of worship, though I cannot fully explore this issue here. By way of comparison, consider the idealist/experientialist divide discussed in Cox 1995.

(believers) in their *formación* (training, i.e., spiritual development). In addition, many of the men in Hombres Íntegros told me that they also attended some other group in their efforts towards this same goal—AA, La Fraternidad, Wém, and Twelve Step groups—almost all of which were all-male groups.

The extent to which the men I interviewed had tried or currently participated in other groups is revealing for what it shows about differences between the groups (see also the appendix's list of interviews and interview subjects). Here I will include examples from men who all attended Hombres Íntegros. For instance, Isaac (from Chapter 5), also mentioned attending bible studies (with Pastor Jaime and others) as well as belonging to MFC (*Movimiento Familiar Cristiana*), a Catholic group promoting family unity which often breaks families in groups with other families and then, in regular meetings, into peer groups based on gender and age. Davíd attended bible studies and La Fraternidad as well. Pablo described trying other groups but experiencing difficulty with the vulnerability that larger groups like La Fraternidad seemed to provoke. Keilor had attended nearly all the men's groups and fellowships with which I was familiar, including many Catholic and evangelical-only groups, having gone from being an active, committed Catholic to being an active evangelical during his life. Randall, like Keilor, had attended another nearby evangelical church in the area, *Camino de Dios* (The Path of God), as well as different retreats, and he also had attended La Fraternidad and AA, with positive things to say about the level of intimacy he observed in both groups. Jonas attended a bible study at Dios es Fiel, as did Zabu; the latter described an interesting conversion career into different churches, and in times of falling out of faith. As the chart in the appendix shows, the same applied to members of other groups: members of Wém like Ignacio, Ugalde, Zaca, Ulises, Nestor, and Tomás all described attending other groups and retreats. Many AA members also

participated actively in Masses and in other Catholic groups, although the more frequent meetings of AA and the extent to which members became more involved in Catholicism meant that they seemed more likely to restrict themselves to AA, since they could meet with their AA group almost any day of the week for one or another type of gathering.

Despite the fact that many evangelical churches (and Catholic ones as well), focused on gender and the family, attending Hombres Íntegros guided my investigation of how peer groups allowed men to focus on these issues. Jaime's initial description of the group struck me as extremely general: he told me that he wanted the group to help men become the *hombres íntegros* that he had described time and time again in his sermons. The name of the groups could be translated as both “men of integrity” and “whole/complete men”—a fact that later reminded me of the virtue ethics language I described above, of telos and of teleios (wholeness, completeness, or maturity).

The ten to fifteen regular members of Hombres Íntegros have included two practicing Catholics as well as members of other evangelical churches. This is possible because, though Jaime does develop a theology of masculinity using the Bible, he largely eschews any doctrinaire positions as the facilitator of *Hombres Íntegros*, where he embraces a view of gender that could accord with much of Catholic teaching on the matter and adopts a more ecumenical stance, in general, than some evangelical pastors in the area. This is, by the way, a strategy also embraced by a number of “parachurch” men's organizations, including San Carlos local chapter of the international Full Gospel Businessmen's Association, La Fraternidad. Instead of dwelling on doctrines that might divide participants from different churches or different theological orientations, as many Christian services do, Hombres Íntegros focuses on the process of ethical and spiritual development, echoing, as do most other support groups and peer groups, its

inheritance of Methodist model. This stress on spiritual development focused on the same virtues Jaime tended to stress in his Sunday sermons: patience, obedience, discipline, and an ever-maturing relationship with God.

The content of regular meetings of Hombres Íntegros consists of bible study followed by (and sometimes interspersed with) paired activities and group discussion. The bible studies, which are usually designed or adapted by Jaime and accompanied by powerpoint presentations, focus on ideas about masculinity and manhood. These guided studies help focus subsequent discussions and sharing on the topics of the studies. In a fairly typical expression of this "sharing" practice, they examine their own lives aloud (which was, a few participants assured me, paradoxically less terrifying than facing their memories in the privacy of their own minds). Meetings of Hombres Íntegros begin and end in prayer, often accompanied by a sort of benediction by Jaime, but usually allowing each member to offer up a prayer in a gesture of egalitarianism.

In this, the groups functions very like a typical Twelve Step group. The AA groups I attended began with someone volunteering to read the Twelve Steps and Traditions aloud, framing the group and its principles, but before this (and at the meeting's end), the members stood together and recited the Serenity Prayer collectively, in unison (see footnote 75). The AA group anchors their sharing around a reading of the Blue Book and a focus upon one of its teachings, Steps, or Traditions, just as Hombres Íntegros anchors its discussion around the Bible.

In the case of Hombres Íntegros, both the paradigmatic form of sharing and more free-form group discussions were practiced (often provoked by a testimonio with which others identified strongly). In this group especially, members leaned upon the familiar discursive framing of a dichotomy of "spirit"/"flesh," "spirit(ual)"/ "world(ly)" that is common to Pauline

theology (and often apparently fractured through an Cartesian, mind/body dualism). Onto these symbolic oppositions, the opposition between "spiritual masculinity" and machismo is mapped again and again in order to construct the former as a clear alternative to the latter. Machismo thus comes for many speakers to stand for sin as a whole, much like the addiction or disease model of AA mentioned in the prior chapter. Like alcoholism, machismo and the stereotypical image of the machista both come to stand for a particularly "worldly" (mundial) and self-centered (egoista) personality or persona, one which portray machismo as a masculinity "after/according to the flesh" (*conforme á/según la carne*).[163] "Spiritual masculinity" was much easier to define when it was posed this way as machismo's antithesis, comparably masculine in its active stance of struggle, but clearly spiritual in a recognizable way as well, as a spiritually empowered (or *bendecida*—blessed) masculinity, which God desires for men[164] and toward which men should strive.

This image of spirituality is precisely what is used in AA as well. However, AA groups, which tend to adopt exclusively "positive" language of God, either eschew or soft-pedal religious language about "sin," the "flesh," and "worldliness," often in an effort by members to avoid invoking either the specter of fraternal judgment or invoke an image of God as other than loving and forgiving. This is especially important for new members whose view of God may be decidedly different than this image of a loving, forgiving, nurturing parent. In the place of the negative halves of these Pauline binaries, the AA members I observed seemed to prefer instead

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163 Jaime preferred to use the former, more antiquated Spanish *conforme á la carne*, (cf. KJV "after the flesh") common in the old Reina Valera version, published in 1602 (cf. Rom 8:5 with 2 Cor 5:16, κατα σάρκα ('kata sarka', from 'sarx' for flesh) though both are the same in the Greek (G2596 + G4561).

164 The use of "desires" here is intentional. In most of these narrative, which presupposes God's love as not just a will but a passion of God, there seemed to be no positing of an impassive God, in the sense of Christian theology.

the language of bad health, of "problems," "disorder," "sickness," or sometimes the more moralizing or spiritual language of being "lost," "out of control," and "weak" (cf. Peterson 1992:55-62), which also eliminates the connotations of judgment that may accompany explicit notions of sin and the flesh. Nonetheless, when members of AA share, they may draw from the latter imagery at will, and sometimes do.

In 2011, I was able to attend the "spiritual retreat" (*un retiro espiritual*) I began describing at the beginning of Part II, which I attended along with twenty-five participants in Hombres Íntegros (including some young men invited by church members and some men who were friends of members or from nearby churches). This retreat gave many of the men an opportunity to engage in some extended narrative practices and forms of fellowship that were not permissible in regular meetings, due to time limitations.

Retreats seemed to be a very common type of spiritual activity for many sancarleños, as the chart of my interviews in the appendix suggests (with retreats being a common additional group in which interviewees from these three groups participated). It seemed to be common to every imaginable denomination of religious groups, with smaller congregations often teaming up with other small churches from around the area to hold joint retreats. Spiritual retreats were also a common practice of most support groups in the area, including both AA and Wém (cf. Mäkelä *et al* 1999:133-134). I regret not having space here to explore the retreat as a spiritual practice in itself, or its influence on local religious and spiritual lives, or the retreats which members of AA and Wém have described attending. However, it is noteworthy how the retreat, as a ritual form is explicitly defined as a retreat from the profane world (and "worldliness"). This not only drives home the spirit/world dichotomy; the retreat, like the group, makes a point of creating ritual spaces and imbuing them with a unique, spiritual ethos.

Also noteworthy was the fact that even interviewees who did not express a present feeling of excitement or despair in our interviews, or who did not report a strong conversion experience when asked, described in their interviews how emotional retreats were, and how powerfully a retreat could reorient their spiritual lives and form the basis for a kind of conversion. This was true of one interviewee in particular, Randall, an participant of Hombres Íntegros who fit nearly exactly the description above and stressed in his interview how he valued "tranquility" above all other spiritual blessings. His description of the retreat was one of emotional encounter—including, in his case, meeting his wife. Another interviewee and member of Hombres Íntegros, Zabu, recounted to me how a retreat he attended when he was fifteen did not transform him immediately but had nonetheless continued to affect his spiritual development and his understanding of it: "my process [of spiritual growth] has been slow," he said, but that retreat "really planted a seed." A third member of Hombres Íntegros, Keilor, recounted tenderly the joy of his son converting on one retreat. That event was a door, he said, through which his entire family was eventually converted.

Here I will recount the activities of the retreat I attended, which included some extended combinations of "exercises" that are common in men's groups, but which can only be carried out this way in longer retreats and workshops. I will also point out some of the aspects of this particular men's group that may distinguish it from the two other men's groups with whom I conducted participant observation and interviews, and which may mark it as a particular kind of men's group—namely, a transdenominational Christian men's group, organized along the Methodist model, and increasingly along the support group model, with an emphasis on mutual support and confidentiality.

First, the men had all enjoyed a breakfast together (with Jaime playing the role of host,

introducing both himself and more established group members to the newer attendees and engaging each of them in conversation before moving on). After breakfast, Jaime opened the retreat with an evangelical benediction of sorts, a miniature sermon that seemed intended to cultivate the right mood for the day's activities (a role played in AA or Wém by an experienced member reading and reflecting the day's *tema* [theme]). The reader will probably recognize in the benediction many of the issues I have mentioned throughout the dissertation about the reevaluation of masculinity, of men's roles, and of men's proper relationships with others (which the ways Wém, for instance, brings its meetings to order). The role of humor in support group and evangelical discourse should also become plain.

The major theme of this benediction raised by Jaime seemed to be the role of "the heart" in cultivating right relationships with God and with others, including the family and one's "brothers." Specifically, he implored the men there to "break their hearts before God" (*quebrantarse el corazón delante del Señor*).[165] This willingness to bear one's heart in relationship with God, and with others, was something the men could cultivate, and on this retreat they could learn how.

Many of the regular members in Jaime's audience, and probably a couple others besides, would have recognized the pastor's use of a familiar Biblical discourse about "hardness of heart" (and "stiff-neckedness"). The term appears in both the Hebrew Bible and by the authors of the Christian gospels and epistles. The authors of Exodus, the Deuteronomist, and both Ezekiel and "Second Isaiah" use this expression, hardness of heart, to describe the proud Pharaoh, the attitudes of impious rich men toward the poor, and the faithless obstinacy of the Judeans before

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For instance, upon my first return to Maranatha after Pastor Eduardo's death, in 2008, my first notes about Jaime's preaching are about his "ecstatic preaching... about God breaking our hearts, about Him talking to our hearts...".

God and Moses, respectively. The gospels have Jesus using a term (translated into Greek) to describe both unfeeling husbands and the disbelieving apostles.[166]

Hard-heartedness was one of Jaime's favorite ways to not only describe machismo but to depict sinfulness in the abstract, and it featured in one study on men and masculinity that we completed in a series of meetings (using an evangelical powerpoint series and a book series designed in Mexico). Like machismo, hard-heartedness was depicted in that study, and during regular group meetings as not merely sinful; it represents an archetypal sort of sin, a reflection of desirous, prideful, self-centered state of Fallen Man, universally identifiable, whether in the proud Pharaoh or in the proud Israelite, in the faithless disciples or in the faithless husbands of today.

The retreat would ideally help men break through men's hard-heartedness and machismo by creating a retreat from the world, and a safe place for men to express themselves. Jaime would assure them throughout the retreat that not only was it possible for men to express deep feelings in front of one another, but that this was the God's design for men. As they grew closer

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Many Hebrew expressions are sometimes translated as "hard-heartedness", all of them referring to the "heart" ('leb/lebab':לֵב/לֵבָב, H3820/H3824) being hardened ('chazaq' in Exodus 7:13, Ezekiel 3:8, from author "P": H2388), or being made heavy ('kabed' in Exodus 7:14, from author E: H3515), or being stiffened ('qasheh' in Ezekiel 3:7, or 'qashah', as in "stiffnecked" in Dt 10:16, Is 48:4: H7185, H7186) or being "fattened" ('cheleb' in Ps 119:70 and elsewhere in the Psalms: H2459).

In Greek, the translation is pretty direct and intelligible for English speakers ('sklēro-kardia' in Mt 19:8, Mk 16:14 σκληροκαρδία, G4641), a root recognizable from medical expressions like "atherosclerosis" for "hardening of the arteries" and "cardiac arrest."

In all these Greek and Hebrew usages, as Jaime like to explain both to the men and during his Sunday sermons, the heart is not merely the seat of emotion (as in our contemporary, English usage, or in the late Pietist notion that I cited above). Instead, the heart is also the seat of the will, thought, and understanding—something like the combination of what we contemporarily mean by both the "brain" and "heart," with the exception that "lesser" or more passive/passionate emotions are sometimes located in the liver or in the gut in general.

The "hardening of the heart" is therefore also a hardening of "the brain"—a hard-headeness or defensiveness to both emotional and intellectual appeals. For this reason, for instance, its repeated use to describe the Pharaoh's refusal to yield to Moses's signs is both an inability to feel sympathy and an inability to be reasonable. Jaime seemed to enjoy exegetical moments like this during services, which had the effect not only of fleshing out the meanings of verses for his congregation but also of emphasizing the radical otherness of the Bible to those "in the world," which was one of his favorite themes (e.g., 1 Cor 2).

in fellowship and communion with one another, Jaime said, the mean would come to see that the very heart of God was expressed in our brotherly relationships with our fellow men, and that this was also His will that, as He said, “it is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen 2:18):

> It's important to give men a role in the church. In our families. In our ministries. Our ministry first and foremost [as men] is the home, of course [referring obliquely to an idea of fatherly priesthood: see Smilde 1997].
>
> But it's also important for men to gather together like this, together. As men, young and old. It's wonderful because we [older men] can learn from younger men about how the world is changing—and maybe we can help them not to fall into the same errors as we did!

That suggestive allusion seemed to hit its mark, causing nervous, embarrassed laughter to swell throughout the encircled group, as the men seemingly recalled to themselves the follies of youth.

“Speaking of the changing world, let's all turn our cellphones off and take this opportunity for fellowship,” Jaime announced. “Find some freedom from the world!”

He paused for effect, and as some men fumbled with their phones, allowing the resonances of his last words about “the world” and “freedom” to echo in the minds of the men before continuing.

“Let's be free from the world today, free enough to open our hearts. It's hard for men to cry! [A man] may be watching TV or a movie with his wife, let's say, but if there's something sad on, well, he says to her, “No, I'm not crying! Men don't cry!” (cf. Gutmann 1996:103-104).

As Jaime mimicked the embarrassed machista, play-acting an angry denial as he wiped away imaginary tears, he drew a gale of laughter from the men. Momentarily disarmed as they were, Jaime showed his mastery of the genre, suddenly becoming serious:

“But why not cry in some moment? Why not?” He paused. The men's laughter seemed replaced with thoughtful silence and a few murmuring signs of agreement. He continued:

> Today, may we *all* open our hearts to God. May we break our hearts before God. If you feel the urge to cry, cry! May we all have hearts so disposed to God! *This* is the way, brothers, that we become aware of [or "sensitive to," *sensible a*] our ministries—as husbands, as fathers, as sons—and conduct them according to the will of God, and not our own! Through communion with one another and with God.
>
> So let's join in communion. As brothers in Christ, let us become friends! ... On this retreat, we are going to learn, to experience (*experimentar*) why we call ourselves "brothers" (*hermanos*): because [brotherhood] is the level of communion we should enjoy with each other!
>
> Let's listen now to Psalm 133, which calls us into communion as "brothers in harmony." "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in harmony/unity[167]..."

Jaime often recited Psalm 133 to the men in regular meetings of Hombres. Ending with that scripture had the powerful effect of lending scriptural authority to the benediction as a whole, to its messages about men's communion with one another being God's will and design, and to the corollary claim that God had promised to soften their hearts and to establish a deeper relationship with them by means of this fraternal communion. As I will show in the remainder of this section, the parallels between Jaime's claims about the mystery of Christian fellowship and communion and the claims that the Twelve Step program makes about the role of the group are striking. As I mentioned first in Chapter 5, in the section about Isaac, the first two traditions and first two steps of Twelve Step programs make a series of claims about the character of God and the role of the group in displaying that character to those who have not yet come to have a relationship with Him. They claim, in sum, that in God we find a restorative power that we do not possess ourselves, but which can cultivate within us God's fundamental characteristics: unconditional love and the desire for reconciliation. The traditions state that we come to know this power and these qualities reflected through the peer group, which functions (in Christian

167 The new 1960 Reina Valeria edition (roughly equivalent to the New King James Version, reads "in harmony" much as in the KJV (en armonía). The original Reina Valera (roughly equivalent to the KJV) read "as one" (en uno).

terms) as an earthly “channel of grace,” manifesting God's love in what I am calling its ethos (or “in our group conscience,” according to the Second Tradition).[168]

Similarly, Jaime went on to preach that by loving one's brother, by loving one's neighbor as oneself, one learns to love God[169]—and that God *is* loving, is *Himself* what we call Love.[170] Saying this, and eliciting an *Amén* from the group, Jaime ended the benediction, using the theme of brotherly communion to segue into the icebreaker activity he had planned.

The activity, designed to introduce the men to each by name and by some basic personal information, occupied nearly half an hour. It required the second participant to introduce himself and to repeat the first participant's information accurately, while the third had to recall the first and second introductions, and so on, inducing a fair share of laughter as the task tried the men's memories and yielded harmless comical mistakes, effectively “breaking the ice” and allowing the men to take some ritualized first steps towards the fellowship Jaime that had preached about by becoming more familiar with each other's lives.

Jaime proceeded to introduce a schedule of the day's activities, capping the schedule with a request that the men spend the day not only eating, playing soccer, and laughing together, but also crying with each other, praying for one another, and “sharing” their heaviest spiritual

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With emphasis added to illustrate the character of God and the role of fraternal and divine communion, the first two steps are: “We admitted we were *powerless*...—that our lives had become unmanageable” and “We came to believe that *a Power greater than ourselves* could restore us...”. The first two traditions emphasize the group's role as a horizontal/egalitarian channel of God's grace and character: “*Our common welfare* should come first; personal *recovery depends upon AA unity*” and “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—*a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience*. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern...”. (Cf. the latter with Lk 22:25-27.)

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The Greatest Commandment, as the commandment by Jesus is known in the gospels, “on which hang all the Law and the Prophets” (i.e., canonical scripture), is twofold: to love God and to love neighbor, the second being “like unto” the first (Mt 22:35-40, Mk 12:28-31, cf. Lk 10:25-28). Cf. also 1 Cor 13 on love as the supreme virtue.

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See 1 Jn 4:8.

burdens. “Sharing one another's burdens would,” the men discovered, make up the heart of the retreat, with “brothers” being paired off for this purpose and given general instructions on what types of problems or struggles they should share. Jaime reassured them that they did not have to worry about how to respond when their brother shared his burdens; they should simply listen, not presuming to judge (which was, he reminded them gravely, to put oneself in the place of God). Instead, the men should let God's love would work through them, so it may reach their brother and heal him. This is how they would establish a proper communion and learn to shoulder each other's burdens, to embrace one another as brothers. In this way, Jaime said, each man would understand what communion between God and men was like, for God longed to shoulder all our burdens and to embrace all of us.

Our perfect communion with God was shattered in the Garden of Eden, Jaime explained to the men as he prepared them for their sharing activity. He began reading from Genesis 3 about what many Christians refer to as The Fall, interpreting the familiar narrative as indicating that Man's sin was not merely eating the forbidden fruit, but in *hiding* from God. This was not merely the evasion of responsibility, Jaime told them; it was an evasion of “proper relationship” with God (cf. Van Klinken 2011:112-114, Soothill 2007:186-187). Jaime pointed to the similarity between this broken relationship and what proceeded to happen between Adam and Cain, a pattern by which Man's initial efforts to evade responsibility produced much more serious consequences: an alienation not only from God but from a healthy relationship with others and with the environment he built for men, for human beings. Men are not only cast out from the earth but from their relationships with God and with their families, again and again throughout Genesis, he preached, pointing past Cain to Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, and so on. In fact, Adam (whose name, Jaime said, indicates that he represents Man in general) had

simultaneously divided himself both from God and from his proper family ties, evading his proper relationship with God by blaming "the woman... you gave... me" (NRSV).

What should men do instead? How should they relate to their families and to God? In his relationship with God and others, Jaime said, a man's primary role is that of stewardship (*mayordomía*), of being a good *administrador* (administrator) of God's blessings. Doesn't Adam unwittingly acknowledge this in his excuse about "the woman you gave me"? Wife and family are simultaneously a man's greatest blessing and his greatest responsibility, the men were told. "As Christ loves the Church!" Jaime exclaimed, citing the passage in Ephesians 3 where the phrase is used to describe the extent to which husbands should love their wives. "Can you imagine *how much* this means [that we must love them]?"

Unmarried men were also blessed, he said, by having been given this opportunity to prepare for the blessing of marriage and family and to remain faithful to their future wives. "So many of us become husbands and fathers without ever becoming real men," Jaime lamented. "A man who is truly a man is one who fulfills his word. He lives a transparent family life, [and] does not have the sexuality of a wild animal, [and] is a faithful spouse who honors his vows" (cf. Viveros 2002). Jaime told the men present that the premarital celibacy was so heroic that the married men should offer a round of applause for their brothers for their struggles against sexual temptation. This was one of the ways in which Jaime reworked the notions embedded in machismo to make room for a spiritual masculinity, notions such as heroic struggle and the idea that masculinity resides in part in man's animal sexuality, which these men (as *vaqueros* of the soul, he once joked) must tame. Exegesis like this often reminded me of the historic struggle for the meaning of virtue, from the secular (or pagan) *virtù*, the expression of virility towards which (for example) Machiavelli's Prince should strive, until its contemporary meaning (with both

words coming from L. *vir*, for man) (see the early honor/shame anthropological literature, Campbell 1964, Peristiany 1966, Pitt Rivers 1966, 1977, Bourdieu 1966, and cf. Miller 1993, Stewart 1994).

After the men had spent two hours discussing masculinity and their relationships, Jaime reconvened them to discuss what they had found. After several members volunteered to describe what they had shared, uniting the group in sympathy with one another, Jaime told them that faithfulness and fidelity were central to any good relationship. The entire Biblical narrative, as Jaime told it (both in the men's group and in his church), was a story of God's faithfulness to us as a father. God's faithfulness should be understood, he told the men again, that the highest virtue is love, in particular selfish love, for God is faithful to us even when we are unfaithful to him. With God, he reminded the men, mercy triumphs over judgment (Jas 2:13). So central was the concept to this sermon and to so many of Jaime's sermons—so central was it to the religious change afoot in places like San Carlos—that Jaime's have even named his church for it: *Dios es Fiel*, God is Faithful. The same term, *fiel*, is used to describe a loyal husband, with one subtle implication again being that God is faithful, even when men are not.

In general, Jaime leaned heavily on marriage and the family as a central motif used to configure human and divine relationships (cf. Brenner, forthcoming). What was striking to me, however, was the way that, contrary to my expectations from much of the literature, especially on African evangelicalism and pentecostalism, so many religious movements and groups in San Carlos, the evangelical and support group movements, tended to use *horizontal* familial terms. Of course, in a majority Catholic environment, this also provides an interesting point of comparison with the Catholic uses of kin terms.[171] The term *hermano*/*hermana* (“brother/sister”)

171 Though Protestantism's focus on marriage and fatherhood is discussed throughout the contemporary

is probably the most ubiquitous form of address among Latin American evangelicals, but equally noteworthy is that evangelicals almost never use the vertical kin term, *padre* ("father"), to refer to evangelical pastors as Catholics do to their priests. *Compañero/a* (or the short form, *compa*) is the equivalent to hermano/a for support groupers and is used just as ubiquitously among them. The egalitarianism of compañero/a is even more striking, for the word not only means "peer" (or "mate," as in the term for classmate, compañero/a de clase, that I mentioned above). It is also the Spanish equivalent for the modern-sounding, egalitarian term for a spouse, roughly equivalent to the English "partner" (Brandes 2002:113,120). These horizontal forms of address seemed to bleed into the personal lives of evangelicals I observed, for evangelical spouses were in the habit of thinking of themselves as bound together not only as husbands and wives but as "brother" and "sister." Likewise, I observed that, at least during stories told at meetings and in my presence, most AA members I knew, and many other support groupers, made a point of calling their wives their compañeras. (Perhaps the term *esposa*, wife, also being the non-slang term for handcuffs in Spanish, was less attractive among the more egalitarian-minded for this reason as well, although this was unclear to me.)

Before marriage, young men should guard their faithfulness to their future spouses and sisters-in-Christ and should pass the time with their "brothers," cultivating a spiritual masculinity, Jaime advised. One's hermanos should be a source of fellowship and encouragement—of social support—as well as being a source of (horizontal) confession (although Jaime also made a point about the utility of sponsorship, of an *hermano mayor*, or elder brother, when one first began to cultivate these relationships).[172] In the safety of the group,

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literature on contemporary evangelicalism, its deeper history and relationship with Catholicism is usually ignored. See Weisner 1989.

172 Although the verticalism of priestly confession and absolution would seem to violate this egalitarian spirit,

one could cultivate an honesty about sin, both with God (as in Genesis 3) and with their hermanos.

That was their goal on this retreat: to grow in fellowship and communion with each other. Finishing his brief sermon, Jaime asked each of the men to pair with an "unknown brother" for the next activity, during which they should praise God together (accompanied by praise-and-worship music that started, rising slowly in volume, even as he said so). After finding a partner, the men began standing next to them but gradually arms went around shoulders and many of the men swayed alongside each other, crying along with the chorus's plaintive refrain "Use my hands, Lord Jesus."

After several songs had set the mood for the activities to follow, the men were asked to pair with still another unknown brother and to spend fifteen minutes or so walking around the grounds of the *finca* on which the retreat was being held, asking their brother about his spiritual needs and then praying with him that God would meet those needs. After this activity, they all re-congregated and a third pairing took place. Jaime did not give hard-and-fast rules for this third activity, but he suggested that since the brothers would spend an hour walking together and discussing their spiritual struggles, they should try taking turns, giving each other about an equal amount of time, say twenty minutes, so that at the end, with five or ten minutes to go, they could pray for one another and for trust in God to sanctify them in their struggles and bless the activity. The walking aspect of the activity struck me not only as clever, in terms of the psychological effects produced by synchronized walking, but also as congruent with so many images in

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Jaime mentioned something here that parallels sponsorship in the support groups, suggesting this egalitarianism in confession may have its limits, at least in the early stages of one's "continuous conversion." He told the men at some length that, although all men are hermanos and *hijos de Dios* (sons of God), men should find a spiritual *hermano mayor*, or "elder brother," who can give offer wisdom and non-judgmental support in times of trial. The sponsor relationship in many support groups (called the *padrino*/*ahijado* relationship—literally "godfather/godson," with preexisting connotations of moral guidance—relationship in Costa Rica) is similar (Brandes 2002).

evangelical and Catholic culture about one's "walk with God." In fact, in most households of AA members there is some decorative presentation of the footprints-in-the-sand narrative, concerning this walk with God. Here, it seemed to me later, this image of a walk with God was being bodily reenacted, each man accompanied by an *imago Dei*, learning, as Jaime had said, to love God by loving what He loves.

Efforts to identify with others and with God's will are not only a way of loving God and loving our brothers, as Jaime said to the men when they had all returned to the central meeting area. Identifying with others and with God's will for them is also the beginning of spiritual growth, of becoming healed and sanctified by God, he said. Unlike what is sometimes known as "self-help," evangelicalism and support group culture emphasize that self-improvement takes place in *relationships*, both with God and with others. Isn't this interesting, he said, that God did not want us to be alone, and that he teaches us to be in a relationship with Him by teaching us to be in relationships with our brothers and sisters? Isn't it interesting, he said, that it was easier to identify with others' struggles because we can see them more clearly than our own? Wasn't this a little like what Christ said, that we will eventually move beyond, this capacity to "see the speck in [our] neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in [our] own" (Mt 7:3)? As we grow in relationship with God, Jaime said, we can perceive our internal struggles more clearly, and for illustration he cited Paul's own desperation at the experience of a divided heart in Romans 7:21b-23a: "[W]hen I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with... my mind..." (NRSV).

Likewise, in group meetings, participants first practiced identifying *with* others, so that they could narrate and examine their experiences *for* others, until eventually they could internalize this dialogic understanding and learn to self-observe and self-reflect critically on their

own between meetings, even to self-discipline themselves in the moment, *in situ*. Jaime's preaching was always striking to me for its emphasis on transformation and growth and spiritual maturity, on the extent to which not only actions, but attitudes, emotions, and ways of thinking can become transformed, so that participants perceive in themselves a transformed identity, one that was rooted in communion. Drawing from 1 Corinthians 11:28-32, Jaime encouraged members to try to practice this communion so that they could eventually feel their brothers, always with them like God is always with us, to practice self-examination so that they might make this perfect communion a reality:

> Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup [of communion– i.e., of community].
>
> For all who eat and drink [i.e., join in communion] without discerning the body [of Christ—i.e., without perceiving God's presence uniting the community of believers[173]] eat and drink judgment against themselves...
>
> But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged... [W]hen we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world (NRSV, emphasis mine).

9.3 Individual identity transformation and identification with others: *Wém*

The relational practices of ethical examination we saw at the retreat play a central role not only in the support group movement but also in the evangelical movement and all movements and institutions in Latin America that have borrowed from and been influenced by these movements (e.g., Steigenga 2001, Chesnut 2003, Steigenga and Cleary 2008, Hartch 2014). Especially influential has been the practice of sharing stories from your life with others and with God, and the narrative construction of identity that results from the practice—both of which play a central role in the evangelical and support group movements, shaping their ethos

173 Cf. 1 Cor 12:12-31.

and their organization. This was certainly true of the other two men's groups I observed: the all-male Alcoholics Anonymous group “A Miracle in [Barrio] San Martín,” and Wém.

I discussed Wém and its founding briefly in Chapters 1 and 2, including its emergence in Costa Rica and its relationship to earlier women's groups dealing, among other things, with domestic violence. The group, like most men's groups and peer groups with which I studied, is modeled to some extent on the broader, AA-derived support group culture that is popular in much of Latin America. While AA's focus on alcoholism means, in Latin America, a practical focus on men and masculinity, Wém and other men's groups (like La Fraternidad and Hombres Íntegros) focus even more directly on reforming masculinity and on helping men manage their behaviors, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts. As in AA and Hombres Íntegros, regular meetings feature an emphasis on sharing. However, Wém leans on a number of group therapeutic exercises that are guided by “facilitators” (either therapists or experienced members who make efforts to radically de-emphasize any sense of authority, as the term suggests), and this makes it somewhat different from AA or from Hombres Íntegros (with the exception of retreats like the one above). Aside from these meetings, Wém occasionally holds special events including family picnics, retreats, movie screenings, and community discussions. On weekends, Wém frequently hosts workshops (*talleres*) on topics typical to the regular meetings: anger management, jealousy, spirituality, intimacy and sexuality, and communication (cf. Gutmann 1996:198-213 on the men's group CAVI). In addition, the group has a support line that you can call, as well as a program aimed at young men called “Soy cero machista” (literally, “I'm zero [percent] machista”).[174]

In group meetings and in most Wém events and workshops, just as in AA and Hombres Íntegros, the establishment of peerhood is crucial to a typical sharing session (and to the

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174 See https://www.institutowemcr.org/.

activities Wém practices). The norms of peerhood are both highlighted and instituted at the beginning of meetings through a set of liminalizing rituals that sets the meeting apart. As in AA, Wém members take turns reprising the rules and the leaderless organization of the group: “We don't give advice here,” “We speak for ourselves: we always speak in the I and never in the You,” and so on. All these groups tended to use first-name introductions, a leveling practice that omits all personal information other than a first name and one's place in the spiritual process: AA members often reveal how much time has passed since their last drink; evangelicals will often tell how long it's been since date they were “born again”; and members of Wém reveal the number of meetings they have attended, with applause reserved for those *Hombres Valiosos* (“men of worth”) who have attended at least 45 meetings. Differences between the men having to do with their class and profession are, as I mentioned, generally omitted.

At a typical meeting of Wém, preference to speak is given to fifth- or sixth-time visitors, and participants usually find they need this many visits to feel comfortable sharing anyway. The sharing genre is challenging for many newcomers, being a more-or-less complete performance of an emergent masculinity that is disorienting to many (or at least a performance of one's struggle towards it, as a telos). As a result, new participants in Wém are made to know that they are welcome to decline to share until they feel comfortable doing so.

One newcomer, Josué (whom I did not interview), cautiously accepted an invitation by a facilitator to explain why he had come. He confessed to the group that his wife “made him extremely jealous.”

“Makes you?” the facilitator clarified.

“Yes...” Josué offered, cautiously.

“Would you mind clarifying? How does she 'make' you?”

This represents the furthest extent of the facilitator's role: humble, brief, gentle questions for clarification that leave speakers “with the floor” and which encourage them to reflect even more carefully on their experiences and relationships. It also gently retrains the personal narrative to reflect presumptively healthier ways of relating to oneself and others. It is easily the most insistent way that masculinities are reshaped in Wém, and for this reason I wanted to show how it works: the delicacy of such questions and the way that the reigning horizontalism of *Wém* requires that facilitators grant participants like Josué a wide berth.

Thus, indirectly and with gentle encouragement, Josué explored the interplay between his passions and the sense of passivity and helplessness he felt in his life. Despite the fact that, by many external standards, Josué was one of the few members (like Isaac) who could be judged to be relatively well-adjusted to the new era of masculinity: well-off economically, educated, comfortable not performing machismo in front of other men, and married to a woman who appeared to be loving, forgiving, and entirely faithful—if deeply annoyed and alienated by the possessiveness and insecurity her husband showed by his repeated questioning of her whereabouts and requests to see her phone.

In his story, Josué acknowledged having tried, out of jealousy, to control his wife, but both his story explicitly and his bearing implicitly made it clear that, although he had made her miserable, his effort to control her was carried out through actually through the most pitiful, transparently helpless sort of manipulations, rather than physical aggression or any apparent aggression at all. (This was not always the case, and my interviews include many cases closer to Zaca's experiences of being physically abusive and domineering in the home.) He wanted to see her phone but, rather than not grab it, he would sneakily examine it when she did not have it with her. As Josué was given more room to elaborate on how his perpetual anxiety and insecurity had

damaged their relationship, the other participants' nodding heads silently expressed their identification with his case, and the affirmation seemed to encourage Josué during his narrative whenever he looked up.

Eventually, as I will show, Josué would still come to see this behavior as abusive and a violation of his wife's autonomy and of the trust and intimacy they could have. However, as above, where the facilitator questioned whether his wife really “made him” jealous, Wém always emphasizes the same *autonomía* that AA stresses throughout Latin America: an important notion that not only signifies the autonomy of the local group but the autonomy of the individual will and their own spiritual paths (Brandes 2002). Josué would come to learn, as would members of Wém and AA, that men were rarely successful at changing until he wanted have to want to change “for themselves” first, because a desire to change for others often presumes a dysfunctional model of relationships and is often manipulative. One of the goals of Wém and other groups, as Jaime stressed during the retreat, was learning what real, healthy, loving relationships, primarily by having them modeled and discussed within the group. In the typical support group fashion, Josué would ultimately come to empathize with the suffering of others only when he fully experienced his own sense of being out of control. The facilitator (and, later, other members) would help him learn to ask these questions: Does he feel happy? Does he feel like what he is doing is working for him? How does it feel to identify so strongly with this sense of passivity, of being controlled by these passions and jealousies? Is it possible that his struggle to control his wife is not really an admission that he cannot even control himself, that he has not learned to distinguish the things that he can control from those that he cannot, as the Serenity Prayer suggests?[175]

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175 See footnote 75.

Notions of masculinity are thus explicitly questioned and redefined in these groups. As with the image of struggle used in each of the groups (and in the examples above). the redefinition of masculinity seems to center on pivoting from an association between masculinity and activity. This reframing of spirituality as masculine was hammered home by the questions the facilitator posed to Josué after he had finished sharing, questions that linked the notion of machismo to passions (*pasiones*) like jealousy and the idea of feeling passive (*pasivo*), or helpless, in the face of these passions

After a half hour, the facilitator thanked Josué for his bravery in sharing and elaborating upon these intimate details of his life. The group applauded enthusiastically, but Josué still looked a little unsure, as many tended to after their first try at sharing exercises. The facilitator pivoted to the group at large: "Raise your hands, everyone who identifies with this man." The sea of hands appeared to offer Josué visible relief.

"I identify (*me identifico*) a lot with this man," each man tended to begin, sharing in the kind of brief summaries of one's *testimonio* that only comes with experience and a sense for how to avoid hijacking the group (which could grow quite large, even over 100 men, at some meetings during 2011). The other men offered self-mocking, outrageous tales, one after the other, of "tailing" wives around town, spying on cellphones, and other retrospectively comical efforts to control where their partners went, what they wore, and whom they knew: "I manipulated my wife for so long, yet she never even flirted with another man! It was all in my head, but for years I destroyed any opportunity for intimacy." "With me, it was my daughters; I questioned their characters and restricted them and they ended up hating me. One confessed that she had her first child out of wedlock to punish me—but thanks to God and *Wém* I can see now that I was to blame." "I came here to fix my family, but I recognized that was just another manipulation. Only

when I started attending for myself did the change begin."

This last point—made repeatedly by both evangelicals and support groupers—discomforted many newcomers, who were confused by the particularity of what was being said. Wasn't learning to be less selfish the goal? Yet participants eventually accepted that psychology was tricky, and that peace came not from a machista effort to control one's relationships but by learning to relate to others differently, partly by being exposed regularly to a different model of masculinity that seemed happier, more at peace, *más tranquilo*, as many Costa Ricans liked to say. The beginning of this process was acknowledging, expressing, and questioning old ways of thinking, feeling, acting, and self-identifying, many of which were tied up with ideas of masculinity and verbally identifiable through the stereotype of machismo.

With the spotlight off of him as other men narrated their stories and the roles of speaker and listener reversed, Josué appeared to relax and become reengaged. Appearing to see this, the facilitator suggested that very often roleplaying exercises were one of the tools that helped participants move ahead in their "process," a statement which elicited a chorus of nods and muttered affirmations from the participants. Would Josué be willing to try an exercise? He consented, and the facilitator had the men rise from their seats and squeeze in to form a large circle around Josué in a warm show of support (a point which the facilitator clarified explicitly: "All these men here support you"). Josué would play the role of his wife, he was told, while the other volunteers would enact Josué's different efforts to control his wife. Those members who had earlier volunteered and identified with Josué in their stories then approached him, one-by-one, asking him questions like "Where have you been?" and "Can I see your phone?" and reaching out to grab ahold of him playfully.

"Okay, okay," said the facilitator to the several volunteers around Josué. "Each of you,

please reach and place one hand gently on his arm or shoulder. But first, is that okay Josué?" He consented, thus reinforcing the principle of autonomy, and each volunteer reached out to touch him.

As they crowded in, the facilitator asked Josué, "Are you okay with the exercise still?"

"Yes, but a little uncomfortable."

"Ah ha!"

The volunteers withdrew in a strong show of respect for his discomfort and for his bodily autonomy, and the facilitators asked for everyone to take their seat and give Josué a round applause. Before they sat down, a few of the volunteers laughed good-naturedly with Josué, patting him on the back and congratulating him for sharing and for being brave. After everyone sat down, Josué was asked to elaborate on how he felt.

"Restrained," he offered. "Crowded. Without freedom of movement."

"Very good! But also, please, what did that *feel* like, in your body? And, please, *where* in your body did you feel it?"

The men nodded as Josué began to describe the tension he felt in his chest, in his jaw, in his stomach—and he seemed to slowly understand. He admitted that he had never paid attention to his own physical and emotional "feelings" in this way, much less sympathized wife his wife's feelings the way that he had in the roleplaying exercise, the way that the men of Wém seemed so capable of sympathizing with the wives and daughters they admitted in their narratives to having tried to control in the past. And as Josué said this, he appeared to grow very sad.

He was then asked what it felt like to worry about controlling his wife, and now the answers seemed to come more easily than they had before the exercise. Just as the men had identified with Josué, Josué had learned to identify with his own experiences, with his wife's

experiences, and with the experiences of others as the meeting moved on. After the meeting, during the group hug that characterizes the end of the meeting and allows the men to treat one another as equals and friends, one after another member, including many of the more experienced members, came forth to congratulate Josué, to embrace him, and to briefly tell him what they identified with most about what he had shared.

The peer group unearths for participants what the years had buried in their lives, and what the Methodist model is designed to demonstrate: that a person's identity is both developmental and dialogic, that it and can only be developed gradually, in relationships with others. The possibility of transformation is premised on the acknowledgment of earlier formations through the sharing narrative. The groups emphasize the extent to which, while our personal identity may appear stable and bounded, this is not so, even if many times our models of personhood and responsibility force us to act as if we were the same yesterday and today. Models of a relatively constant personhood may represent an aspect or aspects of personhood, and treating the individual and her selfhood as largely stable may be a convenient way of accounting for intentions, duties, and consequences (cf. Laidlaw 2014:179-212, esp. 189, 193-195), but focusing on this purported aspect of the self sometimes obscures subitist or gradualist models of personal transformation, does not incorporate either radical changes or the gradually developing ethical agent.

Nonetheless, participants in support groups, by examining the unfolding of their lives, learn to acknowledge and account for the fact that they have been somewhat different people at different points in their lives, occupying different states of mind, with different ideas about what was desirable and right—that they have already changed significantly throughout their own lives, thanks to major events in their lives and processes of drifting in one or another direction, often

without realizing it at the time or afterwards. This realization in turn encourages them to think of their sense of identity as changeable still, to think that they might set off along a different path to being yet another kind of person.

Yet, as many who have never participated in such a group know, the possibility of choosing a new path usually comes dialogically, through knowing or observing the lives of others. In a broader, more abstract sense, identities develop over time in dialogue with others, using discourses and identity models that predate us and are only presented to us in social contexts (e.g., Holland *et al*. 1998).

Many voices in Latin America have been crying out for alternatives to machismo. Yet few anthropologists would likely be surprised to find that men are not simply developing new masculinities all by themselves, in isolation, out of thin air. And many men like Josué simply lack informal peer groups where this alternative masculinity can be modeled and lived out, peer groups in which the possibility of wifely infidelity is shrugged off with the matter-of-fact claim that you cannot control anyone's behavior, where men laugh humbly and good-naturedly at their own past foolishness, admit their vulnerabilities one another, cry without shame, and describe their emotions in such vivid, honest terms. For men to develop this kind of masculinity requires new relationships, in which new models of male identity can be practiced, performed, and supported by others. The peer groups of the evangelical and support group movements often help them develop these relationships. And the familiar, anti-hierarchical, non-“religious” ethos of these peer groups strikes many men in Latin America as distinctly masculine, attracting men who might not otherwise see themselves as ready to join an explicitly religious organization.

9.4 Group organization and individual redemption: AA and "A Miracle in [Barrio] San Martín"

Most meetings of the AA group "A Miracle in [Barrio] San Martín" have a theme-of-the-day, to which the participants' narratives periodically return. Quentin's testimony, offered at the beginning of this chapter, responded to the Ninth Tradition of AA, which deals with AA's anti-hierarchical organization, to which I will return after explaining a bit about the Twelve Traditions how they help structure support groups.

The Twelve Traditions are to the AA group what the Twelve Steps are to the individual: guidelines for action that locate authority in rules and norms rather than in persons. The Twelve Traditions, "in a move paralleling the Protestant Reformation's laicization of priestly authority" writes Mariana Valverde (1998:124), structures participants as if they were a "priesthood of believers" (in Reformation-era terms). As the Second Tradition states, "there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." The Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions interpret "anonymity" as not merely a question of confidentiality but an expression of egalitarianism and mutual identification, so that (for instance) those who promote the group should "maintain personal anonymity," given that the point of proselytization is "attraction rather than [self-]promotion," and given that "anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Other traditions go further, limiting the concerns of the group to recovery and mutual support and defining its membership openly: anyone who has "a desire" to change, "plus one"—plus a loving God who is reflected in the groups. (In this AA, the number of attendees was usually written to indicate this, so that if there were 18 participants, someone would write "18 + 1" on the whiteboard. Several other traditions insist on the group's moral and financial autonomy

from other particular traditions and institutions, and its dependence instead upon the support of members as they are able (4, 6, 7, and 10)—one of the reasons these institutions do not often suffer from financial want, so long as they can rent a room and/or find a space to use.

Finally, two traditions deal with the (non-)organization of the group (8 and 9). Together they insist that the groups "remain non-professional," all the group's efforts being shared by members cooperatively (8), and that any work performed by the group or the movement cannot be "organized" (i.e., delegated or professionalized) (9).

More specifically, the Ninth Tradition specifically states that "*AA... ought never be organized*; but... may create... committees directly responsible to those they serve" (emphasis mine). The publication *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, by AA founder Bill Wilson, discusses how this works in practice, so that even their international headquarters avoids any professionalization or "central government" (AA 1986[1953]:172-175). The book details how a worldwide movement can function in which no general conference or board "can issue a single directive to an AA member and make it stick," nor can members be expelled or any discipline be applied to anyone. Bill Wilson mocks both the "the churchman" and "the psychiatrist" for insisting that religion and psychology must adhere to a hierarchical order and disputes their patronizing claims that failing to acknowledge hierarchy is a sign of immaturity, is "making disobedience a virtue" or failing to "grow up and conform to social usage" (174). The authority of both medical and religious hierarchies, as well as the compartmentalization of religion and science, are often waved aside with the invocation of the term "spirituality," as I have explored it above (and in line with the claims of Taves and Bender [2012:5-9] about how it is used to scramble the religious-secular boundaries—and their respective hierarchies). Wilson speaks with the urgency of religious figures in many major traditions, comparing sin to a problem that has us

at the point of death, from which we must "recover [or] almost certainly sign [our] own death warrant[s]" (*idem*.). Wilson insists that AA adheres to "spiritual principles" and needs no others, echoing Valverde's claims invoking a "priesthood of believers": "So we of AA do obey spiritual principles, first because we must, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings. Great suffering and great love are AA's disciplinarians; we need no others" (*idem*.).

According to this discourse, AA is not merely Not a Religion, it is specifically not an Organized Religion. Its rejection of Organization by name (or what we might call institutionalization or bureaucratization) seems to parallel the evangelical rejections of the (overt) notions of both Religion and Ritual (cf. Pfeil 2011). The self-identification of the support group movement as something other than an organized religion clears a space not only for a new egalitarian sense of spirituality (as Wuthnow and Mercadante have argued) but for emergent masculinities as well (Inhorn and Wentzell 2011), just as the Methodist model cleared spaces for new models of spirituality and masculinity where it was taken up (cf. Brandes 2002, Jarrad 1997). Not only is the support group model pioneered by AA "the most democratic, the least dependent on formal organization, and the most capable of functioning without strong leaders" of all the small groups and peer groups covered in Wuthnow's (1994a:150) study, but later researchers of North American religion found that, "for many, AA is the [implicit] archetype of a SNBR [spiritual-but-not-religious] community," despite the fact that "the connection between the SNBR ethos and the [AA] movement is often overlooked" in the scholarly literature (and 2014:176,174, respectively).

So, too, have most authors overlooked the way in which this egalitarian form of spirituality might be particularly attractive to men, especially in light of ideas about masculinity and ideologies that seem to counsel a reluctance to subordinating oneself (not only in the notions

underpinning machismo [cf. Lancaster 1992:235-278], but, for example, in the liberal anti-clericalism of nineteenth-century Latin America, discussed above, cf. Mahmood 2005). What I want to draw attention to here is the way that this organization works in the local group and how it appeals to men by pivoting from locals' ideals about masculinity toward substantive critiques of particular models of "toxic" masculinity and toward alternative models of masculinity with which to replace them.

In the speech by Quentin which I introduced in the beginning of this chapter, Quentin started his testimonio by performing exactly what was attractive to men about this portrayal of spirituality (as active and egalitarian). His performance of masculine spirituality was excellent, standing confidently now before his compañeros, describing repeatedly how AA had "strengthened" and "fortified" him (v. *fortalecer*).

But, Quentin said, such "personal recovery depends on" finding a sense of "unity" in the group, quoting the First Tradition. AA's founding began with the group, he said, and these traditions were created to secure the group's autonomy and the equality of all its members. Quentin recalled that Bill Wilson had visited and sent letters to the early groups regarding his advice on their organization, but that the members finally pleaded for something more formal to unite all AA groups. "Bill, we love your visits and your letters," Quentin said, paraphrasing their request, "but please, give us some tradition that will outlive you!"

Quentin, like many of the participants in the evangelical and support group movement, found the egalitarianism of The Twelve Traditions appealing:

> The success of any institution—the success of a business, for example—depends on how it is governed and coordinated, how discipline is imposed, how it is organized...
>
> Usually in a business, it's your education or class that determines who will govern. Someone might say, "Well, sir, your vocabulary isn't very good..."
>
> But not in AA! In AA, we obey—what? Spiritual principles! We... don't suffer

from human authority, but [rather] when we disobey our spiritual principles, our spiritual traditions, our disciplines.

Quentin's apparent identification with the man being passed up for a place in a business hierarchy may reveal an anxiety about his own place in such hierarchies, or it may also be an appeal to others' similar anxieties, or it simply have been a telling look at the ethos of humility in the group. Such is the multifaceted nature of sharing or of giving a testimonio, an act which is at once evangelistic and confessional. Still, Quentin's appeal to the problem that different levels education and class may produce in small groups spoke to many of the problems that have long been identified with early Catholic base communities (e.g., Burdick 1993), as well as the problems that developed in the Methodist class meeting.

Continuing along this theme of "spiritual principles" and the way they confounded worldly hierarchies, Quentin continued:

> Before—you all know! I was worse off than Teodoro [a member whose alcoholism left him homeless for a time—see the chart of interviews in the appendix]...
>
> And not just with drinking! I am by nature the weakest sort of person, emotionally. When things get rough, rather than face reality, I attack myself, isolate myself—with alcohol, but *also* with my thoughts: "Yes, yes, you *maricón*, *maricón* [pansy]! The whole world is against you!"
>
> I know: fear, insecurity—they can kill you! Some moments, I almost let them kill me. For almost eight years, like this... But after learning to rely on my group, I don't even want to drink anymore!

Having already heard the interview of Zaca above, I was struck by the way that Quentin described these internal voices of machismo attacking him, and how much they sounded like Luther's account of demonic "assaults," or Anfechtungen. I also reflected on the contrast between the atomization of machismo that so many of my interviewees had described and Quentin's own description of learning to depend upon others for strength. The V-shaped arc of Quentin's narrative was as typical of the sharing genre as of many hero myths, although here Quentin

reproduced the narrative arc only in a thumbnail sketch, merely gesturing toward a longer story of hitting rock bottom that, as he implied, all the members already knew. He had been brought low by pride, driven deeper into atomization and further out of control, and his will had only undergone this *fortalecimiento* ("strengthening"), as Quentin said, when it had begun to cooperate with God's will and with the group, where one first comes to know the divine will.

Quentin went on to trace this V-shaped arc to the present:

> Tomorrow, I face a different problem— a "problem" I couldn't even have imagined while I was an active alcoholic, just as alcoholism is unimaginable to the non-alcoholic. Tomorrow, I will decide whether to sell a business I worked so hard to build.
>
> What will I do? I don't know. But I know what I *won't* do: I won't drink! That is the spiritual wisdom I learned from these compañeros, by following our spiritual steps and traditions: that you are, day-by-day, *supported* and *strengthened* in a group, that you are *not* alone, and that others understand you and can help you understand yourself.

Despite these weighty matters, Quentin's narrative found not only a place for a humor but a purpose for it which it also serves in the support group and evangelical movements in general. Humor serves the communal good, generating warmth and support and providing comic relief. Quentin used it himself throughout the testimonio, being one of the funnier members of the group.

Because Quentin used humor so frequently (and because his recovery was known to be in little practical danger, as he said), others felt comfortable using humor with him. Although humor plays an important rule, experienced members tend to use it sparingly or not at all with newer members, to whom very little is often funny. Any humor that does entertain and edify them must usually be aimed, gently, at more experienced, more confident members. This is a final, rare use of humor: to assure that the oratorical bluster that members often feel when reflecting on their recovery does not undermine the primary value of humility. This other-directed humor represents

the furthest extent of other-directed humor I ever observed in a group, so I include it here, as with the gentle questioning of Josué, as a sort of limit case, to illustrate how even at these limits the group still hews to the basic principles of egalitarianism and autonomy. These limit cases (other-directed humor and questioning) probably represented a very small minority of the humor used in groups like these, most all of which consists of humor directed at oneself and one's own past, similar to the self-mocking, miniature sharing narratives the men of Wém offered Josué in sympathy.

This light-touch, other-directed humor is what happened between the two excerpts above from Quentin's testimonio, when his compañero and former drinking buddy Carlos chimed in humorously. Quentin had been waxing poetic about the happiness he had found in his relationships in the group. Any disaster, any pain, he said, would be manageable if he could rely on God and his compañeros.

Yet God sometimes helped him in counterintuitive ways, he said, guiding him towards service roles in the group. Service has been, he said, in a beautiful image, "the tree [or trunk] of my recovery," Quentin said, rooted in the soil of the group and nourished from above by God.

It was in this context that he exclaimed, in earnest and heartfelt tones, "I don't even want to drink anymore!" The group erupted in applause, and Quentin added, "My group knows me! My group understands me!"

"Those sons of bitches, eh?" his friend Carlos had interjected, and the laughter that followed had not only been good-natured, it had improved the testimonio and focused Quentin on the present and the reality in which he still struggled (for instance, with his business decision). The message is that all spiritual struggle takes place along this same arc, most recognizable in our darkest moment, and that these struggles depend every bit as much upon others, as loathe as

our pride might be to admit it.

Quentin's testimony about the importance of the peer group (and his peers' reaction to it) illustrates how AA groups help many men find sobriety. There are two issues here to examine before concluding: the issue of men and masculinity, and the issue of “sobriety” (and spirituality). What do they mean for the support group and evangelical movement?

First, many men find sobriety in AA because AA groups in Latin America are frequently all-male. Female alcoholics in Latin America often prefer Al Anon, despite its original purpose of helping wives cope with their husbands' alcoholism. Given broad differences between the patterns of alcoholism that men and women suffered (especially in older generations of Latin Americans, when drinking in public was coded male), most Al Anon members report, like Quentin, feeling more comfortable and more understood among male peers (cf. Mäkelä 1996:176-178, Brandes 2002:102-105). This peerhood was a fundamental principle of the group and made this kind of humor “safe.” In fact, as I have mentioned, gender peerhood is merely the beginning and most regionally characteristic form of segregation that determines the process of fission by which groups split and the movement spreads. Un Milagro en San Martín was known for being a smaller, more intimate, and somewhat motley crew, especially for being accepting of working class men and being the preferred group of many respected older and retired alcoholics, who often had experience as sponsors and more time to fulfill this role. (In this, perhaps, the name of the group invoked the mixed-class tradition of San Martín itself: Romein 1995:496.) Likewise, in Wém and Hombres Íntegros, men reported enjoying being able to speak more freely among men. This also allowed sharing to be was peppered with vulgar street language that many men in San Carlos were raised to avoid using among women (Brandes 2002:126-127). Among men and all this “manly language,” newcomers to this group could be reassured that the

“spirituality” and admissions of weakness they witnessed could still be recognizably masculine, even if other sancarleños whom I met in AA admitted that they preferred the less rough-edged quality of other groups.

Secondly, AA members come to understand sobriety, like alcoholism, primarily in terms of spirituality, as a spiritual process every bit as gradual and continuous as the model of sanctification that motivated Wesley to design the Methodist model. Sobriety, as in Quentin's testimonio, means not merely abstinence from alcohol but staying spiritually conscious, a message that other international studies of AA have shown to have gained real ground in Latin America (Brandes 2002:164, Mäkelä 1996:123-127), alongside evangelical and charismatic Catholic movements that also emphasize the notion of spirituality rather than religion.

The discourse of spirituality may thus represent the partial resolution (or growing overlap) between religious and therapeutic discourses in the contemporary evangelical and support group movements (see Bellah *et al* 1985:93-110, cf. Wuthnow 1994a-b, 1998), even though at the same time it represents the laicization of both those discourses. Moreover, the AA model of addiction (adopted by the support group movement and thus by those movements and institutions which borrow its model) requires divine, communal, *and* individual effort, resonating deeply not only with Arminian, but with some Catholic (and most Orthodox) ideas about sin and the respective roles of God, the collective Church, and the individual will. This resonance with preexisting strains of Christianity and religious understandings has had, I argue, important consequences for the shape of religion in Latin America and for religious and secular projects to reform machismo.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

In this dissertation, I strove to show how a new form of spirituality in Latin America is helping to transform masculinity in the region. This new form of spirituality is modeled most proximately on support group culture, yet it shares a long history (and some key characteristics) with evangelicalism, with both being rooted, as I illustrate, in what historians call "the Methodist model" of social organization and community, based on voluntarism, egalitarianism, and mutual support. This support group model of spirituality has been adopted by a number of movements and institutions throughout the world, who have found that the high levels of social support and mutual identification that this model of community can generate among participants can be adapted to a nearly endless number of shared struggles and different forms of peerhood. In Latin America, the widespread adoption of this form of spirituality has been especially relevant, given that Alcoholics Anonymous had decades ago proportionally outgrown its North American presence by three times over (Vaillant 1995:268). Moreover, AA grew at this phenomenal rate in Latin America almost entirely through all-male groups, all the while growing alongside evangelical, pentecostal, and charismatic movements (including charismatic Catholic movements) that had their own special emphasis on men and masculinity—a "reformation of machismo," as Elizabeth Brusco (2011[1995]) called the phenomenon.

As a result, this support group-style of spirituality has thus had a broad if under-appreciated influence on ideas about religion and gender in the region, especially ideas about what a spiritual community looks like and what masculine spirituality might look like. Part of what has made it possible to have this influence, I argue, is the widespread discussion of a "crisis of masculinity" (or "crisis of machismo) in Latin America, which is often associated in the

region's popular, journalistic, and social scientific discourses with a second crisis, a so-called "crisis of the family"—a set of cultural, legal, technological, and economic circumstances that are producing rapid changes in gender and the family. It is in this context that the support group model of spirituality has managed to have such transformative effects on masculinity in the region, providing not only a new model of masculinity (recognizably masculine but non-machista), but also a new social environment where men can feel comfortable and supported by other men as they practice, perform, and ultimately try to inhabit this masculinity. Evidence for this transformation, such as Robert Wuthnow's (1994a-b, 1998) team carried out in North America, still needs to be collected. However, if the model of spirituality and spiritual community provided by AA had already begun "restructuring American religion" by the 1990s, and AA in Latin America had already tripled US membership rates by that decade, then the effects of the support group movements on Latin America may be expected to be wide-ranging indeed. And given that both AA and evangelicalism have both been seen to address male gender identity and its transformation directly, and that AA consists almost entirely of men in the region, one would expect the restructuring of Latin American religion to have an especially dramatic impact on men and masculinity.

I have tried to show what this new model of masculinity looks like, both in the literature and in the lives of men in the urbanizing area of northern Costa Rica where I carried out a total of twenty two months of ethnographic research over the course of a decade, conducting participant-observation in three men's group that roughly represent the kinds that are popular in San Carlos, and in three distinct styles of church (Catholic, evangelical, and Adventist) as well as thirty-plus life history interviews with members of these groups, with men who are not members, and with local religious leaders. I have also tried to show in detail how this new model of

masculinity responds, like the model of support group-style spirituality, to the broader changing set of circumstances mentioned above and the sense of crisis they have nurtured.

Moreover, I argue that there are historical precedents for how the support group model has been harnessed to grapple with these changes, as well as contemporaneous parallels in North America, and that there may be lessons for understanding the present moment in recognizing the repeated recruitment of the Methodist model to the task of remaking men and masculinity (e.g., in its evangelical heirs and in its transdenominational heirs, like the YMCA or AA). To make sense of these historical precedents, I have privileged the analysis of social organization and of ethos—of the styles of affect, of mood and emotion and their expression, that are generated in particular social environments. I argued for a sustained attention to religious organization and to organizational growth "beyond the congregation" (cf. Scheitle 2010), thus joining a number of recent anthropological studies that have turned their attention to understanding the significance of small group and peer group organization, both within and alongside churches (e.g,., Brandes 2002, O'Neill 2009, Bielo 2009, Lindhardt 2011b, Handman 2014). Part of my motivation for paying attention to non-church social organizations and their unique affective qualities is that I was repeatedly confronted during the course of my research and my efforts to make sense of my data by how much I and others appeared to be missing by treating discourse- and practice-oriented approaches as the major alternatives and complements to one another, and also by taking the congregation for granted as the primary unit of analysis. So much of the trajectories of men's religious lives seemed, as Smilde (2007) has argued, and as I discovered in my interviews, seemed to pass not primarily through churches but through other institutions instead (including these groups and their families), institutions which in turn struggled to help men commit themselves to the church as an institution. It was hard not to wonder whether this fact that was

related to the difference between the proportion of most churches' focus on men and masculinity, on the one hand, and men's actual numerical proportions in those churches on the other. Indeed, churches also seemed less like natural units or classifications as I watch the main evangelical congregation I had studied schism over the years into two organizations, one of which was largely a collective of bible studies, prayers groups, and opportunities for marital counseling, and the other of which had shifted from being a “pentecostal church” to an “evangelical” one under a new pastor.

I also found that focusing on non-church social organization and on the ethos of these other forms of organization seemed to make sense of some of the transdenominational and even trans-secular spread of what have been called the “transposable messages” and “portable practices” that seem to spread across the Latin American religious arena, moving across denominational lines, as a number of Latin Americanists across the disciplines have noted (Steigenga 2001, Chesnut 2003, Csordas 2007, Cleary and Steigenga 2009, Hartch 2014). Many who examined this diffusion were tempted to interpret it as reiterating the supposed lesson of an earlier generation of research (e.g., Martin 1990, Stoll 1990): that an an analysis centered around churches was less fruitful than those focused on discourses and practices or those which privileged the lifecourse and social networks at the micro-level. However, one of the major findings of my research was that there were, in fact, many *non-church* social organizations and movements that were leading to the diffusion of these discourses and practices and which, rather than “competing” with churches for men's spiritual attention, were in fact funneling men into the churches where I met them and increasing their participation in those churches. In the church men's groups I visited, including the precursor to Hombres Íntegros, there seemed to be a set of similarities between what I observed and support group practices and discourses, as well as much

about the affective qualities of these groups, in a parallel to what some sociological research on the small group and support group movement in North America had found (e.g., Wuthnow 1988, 1994a-b, 1998, Mercadante 2013). This cross-pollination of spirituality between the support group movement and religion proper has been little studied in the region, but the literature offered some promising clues, which I pursued by pairing this life history approach with my comparative approach to studying religion and spiritual communities, beginning to regularly attend two more groups, an AA group and Wém, one of the large men's groups in town (which often subdivides into smaller, more manageable groups to conduct parts of their meetings).

The discourses and practices associated with the support group movement and to some extent with the evangelical-pentecostal-charismatic movement—including the discourse of spirituality, and the practice of sharing testimonials—have spread with remarkable ease across denominations and across the religious-secular divide. I argue that one of the reasons for the ease of this diffusion is largely organizational, with the influence of a particular style of social organization, that social historians have called "the Methodist model," dominating not just the support group but also a number of other successful movements, including evangelicalism, as Martin (1990) has noted.

In this latest iteration, I argue, the Methodist model helps explain how the support group movement has generated a Latin American parallel to what Robert Wuthnow called "the restructuring of American religion" through new models of spiritual community, across different denominations and faith traditions, largely through "extra-denominational" innovations in religious social organization. The support group movement seems to have provided the dominant model for the ethos and social organization of this restructuring, much as Wuthnow and his team of colleagues concluded of North American religion (cf. Mercadante 2013), spreading in Latin

America, as it has in North America, across denominational divides and across the religious-secular divide as well, fundamentally transforming spirituality in region, especially for men.

In fact, there are a number of reasons why the restructuring of Latin American religion has had a special impact on men (above and beyond what research on the Methodist model has already shown about its seemingly recurrent focus on masculinity). There is, of course, the unique role that the gender segregation of AA groups in Latin America has played in their influence and how they have shaped ideas about spirituality and peerhood. There is also the probability that there has been a good deal of mutual amplification between the support group movement and these other religious movements, as might be suggested by much of the literature about religious changes in the region. But, crucially, there is also a long history of co-constructing religion and gender in Latin America that makes questions of gender implicitly religious and questions of religion and spirituality implicitly gendered. This has meant that the widely perceived "crisis of masculinity/machismo" and "crisis of the family" afoot in Latin America has often been interpreted in spiritual terms and as therefore open to religious responses. Of the variety of organizations and institutions in the region addressing this crisis, some of them are purportedly secular, and yet most of them, because of the deep co-construction of religion and gender in the region, are either explicitly spiritual or else contain a lot of religious-therapeutic hybridity in their activities, as one sees in AA or in groups like Wém.

In addition to focusing on the question of organization and the particularities of how the Methodist model has been taken up in Latin America, I have focused throughout this dissertation on the notion of ethos, both in its relationship to this model of organization and as an analytical complement to analyses of discourse and practice. My use of the notion of ethos has served a number of purposes, including allowing me to describe in useful ways the relationship between

“the 'feel' of a culture” and its discourse (between its ethos and its eidos, in Bateson's terms: 2002[1942]:91-91, 1936:220). The layers of meaning buried deeply in the word “ethos” also suggest how the development of personal identity or character (ethos, or habitus) might depend upon the character of a social environment (its ethos) or of a particular “habitat” (an earlier meaning for ethos). My hope is that this connection of affect, place, and character development might be useful in some way to others interested in the anthropology of ethics (which has often failed to emphasize social relationships adequately or even to include a situationist view of ethics) (see Robbins 2012 on Faubion's [2011] corrective, and Bialecki 2016b, respectively). The ethos of support group culture, like its social organization, has been elaborated upon by a variety of groups, including two support groups (Wém and Hombres Íntegros) that I examined here. The study of the ethos of these social environments may explain much about the appeal of not only support group-style social organization but also the discourses and practices associated with the support group movement, such as the discourse of spirituality and the practice of sharing testimonials.

Instead of reprising much of the data that supports this analysis here, I would like to conclude by suggesting what this analysis might contribute to contemporary questions in anthropology, based on the series of questions I asked in the introductory chapter. One primary contribution, which I have previously mentioned, might be the dissertation's analytical design and the ways in which its focus on social organization and ethos may be complementary to analyses of the discourses and practices of given social fields. This view might suggest a number of ways that the support group movement might be understood in comparison to similar settings designed to produce safe spaces for the production of new identities, and gender identities in particular: ritual settings (especially for rites of passage), safe spaces for those managing an

LGBTQIA identity, other gender-segregated religious and spiritual settings, and other secular peer groups (especially those that cross-cut other forms of social organization), for a set of circumstances as wide-ranging as addiction, illness, pregnancy, divorce, even political struggles, as I noted—almost any conceivable struggle or difficulty that people face. As such, the organizational view suggests that these sorts of movements may be understood in terms of the way that they serve as a conduit of cultural material across different social divisions, including not only different religious institutions but different classes, genders, ages, and so on.

Anthropologists might also avail themselves of a number of interdisciplinary questions and bodies of work about social life if they looked to the support group movement as an example of social organization and social movements. In this dissertation, for instance, I have relied upon research on a number of important psychological concepts (such as social support and accountability) and sociological concepts (about networks and social support) that are also key to understanding other social movements and institutions that anthropologists might study, including political ones (as shown in the example I reviewed concerning Ada Colau and the Spanish anti-eviction movement). Anthropologists might also view in these groups a possible site for studying both ethics and politics. I have spent more examining the former, but there is an intimate connection to politics presented by these groups (and suggested in the social historiography on the Methodist model) that deserves a more thorough analysis than what I have managed to carry out here, concerning especially how the support group discourse may line up with neoliberal "responsibilization" discourses and legal changes that have sought to "responsibilize" men's relationships with their families—often alongside efforts to *diminish* the responsibility of the state to these families. These groups also provide a new site for studying, as anthropologists at least since Ferguson (1990) have done, the work presently being done under

the banner of "Gender in Development," which has sought men's participation in development programs that, while they may be carried out by "non-governmental agencies," certainly bear on political questions. On the question of ethics, too, there are many important questions raised by this research, particularly regarding the more gradualist model of virtue ethics embedded in the support group wherever it has spread throughout the world—a model of ethics and identity formation that seems not only to challenge certain strains of Christianity thought, with different views of salvation and moral responsibility, but also to raise questions that appear in many religious and cultural traditions about ethics and personal responsibility (cf. Laidlaw 2014:179-212).

For anthropologists of gender or of religion working in Latin America, another possible contribution may be my analysis of how emergent masculinities may be constructed using gender discourses that are implicitly religious, and which are also shared by the stereotypes of machismo and marianismo (as was the case in the model of spiritual masculinity I examined here). Another possible contribution might be the objects of analysis I have chosen: the particular kinds of social organization examined here, including the support group movement and the Methodist model of social organization. The support group movement has been largely understudied by the anthropology of religion and the anthropology of Christianity more narrowly, in part because this movement does not see itself as religious and in part because its discourse of spirituality scrambles the lines between the religious and the secular, causing it be easily overlooked by those focused on explicitly religious questions. However, if trends in religion seem to pass through organizational channels other than churches, a focus on how they relate to other institutional forms and other forms of religious and spirituality may be fruitful (e.g., Bartkoswki 2004, Handman 2014).

Yet surely some part of the lack of research on the support group movement, especially as a further development of religious models, is also due to the fact that the movement has been studied by psychological and medical anthropologists instead. However, a focus on social organization as a way to understand discourses and practices lends itself to different objects of analysis and avoids some of these definitional problems in the study of religion, as social historians who have linked the Methodist model to a variety of social movements and institutions have shown. In particular, Martin's account of the Methodist model and its role in fueling evangelical and pentecostal-charismatic growth in Latin America is one fine example of the uses to which such an organizational view can be put. The Methodist model is not the only model of social organization or social history to consider for those studying religious transformation in Latin America, of course, but it does suggest how organizational analyses that are not congregation-centered can fruitfully open up the anthropology of religion to the findings of historians, sociologists, and scholars from a number of other disciplines and reveal how a phenomenon like the evangelical reformation of machismo can be understood as a larger organizational innovation, much broader than a single church or movement (if capable of being adopted by them), or how apparent changes in religious practice and discourse might be understood as resulting from organizational innovations or new structures of affect.

Likewise, the anthropology of gender, and of masculinity in particular, might benefit from similar attention to these forms of social organization and their role in the development and transformation of gender identity. While the study of gender may have been more attentive to the question of social organization in general than have many other areas of study, the study of gender and religion as co-constructed categories is actually fairly sparse, particularly with regard to the study of masculinity, which is itself a relatively newer subfield in the study of gender (see

also Dawley and Thornton 2018). Thus, although the study of men and masculinity has focused to its credit on social organization, as well as gendered discourses and practices, it may benefit from focusing more on religious and therapeutic organizations as the subfield develops. The interrogation of such organizations, such as those that make up the support group movement and the Methodist model, might reveal how they have focused rather explicitly on masculinity in places like Latin America and how they have in turn transformed ideas about gender in those regions.

APPENDIX:
Life History Interviews (plus Extended Interviews)

Alias, **Rec#**	**Age,** ***Kids***	**Groups,** ***Religion***	**Details**
Ignacio, *B0000006*	40, *2*	Wém (+Cielos Abiertos' mens group) *Evangelical (active)*	First interview, Cielos Abiertos' men's group, and invited me as complementary to Wém ("cosas de men/God"), Fatherhood classes(M-W) discussed, "Conversion" after separation, Wife partying, brought home another man, Discipline/Horse-and-bit quip, Wém(3yrs)→ evang(8mos), Improved fatherhood ("they deserve love, respect"), Sharing→perspective, "Wém es un proceso" [36], Sold alcohol with father, Conversion as egalitarianism [44], "Recuperation" from machismo, Prays before gets in serious relationship, Won't divorce (1:03)
Xavier (Keo) *B0000008-9*	56, *3*	Wém, *Catholic (active)*	Construction manager, Leaderly figure at Wém, Interviewed at work, Conversion anniversary cited (4yrs prior, as this chapter started), "Feminine revolution," Laws affecting men, Parenting changes, Religion and therapy: "both needed" (cf. Ignacio), not just "sacred canopy," Reasons for Wém (cf. AA, external demands, as in US courts), Converted when family problems, infidelity→"collapse" (1:48)
Nolen, *B0000010*	32, *2*	Wém, *Catholic (active)*	Young, educated manager, lived in the US, Found Wém seeking therapy, Ejected from home by threat to call police, Estranged involuntarily from his kids, Only 5 sessions into Wém, First session discussed, Roleplaying and Workshops, Best: "Learned to love myself" and friends, Describes economic stress, job losses, Wife income→Infidelity, Calle=/=Sabiduría, Calle vs. Exercise, Recommended "How do you

			see yourself in 3, 5 years?" (1:14)
Ugalde, *B0000011*		Wém (+AA, HdN, MFC), *Catholic (active)*	Nicaraguan, Socialist-Catholic with Biblicist, culturally conservative sentiments, Economic problems, "Many men feel like this, frustrated!" Wife forgave domestic violence after 1yr Wém, kicked out, Differences in churches, masses, Social changes: dress, gender, sexuality, calle/public, homes/domestic violence, "so, good and bad changes," schools and parents and police, His machismo: "angry face" (throughout), domestic violence, "do I deserve forgiveness?", Testimonials and change, Changes: lost paranoia, jealousy, sickness, anger, facial expression=/=self-expression, God, self-love, healing, laughter vs others' fear of him, communication, Machismo and vulnerability, insecurity, Car accident story, Groups: attends HdN, left AA and HdN (but "the problem was me"), Masculinity main issue (and fear of losing it, the street), Wife went to Oficina Mujer, Communication: family, apology to woman at work, "Bubble" of machismo, Change= Healing (2:00)
Victor, *B0000016x*	52, *4*	AA, *Catholic (active)*	From alcoholism to "personal development": "fever for reading" and exercise, Parents "not very educated," Married twice, Began drinking 13yo, Worked since 8yo (cf. Zabu, Ysidro) – Salary felt like "freedom," Father died, Lost first marriage and stable job at Banco Nacional, Second wife demanded AA (from alcoholic family; his was once weekly), Joined AA for spiritual sobriety, post-drinking, AA very "practical," Drinking vs. problem-solving, "Studious" now, Economic recovery: saved money for home, took chemistry course→makes and sells cleaning products, "Self-destruction" and machismo→Improved relationships, more "tolerance," less gossip ("chisma") *Interview missing (1:33)*

Silvio, *B0000017*	44,	AA (+others), *Methodist (active)*	Edwin's brother, went to numerous HdN, NA, "sectas," 3 yrs sober after drinking since 16yo (plus sexual compulsivity ("clarity, reality, best years of my life"), Identification with texts, group, felt guided to AA, "Claridad" – also with Methodist services, Sunday school, "metodología" that was "Cristocéntrico," about rebirth, change in the personality (cf. AA, Bible), Crisis: robbed/was robbed, hurt/was hurt, recovered in clinic, prayed for sobriety, Moved to brother's 6yrs, Found *hermandad*/brotherhood in AA, end to machismo, pride, anger, envy, lust, growth of humility ("accepts defects"), better relationships with self and others, Calle/street "therapy" vs support group therapy, shame vs safe intimacy/vulnerability, hugging others, Work: never stable before, now an administrator at the Instituto de Bachillerato, "Hugging" God, Future hopes: "obedience, peace, spirituality, family" (0:46) – Shorter, in cafe)
Quentin, *B0000019x*	48, *4*	AA, *Nom. Cath.*	11 years in program, Attempted suicide, Taxi driver, Recovered in a clinic, then to AA, "Identified himself" with/in Big Book, other members, Sponsor helps a lot, lives close, just as he now helps others, reminds him, "shows the path," God's will vs mine (Step 3), "Pink cloud/euphoria"→relapse, Step 4's "meticulous" inventory→true judgment, self-honesty, Relapse has a purpose, "reality check, His own violent relapse, worse than before (cf. Zabu), vandalized the house, attempted suicide→prison, "disgraced with the life that I had" (economic, family, work problems), Came to AA during 3mo binge that followed, "Before I loved the street – anything except home"/ "Wallet dad," Machismo vs. "trying to be a better friend, father, human" (cf. Wém), "Prudent period" away from drinking friends, excuse-making, especially "casi-hermano"/ cuate, Now "clean clothes" and better relationships, Future hopes: "reintegrate into society," "constructive friendships" (2:32)

			Interview missing (now; great notes though)
Zenon, *B0000019x*	65, *4*	AA, *Occ. Cath.*	22 years in program, Sports organizer and radio personality (Radio Santa Clara), 7yrs sober before AA, Strong proponent of 12-Step program, Groups: tried other AA groups (incl. Renacimiento, etc.), tried Wem and HdN, Sponsorship=/=advice, stresses free will, "helps them orient themselves," Seeing bad in others, identifying, "that's how you learn," Service to 1 group, "Reciprocity" "creates unity," Continuous "process," never finished, Each step prepares: 9th requires prep, may not be forgiven, 3rd step requires knowing "which God" (2nd): "cuesta que crezca," Relapses: not just substances, "emotional, spiritual" relapses, often peer pressure: "Es que [your wife] le manda en la casa," "Constant contact" or relapse, Sometimes relapse helps long-term, Start over, His unique conversion: Outside of AA, during long cry with his wife, came to AA 7 yrs sober, bringing an alcoholic friend to AA, realized "who he was," Forgiveness: Ex of daughter's "revenge" pregnancy, other daughter's hatred, No more road rage, or claridad:calle:oscuridad:casa, (2:32) *Interview missing (now; great notes though)*
Roberto, *B0000020x*	63, *1*	AA, *Cath.(2x/m)*	20 years in/out of program,10 years since last relapse, Tried many other AA groups, Sigifredo invited him (and wife suggested), Works as salesman, farmer before, Drinking→Economic problems, Wife suggested AA: we can't afford fridge, fixing leak, shoes, etc., Sociality of group most attractive (convivencia, fraternidad, unidad, amistad), Better relationships, better finances now, Had verbally mistreated son (trainer at Eligón), Also intolerant, Now has risen in his company, "The program showed me how a group can help others more" *Interview missing (short, before AA junta)* (0:43)
Teodoro, *B0000022*	47, *3*	Wém, (quit drinking	6yrs sober (w/o AA, story with bottle), 3yrs in Wém, then started evangelicalism but no

		alone), *Nom. Cath., Evangelical Now none*	more, 2.5 years since leaving alcoholic/addict wife who begged him to keep drinking, cheated, 2 suicide attempts (motorcycle and knife), Wém points out his shortcomings (communication, affection), Custody/Single fatherhood of 2 ♂, Guilty vs responsible, Listening vs advice, Women's workshop and single fatherhood, Ex kidnapped, Breadwinnership "irreponsible" alone, Helps other couples: e.g., "Mirror" exercise, man saw ugliness of how he talked to stepdaughter, "we can't see ourselves," Story of son coming to Wém, Bible and Christian music (but no church since Camino de Vida), Mom's upbringing, harshness→Bad marital behavior, Men don't forgive infidelity (1:38)
Tomás, *B0000024*	46, *2*	Wém (+ Cath retreats, HdN, MFC), *Cath.(2x/m)*	Longtime Wém member (100+ sessions), Works in construction, 3yrs separated, her jealousy, but never cheated, She took kids w/o telling him, Came to Wém 3mo later, depressed, Workshops, Cf. "Religion," Custody/Single fatherhood of 2 (briefly), Stories of neighbor, children rejoicing his change, Tried single-gender Catholic retreats and other groups, Likes "the question of identification," "self-vision," Sees Wém bringing men from suicide to self-love, Hopes for greater decisiveness, less insecurity, Likes the non-advice (vs church), sociality, "tools" (and workshops that focus on tools), focus on the body, (1:01)
Zaca(rías), *B0000028*	50, *3*	Wém (+CEBs, HdN, politics) *Catholic (active)*	Longtime Wém member, Tried HdN and went to CEBs for a time, Wém→Mass and politics, Brother is high-level political figure in Quesada, Wém "mirror for machismo and arrogance," Very abusive and adulterous before Wém, "Claridad:Calle::Oscuridad:Casa, Machete incident, Post-1st Wém mtg, bible, God saved from suicide (Ps25:7), Forgiveness of his father important, Calmed himself with "tools" when son: "we're still afraid of you," "Free to speak... antes golpes, ahora palabras," "I owe

			Wém my life," Social change: "beard hair" trust vs banking, frustrated by drugs/marijuana, Hugo/Fidel, past of "unlocked doors," spoiled children, materialism, Mixed support for women's equality, women working, lib, Story of internal self-mocking when women invited him out, "I was born into violence," "Ongoing process," Strengthening oneself and others vs machismo, Goose/gander (1:35)
Teodoro, *B0000029*	51, *5*	AA, *Cath. (individ.)*	Short interview, Hardworking agricultural laborer (hired by Eladio), New to AA (5mos), reticent-seeming, By 2013, much apparent progress, Family reconciliation, Father's death→Drinking (cf. Eladio), "I was going crazy," living the streets, Family called cops to eject him for verbal abuse, Autonomy/space for new folks, Still on Step 1, No future ("hoy y mañana), First marriage broke up 15yrs ago, 4 mothers (2 counted as marriages), Came to the growth "waiting for death," Fallout with family, Recovery: health changes, just listen, try not to miss meetings (0:37)
Ulises, *B0000030*	64, *2*	Wém (+AA +IAFA), *Catholic (active)*	Elderly, longtime member, Past alcoholism, Criticizes AA, Two marriages, Machista upbringing, "full carton" of problems, Self-love→Other-love (throughout), Drank 50 years, Violence and bar fights, Changes to family, friends, work, Wém="education," "Drastic" upbringing (cf. Franklin), Wém→ Mass (+devil), Health and character changes, Does construction/inspection work, Wife's trust, Better fathering, Social changes (cars, TV, women working+education, male jealousy), "Love is very beautiful–you just need to know how to care for it," Men have to learn, women "thousand times more ready," Workingclass work history (varied), Confidentality key to grupos, Other groups, Furture changes: more honorable, more humanity, able to help others, honoring parents (1:13)

Isaac, *B0000032*	42, *3*	Hombres Íntegros (+MFC,), *Catholic (active)*	"Perfect Isaac," Arrived talking re:UN petition against animal cruelty, Strongly Catholic identity, but bemoans lack of biblical study, too few priests, Close relationship with Jaime and HI, Exposed to non-Catholics while studying in the US, "Spirituality, a certain brotherhood," "Communion with brothers," Discusses Protestant-Catholic, Exposes children to other religions, but fears "confusion" (same language as Sigifredo), Religion "not sports" (fanáticos), Always had fear of God, Successful at Dole, but left, founded on own agricultural product company for family (cf. "Teodoro"), Religion/Fear vs. Spirituality/Relationship, Conversion during pressure to move abroad, "Shared" decision with God, Neighbors with Pastor Jaime: "mutual respect," no conversion attempts, Catholic error: marianism vs. paternal priesthood, Protestant error: prosperity gospel, "Separated brothers... World bigger than more than just Cath and Prot," HÍ→MFC, 10hrs spirituality/wk, Bio:"Perfect"→"Spirit of struggle," Crab analogy vs. support group-as-God (cf. AA), Social changes: "development," but selfishness, machismo vs education, prodigality, unstable families, materialism, social media, vs. "roots," Waltons, Churches as solution to disintegration?, "Slut walk" in CR, Talks original sin, AA, HdN, MFC (2:39)
Oscar, *B0000034*	50, *2*	None, *Adventist (inactive)*	Longtime interlocutor (rented from, 2003-2004), Married into Adventist family (rarely attends), First part discussing with wife (she hopes Luis will connect with men's groups), Married 27yrs, Parents become evangelicals 40yrs ago, very strict, God-belief but churches "false," compares HdN, Work history all over CR: finca, logging, hospital asst, tractor driver, trucker, bus driver), Social changes: urbanization, "nickel'd buy...", men in offices, family and parental respect, dress, plastic surgery; Stopping drinking: got sick (empache), lost appetite, was "tranquilo"

			drinker, Economic changes with abstinence, Family's drinking history, One can drink away 2 days wages at once with a friend, Stopped drinking→Bought car, Nicaraguans' drinking reputation linked to hard work, older styles of drinking (1:20)
Norma, *B0000036-7*	67, *2*	N/A, *Evangelical*	Leader of post-schism Maranatha, Conducts services + Marital Counseling, Widow of Pastor Eduardo (met at UCR), Moved to CQ in 1993 with charge by Maranatha/Rony Chavez in SJ to missionize San Catlos, Maranatha property: from Eduardo's family, Failed hotel idea, then received "call"/prophecy to build church, She led women's "cell groups"/ "support groups," Currently 4 other "obras" in the area, History: 94-family, support group, evangelization campaigns (pentecostal vs. legalism), 98-300+ members, 01-04-500+, SJ paid for channel, 04-closed b/c costs, but "strategy to convert souls," Links to Houston, Chicago, Husband's training by Hunter on healing campaigns in SJ, Conversion to evangelicalism: marriage problems, "personal history" unsaid, but found verse in Matthew that converted him, since he was losing family while gaining business, then his evangelical mother died, "crisis," Eduardo converted, then daughters, then she (2yrs later, "didn't have a relationship with God"), Gradual conversion, "crecimiento espiritual," First heard evangelical music from street, Eduardo got rid of "spirit of legalism" for Holy Spirit, Salvation by faith, not allow criticizing people for long hair (on men), pants (on women), Confrontation with other pastors, "legalist" evangelicals, Instead, "spiritual warfare" against "Satan and his demons," Lost people, were condemned, Then "miracles and marvels" began, but no libertinism, Channel brought many curiosity-seekers, many converted, Legalism and tithing, Tambourines: evangelicals→Catholics, Catholic charismatics often become evangelicals,

			“closer to Christianity,” but still “idolatry,” “materialism,” Counseling: marriage and family therapy, Usu Adultery, anger, violence, “free union,” marriage preparation, Problems with Health Ministry (cf. Adventists): elevator, ramps, water extinguisher, 2yrs ago, everyone left for Dios es Fiel, Rarely are there woman pastors, People preferred Eduardo, felt orphaned, Left for other churches ((Camino de Vida, Pasión de Almas–non-legalist, Metodista –2 types)), Family disintegration, Church factionalization: tithing, spiritual warfare, Prosperity gospel, Groups: Cell groups (“model of 12,” single-gender→“win souls”) (1:24)
David, *B0000038*	50, *0*	Hombres Íntegros (+Bib. Study, HdN), *Evangelical*	Converted to evangelicalism 3yrs ago, with wife, “Different case”: “Why am I 'good' but don't feel it,” “Emptiness,” closed off/cerrado, “Missing... Jesus,” a “relationship with God' (cf. Rosney), “Not religion... attitude,” Chorus→P&W participation, Confession and prayer, evangelical vs Catholic, Less worried “what will people say?” in evangelical churches, “freedom,” Story: “Missing God” cf. “missing something” at a family party where all cousins were married, Family accepts his conversion, Raised in Alajuela, First attendance at DF, “felt something” like when he met his wife, Mass felt “cold,” Changes: learned to “autodominarse”: quiet himself, anger, impulsivity, Was black sheep of large extended family, “un poco aparte,” HdN: know it well, “good tool,” the testimonies, interest in personal “changes” since relationship with God, First “vision,” then testimonials, Ex of domestic abuser, “machote,” “Good to rescue from everything what is good,” HdN “more interactive,” Goes to HdN events still, not mtgs, Gradual conversion, nothing sudden, Changes: less temper, never argues with wife, raises voice, no fights with soccer teams, better relationships at work, more tolerant of parents, Social changes: urbanization,

			vulnerability to "the world," Ex: "Fireproof" evangelical movie, Spiritual development gradual: "poco a poco," "cada día mejor," Improving men's groups with testimonials, Companionate marriage vs. machismo, Churches vs grupos, problem of low male attendance in churches, Men "colder," Pyramid of values, His story: many "hit bottom" like alcoholics – but he didn't have to (1:34)
Cache, *B0000039*	66, *4*	Hombres Íntegros (+MFC, earlier Bible study, evangelical men's group), *Evangelical copastor DF*	Co-pastor at Dios es Fiel, Converted in 96 with Jaime, praying at his house, Wife 9yrs earlier, while he was with "tonteras": women, drink, Work history, all over CR, Marital changes: after conversion, no arguments, Once kissed neighbor, kids saw, almost kicked out, His nuclear family and religion, wife still at Camino de Vida, was active Catholic, Catholic ritual "digno" but "sabio de Dios, poco," 2yrs at MFC, less at Pital evangelical church's men's group (collapsed when pastor "slipped," church collapsed), No relapses, only one drink that felt horrible, nor women, "Todo se dejó, papá," but never violent, except defensively at the cantina, "Happy drunk," Friends left him, Best change: with wife, Dad machista, god mad when kissed, Friends with other evangelical pastors, Changes in San Carlos: highway and corruption, less urbanization than drugs and guns, Biggest problem: neglect of children, Men's group addresses this, men's problems: infidelity, spoiling or neglect, berating wife, Post-conversion sin, Pastoring men one-on-one (cf. Ronald), "Can't give advice" to effect salvation, only preach about sin, Membership and those who leave: "they get mad about preaching," Compromiso/commitment as constant theme in DF (vs idolatry), Changes in church/church history, History of men's group (copying women's group, see Maranatha), Discussed testimonials, "better in parts" (and Cache originally suggested AA), 3yrs apart from DF, Changes in DF cf. Maranatha: soteriology, blessings, tithing,

			etc., more Bible study, more "learned" congregation) (2:14)
Pablo, *B0000040*	55, *4*	Hombres Íntegros (+HdN), *Evangelical*	Quiet professor, journalist, now teaches Spanish, Divorced wife who stayed out all night, kept kids from him, Divorce/estrangement→conversion, Tongue-speaking at conversion (by himself, confessing Jesus aloud, after female pastor prayed over him), Wife:Methodist, kids:Pasión de Almas, he:DF), Changes in Maranatha/DF ("active," "spiritual warfare"→Now-defunct assn with other evangelical pastors/"desviación," less "combative"/warfare), Methodism, Neo-Pentecostalism: Prosperity gospel/"siembra"/ "superfe," "actos proféticos"~ paganism, emotionalism), Gnosticism (wife's involvement), Social difficulties in San Carlos, Therapy/intimacy hard, maybe because of small town (1:35)
Ysidro, *B0000041-2*	52, *4*	Hombres Íntegros, Hombres de Negocio, *Evangelical*	Metalworker from north, Father left at age 5, Arrived in CQ at 6, saw 1st car, Job history: fired young once, started workshop before divorce (and jailed frequently for child support until improved), Married twice: 1st he cheated, she 2nd – first for "freedom, "sacar el pulso," second he put her through school, got Instacredit job, partied all weekend, kicked him out, Initial conversion on Mother's Day 06 with mom at Maranatha, then HdN 3 yrs ago, After 3 suicide attempts: hanging, asphyxiation, truck-assisted, HdN: story, vision, delegate position, goal of "rescuing men, putting them in churches," complementarity, national convention, Return to DF: before a "spectator," now "participant," 2 years of giving testimonials for HdN around the country, Changes: work ethic, interpersonal style, family relationship, no jealousy, aggression, drinking, different attitude towards women, Economic and legal changes (child support/alimony), "Religion" vs "relationship," HdN vs HI (more

			interactive), Future hopes, Exemplar: Rafael, Mother's death ("before I would have blamed God") (2:17)
Hector, *B0000043,5*	76, *4*	AA, *Catholic (active)*	Devout Catholic with 4 live-in daughters, Happy family greeted me, discussed Al-Anon, "Generous hands are never empty," Anniversaries for AA, Praise for latitudinarian AA, vs. "sectas," HdeN, "Free will"/Albedrío, Alcohol abuses→other abuses, "Spiritual growth"=AA→Mass, Family+Religion, Alcoholism's economic effects ("quicksand"), Abstinent man gets told "Es que te manda la mujer" (cf. Adrian), Sponsorship like a "chain," Example of sponsoring other, Christian themes in AA, Liquor is Satanic/"diabólico" (2:50, only 2:00 recorded properly)
Norman, *B0000044*	24, *2*	Hombres Íntegros, *Evangelical*	Youth pastor/pastor-in-training at DF, Converted mom and dad, Tumultuous family life, Converted by televison + phone while sick from cigarettes, also alcohol, Discussed theology, "fundamentos," "Sana doctrina," "Fortalecimiento"/"Proceso," Best of HÍ is sharing, friendship, 'comunión', Christ-as-Methodology, not "Religion," Conversion best "one-on-one" (2:05)
Keilor, *B0000046*	60, *4*	Hombres Íntegros (+Camino de Dios, Catholic, CEBs, Charismatic Catholics, retreats, HdN), *Evangelical (was active Catholic)*	Finquero, "Goals... no patrón," Built them apartments at finca and rents out house: "Why work, kill yourself for others," Youth and prodigality: "Plata que agarra, plata que quema", Was dedicated Catholic, 23yrs in CEBs, retreats, Conversion through son Andrés "found God" on a retreat, turns evangelical, Family conversion to support son, First to Camino de Vida, Son recommended Jaime as a "true pastor," and DF as "más sano" than CV's "love of money," Belonged to Catholic charismatic group for 22 years (supports alegría, alabanza, music ministry, brings life), Turned to charismatic group as "bad," "worldly" young person, Lacked "teachings, [ethical]

			formation, process," lots of "tradition," "The thorn [of inquiry] entered me," Never liked rosary, confession, "didn't feel it," Jesus only intercessor (1Tim2:5), Sin vs sinner, Acts17:24 vs God in temples, One sacrifice forever vs Eucharist, Conversion when kids 8-9, drinking and arguing with wife, She's assiduous, he's "bandido," 5 years in, she says "marry me or leave" – and he was "lonely," she's a hardworking, honest, respectable woman, from a good family, Still, Devil entered, drinking, lacked communication, the Word, Social changes: locked doors, broken families, murder, women working, Changes: drinking esp, led to "distancing from the home" (cf. Quentin), vocab, anger, Two conversions: Charismatic, then Jaime/"formación, process," Goal: change home, then rest, Drops by group of Christian Catholics (not charismatic, though), Other participation, HdN: likes ecumenism, testimonials unsure, HI: teachings on masculinity, family good, needs more service (to church), AA testimonial: jealous man killed son accidentally (went to AA for anniversary–cf. Hector), Versus Life-as-testimony, Future: involved in Word, church, executive board, Financial issues of DF: needs to buy not rent, board to take management off pastor's hands, pastor's dislike of talking tithing should be shifted to board, "church should be a model" vs corruption, Problems with churches: pastor follows momentary desires of shifting congregation, "worldliness" (reggae), (2:02)
Jaime, *B0000052*	50, *3*	Hombres Íntegros, *Evangelical pastor at DF*	Pastor of Dios es Fiel, ex-copastor to Eduardo at Maranatha, left 3 yrs prior, Married 30yrs, Sawmill worker (close 92), Quesada's founding, Parents charismatic, Father traveled for work, died day after Jaimed married, became pastor 36yo, 3yrs post-conversion (at Maranatha), Maranatha's history, Eduardo's break over his desire to church-plant, use unprepared people, neo-Pentecostal*, Association with EFCA(3yrs)–"sano,"

			*=superfe, actos proféticos like Bible-burying (cf. Pablo), Ayunos (personal vs in groups/Mt6:6), "Obras" vs God's Will, Cell groups (G12), lack of preparation, "including me," EFCA:Pent-lite, Calvinist 80/20, minus double predestination, Pentecostal 'fetishism,' emotionalism from folk Catholicism, Inst.Bíblico with Cache, Maikol, Compromiso:major challenge, Casual members–tribulation, emotion, Catholicism and neo-Pentecostalism share = promesas, "religión," exorcism, ceremonies, legalism, Adventism, Maranatha/DF history, religion vs discipleship, grace, process, word=seed, His conversion: 2yrs Bible study at Maranatha, 1 day he broke down, cried, desire to change, taught Ana Cristina, her family, HdN, AA, Changes: drinking (imm.), smoking, temper (hurt son's hand), bad thoughts, Difficulties as pastor: low salary + computer job, friends left, mother disowned, brothers teased incl Catholic theologian... black sheep, Now "I get along better with Catholics than neoPents," Social changes: materialism, family disintegration, gender roles, machismo, Why people switch churches, conflict avoidance, Ecumenism (exs Rosny, Mormons, JW), Maikol, Hopes: more friendship, unburdening (2:28)
Randall, *B0000056*	40, 2	Hombres Íntegros (+Camino de Dios, retreats, HdN), *Evangelical*	Convert to evangelicalism, first under Jaime in Maranatha in Florencia, Paints cars, Discusses mixing of culture with "vicios" (e.g. Platanar), Married 27yo (she 22), separated 34, divorced 39, From a big family, "fanatic" Catholics, but evangelical mom (who converted 10yrs ago, Genesis church), Converted 5 yrs ago, first 2yrs still clung to the calle, Churches: Maranatha in Florence (Jaime, neighbors present, uncomfortable), Oasis de Paz (sano/less emotionalism, met 2nd wife on retreat), then Camino de Vida (wife's church, not "sana"), then Dios es Fiel (with wife's parents, 15mos ago), Seeking a "tranquility" others seek in drugs, etc., Fiesta/calle pre-marriage, vs church, Never

			tongues, story of “slain in Spirit,” No sudden conversion, just the retreat, Changes: relationship to God, manner of speaking, thinking, acting, Relationships: some friends left (Se va alejando poco a poco), first wife hates it, forbids bringing kids, more natal family members appreciate, Changes: children (involvement), siblings (peaceable), work (honest, calm), HdN seems “routine... specific,” Yet hopes HI becomes “more active, more communicative, more confidentiality” (like HdN, AA), “Why not greet one another in the street?”, For evangelicals, Jaime/DF different: less “emotionalism,” Social changes: crime, women/family, church growth/corruption, Future hopes: service, development/maturity, Chuy Olivares (preacher Jaime likes), Bible study group, Men's group: self-control, marriage/family (2:01)
Nestor, *B0000058*	47, *4/3*	Wém, Hombres de Negocio *Catholic (active, except evangelical in the US)*	HdN on/off since 1st visit in 94 (wife's insistence, thought hugging strange/machismo, cf. Zaca), 9 yrs “radical changes,” despite “falls,” church attendance (“goal of HdN,” cf. Ysidro), Worked 2yrs in US, landscaping 04-06, at NeoPent service–write-the-number–“God provided [$20k]” (work), HdN didn't feel “impactful,” but stopped drinking and womanizing immediately almost without noticing (94-03), Family history (daughter's death, father's death, married “seeking father's love w/o knowing,” Mom's criticism “marked my life,” At HdN, realized need to forgive mom, accept father's death, ask forgiveness from bros, God, Fatherhood: lacked time for children, fought with wife, son's suicide attempt, leukemia diagnosis, prayer session with wife (“Papito...”), healing 1mo later, Testimonial: wife's abortion dissuasion, 2006 adultery in US: loneliness/self-esteem, wife saw SMS, confrontation with son, 3yrs alone, Then 2yrs ago Wém→HdN again (wish HdN was less structured, more rules), HdN: no testimonial yet (“total victory” required),

			Wém changed his relationship with others, Stopped drinking and womanizing, Testimonial vs confession, Evangelical vs Catholic: both seek God, Women, spirituality, marianismo (1:36)
Wilberto, *B0000059*	51, *0*	Adventist Sabbath School (+AA, HdN) *Adventist (active)*	Guatemalan Adventist, Interview largely to do with Adventism (1:36)
Jonas, *B0000060*	46, *4*	Hombres Íntegros (+DF Bible study), *Evangelical*	Attended Maranatha/DF for 5 years, before, “Catholic entre comillas,” “religion/of-the-world,” Family converted together, starting with his mom, then his wife, then kids, with men counseling him, Infidelity main issue (5yrs w/o drinking), driving facilitated it, even walked in the street with a fling, like a gf, Converted quickly, “I integrated myself, went to men's group, Bible study. Taxi/bus-driving allows, trucker's schedule (now) makes it difficult,” Never abusive/softie, 4 kids (all musical), Wife sought Ana Cristina, Wilma's counsel, went to women's group, then marriage group with him, Congregation changed since he joined (more intimate, smaller), was deacon 2yrs, head deacon 3yrs, Never went:AA,HdN, but heard good testimony, likes Combate (cf. Maikol), Comparing churches: Iglesia de Dios good, Camino de Vida materialistic (story of kicking out Leo for losing job), Many evangelical pastors get rich, not Jaime, who doesn't like dealing with money, Hopes: church keeps “evangelio sano,” gets greater lay involvement, discipleship, counseling, men's group, Work friends didn't believe it, “Zapato roto nunca falta una pata mala,” Changed relationships: most welcomed the change, wife's family mixed as Catholics, though happy he changed, “Ticos son mas marianos que cristianos”/Jer2:27, Social changes: infidelity spreading to women, machismo too, Why do people convert:

			women first (praying for sons, husbands), men rarely come first or stay if woman doesn't like it (e.g. taxi friend)("for the love of my family"=AA sign, vs staying home to watch soccer when Catholic), marianismo:espiritual:: machismo:material/proveedor, Kids imitate parents, His father machista to the extreme, Conversion: not too "emotive," though first sermons felt directed at him, first P&W made him cry a lot, Machismo makes conversion hard, "we're worried they'll humiliate us," "women aren't so hard," Pre-conversion: 3mos of kids not talking to him, wife crying every day, Sponsored by Luiz Lizano, then Caché, Kids: relationship changed completely, they integrated completely, "for me this is the best gift, and I can't understand/advise parents with problematic kids (cf. AA, support groups, specific problems), "we rarely thank God, only blame him," Gospel is simple: Love, Discussed my beliefs (1:39)
Zabu(lón) *B0000048*	37, *2*	Hombres Íntegros (+DF Bible study), *Evangelical*	Musician and office supply salesman, Lives on finca with many houses, extended family, though father died at 1yo, Liceo v Colegio Maria, Evangelical since 18yo: 1st conversion with wife (21), 2nd 6yrs ago (31), Never drank much, problems only with lust, Father died when 1yo, eldest brother quit school, he worked since 15yo, since 25 "in the street"/calle, Conversion to Assembly of God (4yrs), from "worldly" life of the street, being a man too young, "fue algo personal con Dios that impacted my life," though slowly became serious, 96 to Maranatha, became musician, Relapse 6yrs ago, "me desanimé, me enfrié" (got cold), the world of friends and temptations, "gatear," musician's life, Conversion: like a veil being lifted, Siblings conversions, Conversion: "process, transition, unfinished, by grace and mercy, trying to live in things of God, many tests, "men's natures," Groups: youth retreat at 15, a seed: different growth rates for different plants, "my process

			has been slow," Relapse: "negative spiritual part, spiritual rebellion" worse than before, Friends: some lost, turned down (pride), Changes: work improved/more responsible, less street language, turns down opportunities to fiesta with women, Groups: Arenas secular youth group, Marriage problems: fighting, mistrust, jealousy, Church, Maranatha/DF changes: less spiritual warfare, energy, emotionalism, prepotencia (cf. Zaca), more discernment of the word, better temperament, more humility, cf. all Camino de Vida, Juventud 2000, Amor de Lo Alto – "I prefer a health word," Social changes (SJ, CQ, Zona Norte): gender, openness, libertinaje, spoiled/dependent children, raising children/"finger in dam," Process: relationships, against the nature of men, live in the present/day-by-day(Mt6), "I don't believe in the future" (cf. AA), more humble and tolerant, Machismo: jealousy, insecurity, cell/fbook, "Real relationship is with God; don't depend on others for happiness," "center, motor of my life," Men's greatest problem: sex, getting worse, culture of infidelity/machismo spreading (1:43)
Padre Juan Miguel, *A0000087* *+2008 video*	51 (48)	Catholic Church	
Fran, Psychologist (Facil.) *A0000078*	53	Wém	
Fran, Psychologist (Facil.) *A0000122*	53	Wém	

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