

# Religious Vocation as a Latent Identity for School Principals

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*Abstract:* This paper is concerned with studying schools as organisations. The effects of religious vocation as a latent identity of school principals is central to the analysis. Some of the organisational processes of schools which are run by religious congregations are examined. In particular the implications for staff authority relations and for boundary exchanges with clients are explored. The substantive discussion serves to demonstrate the analytical scope of the latent identity concept. Some suggestions are made for refining the concept to improve its analytic potential.

## I INTRODUCTION

This paper seeks to make a contribution to the study of schools as organisations through an analysis of the impact of religious vocation as a latent identity on the orientation and behaviour of school principals. The analysis has two major concerns, one substantive, the other theoretical. At a substantive level, the paper examines some of the organisational processes of schools which are run by religious congregations. Such schools constitute a significant segment of the educational system in many countries and thus represent an important variant on the more conventional public or state-controlled schools. The precise relationship between religious-run schools and public schools varies from country to country. In some countries, for example the United States, religious-run schools exist independently of the

\*The author acknowledges the assistance of the small grants scheme of the Committee for Social Science Research in Ireland which helped towards preparing this paper for publication.

public school system as an alternative to public education, while in other countries religious-run schools have been aligned with the state system as part of a national system. The latter is the case in the Republic of Ireland, the location of the present study. Here, schools run by Catholic religious congregations exist side by side with lay schools as part of a national system of education. At a more general theoretical level it is hoped that an examination of religious vocation as a latent identity will serve to demonstrate the analytical scope of that concept. In addition, some suggestions are made for refining the concept to improve its analytical potential.

The neglect of latent identities in the study of organisations was first noted by Gouldner (1957/58) who, in criticising the tendency to confine analysis to highly visible specialised roles within an organisation, pointed to the fact that as yet organisation analysts had not incorporated in their theoretical models a systematic concern with the way in which the diverse social identities that people bring with them into the organisation affect behaviour. Burns (1969) made a similar plea when he argued that a single system of interaction or structure of relationships does not provide an adequate frame of reference for the study of organisations or the practice of management. Organisational personnel are engaged in a plurality of social systems; the organisation represents only one of several means-ends systems for realising the goals of the individual. In reviewing the literature on school organisations Bidwell (1965), observing that social-class status was the only variable which had been investigated, opined that the entire area of administrators' latent identities awaited new work.

The present paper is viewed as making a contribution towards filling this gap in the study of school organisations. It results from a study of the organisational context of school administration through an analysis of the role conceptions of primary school principals in Ireland (Clancy, 1979; 1980). Having identified the major dimensions of principals' role conceptions, an attempt was made to account for the variability in these role conceptions. A major empirical finding of the study was that the most crucial determinant of variability in role conceptions was principals' vocation (i.e., whether religious or lay). The following discussion contains a theoretical interpretation of the differences in orientation between religious and lay principals.

## II SINGLE AND MULTIPLE STATUSES

The interest in latent identities arises from the fact that individuals simultaneously occupy several positions or statuses. Traditionally it was believed that individuals activated each of these positions singly at any given moment of time (Linton, 1936). More recently the postulate of the single activation

of positions has been rejected; it is now accepted that individuals frequently activate multiple positions simultaneously and that they are also reacted to as incumbents of multiple positions (Sarbin and Allen, 1968). Thus, it becomes necessary to take into account the multiple positions which are occupied simultaneously by individuals in organisations and other social positions.

A full acknowledgement of the complexity of "role systems" would seem to imply the futility of attempting any generalisations. Since, as sociologists of knowledge remind us, each individual has a unique biographical situation, it may prove impossible to identify the entire network of positions simultaneously occupied. In addition, even if it should prove possible to enumerate the entire complement of positions occupied by each individual, the resultant configuration of "position sets" would, in principle, be unique for each individual. However, there are a number of factors at work which make such a conclusion unwarranted. First, there are structural limits to the variability of positions which are occupied simultaneously. Merton (1957) has pointed out that the components of status-sets are not combined at random; a process of self-selection — both social and psychological — operates to reduce the prospects of random assortments of statuses. In addition, while it is no longer plausible to accept the postulate of the single activation of positions, it is clear that certain statuses are indeed dormant at certain times. A crucial analytical problem is one of differentiating between those statuses which are dormant and those which are active.

The distinction between "general" and "specific" statuses is useful in attempting to adjudicate on whether a particular status is active and thus potentially relevant in any particular situation. Because of the segmental quality of social life in contemporary society only a limited number of a person's specific statuses are potentially relevant in any particular context; because of their limited scope and pervasiveness many such statuses can be viewed as "dormant" or "neutral" in respect of other statuses. In contrast many general statuses may never be totally dormant; because of their pervasiveness they are always potentially relevant for behaviour in other statuses. Such statuses have been variously designated as controlling (Merton, 1957), dominant (Della Cava, 1975) or key (Fichter, 1957) statuses. The implicit judgement being made by the use of such terms as "controlling" or "dominant" seems misleading. Two separate issues are being confused by the use of such terminology. The first issue concerns whether incumbency of a particular status is relevant for behaviour in other statuses; the second issue is concerned with the strength of the influence on behaviour emanating from the incumbency of the different statuses. Certain statuses which we have designated "general" may always have some effect on behaviour in other statuses; however, it is not the case that such influence is always stronger than that

emanating from any specific status.

In any search for latent identities which influence behaviour, it would seem that incumbency of statuses, which have been designated as "general", represents an important source of such identities. Having identified the significant latent identities a second analytical problem is concerned with the specification of the influence exercised by these identities. The need is both to identify the expectations associated with particular latent identities and to examine the way in which these expectations condition the culturally prescribed expectations attached to the manifest status being studied. The present discussion addresses itself to these two analytical problems. It will be shown that religious vocation is a significant latent identity for principals of religious-run schools. Following this, an attempt will be made to specify the extent to which this latent identity influences the orientation of these principals. To accomplish this latter objective it will be necessary to identify some of the expectations associated with the religious identity and to demonstrate how these cultural expectations condition the orientation of religious principals.

### III MEMBERSHIP OF A RELIGIOUS ORDER AS A SIGNIFICANT LATENT IDENTITY

In the educational context, religious principals, in common with their lay counterparts, occupy the status of "administrator" and in any study of school administration this represents their manifest role. They also, however, simultaneously occupy the status of "religious" and it is contended here that the identity associated with this status influences the exercise of their administrative role. This combination of statuses, one in the educational, the other in the religious context, represents a particularly compatible combination; part of this compatibility is a function of the similarity of commitment to the service of others which is shared by religious and educationalists. However, the compatibility is more than an incidental outcome of mutual commitment to the professional ethic of service; for religious educators the mingling of the two identities is a product of explicit formation and training. Involvement in education has always been part of the religious apostolate; indeed, in the case of many religious who staff Irish schools, the foundation of their respective congregations was inspired by a commitment to the Christian education of youth. Thus, in many cases the explicit objectives of the religious life are educational. Consequently, the mingling of the two identities is a function of concurrent socialisation; training for the educational profession was received concurrently with training for the religious life. This duality in the training of religious has been the subject of frequent comment. Fichter (1961) has remarked that one of the curious aspects of the training of religious functionaries is that the professional orientation is given in their

subsidiary roles, rather than in the strictly religious vocation. Vallier (1968) has viewed the process from the opposite perspective when observing that the training of religious specialists does not always prepare them for their work.

Thus far, it has been suggested that the status-set of religious and educationalist is compatible by virtue of orientation and training. Since the present study is concerned with the manifest role of principal, the analysis is directed towards an understanding of the ways in which the religious identity influences the educational administrator identity. The plausibility of such a flow of influence has already been suggested in the consideration of the concurrent socialisation involved in preparing for the twin statuses. However, a number of additional features of religious as an occupation accentuate the possibility of such an influence. When the status of religious is classified on the general-specific continuum it is clear that it occupies a position towards the general end of the continuum. The diffuseness and pervasiveness of the status is first highlighted during socialisation. Fichter (1961) has pointed out that the formation and training of religious differs from that of any other occupation or profession because it prepares a person for more than the performance of specific occupational roles; the religious is being prepared for a way of life. The professional performance of religious seems to reflect this initial orientation. In other professions and occupations the normal life of the individual may be affected by the kind of professional functions he performs. In the case of religious personnel the influence tends to be in the other direction; the professional roles are directly influenced by the fact that the performer is a priest, or a religious Brother or Sister. The direction of influence suggests that religion as an occupation is indeed more appropriately viewed as a "way of life" rather than as a segmental activity.

This view is reflected in current analyses of the ministry as an occupation, which is the only religious occupation to have been subjected to systematic study. Jarvis (1975) suggests that the ministry is best viewed as a status profession rather than an occupational profession. Della Cava (1975, p. 42) argues that the status of priest is a controlling status; all the many and diverse activities in which priests engage are defined as extensions of the priest status and are subordinate to it: "... first and foremost he is a priest, and then a teacher, psychiatrist, sociologist etc . . .".

However, as has been argued above, the pervasiveness of the religious identity does not necessarily imply that the influence of this status will be stronger than that emanating from any more specific status. This qualification is implied by Hall and Schneider (1973) who, when commenting on the practice of some sociologists in describing priest-educators and priest-social workers, etc., as "hyphenated priests", suggest that in most cases it would be more appropriate to place the name of the professional role before rather than after the hyphen.

#### IV AFFILIATION OF RELIGIOUS AND LAY TEACHERS

The manner in which workers are attached to an organisation, and the way others with whom they have contact are attached have important consequences for their behaviour (Dreeban, 1973). Argyris (1960) suggests that the relationship between the individual and his organisation may be viewed as an implicit psychological contract. It is clear that the nature of this affiliation with the organisation will be related to the type of incentives which the organisation can offer. Barnard (1938, p. 139) asserts that ". . . the contributions of personal effort which constitute the energies of the organisation are yielded by individuals because of incentives."

In reviewing the historical processes which influenced the evolution of public education in the United States, Lortie (1975, p. 4) suggests that the "hierarchisation" of schools and the diffusion of compulsory attendance produced dual "captivity" in the relationship between teachers and students:

Students were assigned to particular schools by place of residence, and once in school they were allocated to specific teachers by school administrators. Teachers having accepted employment in a given school district, were assigned to a school by the superintendent and to particular students by the principal.

However, it is clear that the differences between the modes of affiliation of pupils and teachers outweigh this apparent similarity; while pupils are affiliated to public schools by "conscription", all teachers enter their role voluntarily (Bidwell, 1965; Jackson, 1968). Since the present analysis is concerned with staff roles, attention will focus on the differential modes of affiliation of lay and religious teachers.

Lay teachers are affiliated with schools by hiring; school systems offer incentives by way of salary in return for contributions of trained competence. In this respect teachers differ from many other professionals who work within organisations; doctors, for example, have hospital privileges while lawyers and architects frequently form partnerships. Hiring carries the implication of dependency on superiors and, as an affiliative device, ordinarily makes the bureaucratic direction of work possible.

However, it is well known that the work of teachers is difficult to direct administratively (Pellegrin, 1976; Lortie, 1969). The occupational ideology of teachers is one which demands autonomy and supports this claim with an insistence that the internalised professional service ethic represents a guarantee of control from within, thus making external surveillance both inappropriate and unnecessary. Thus, it is clear that the affiliation of lay teachers with schools by means of employment contract is modified by the strength of the professional ethic which stresses the service obligation.

Religious personnel have a different mode of affiliation with the school organisation. Since the professional orientation is given in their subsidiary role rather than in the strictly religious vocation, the religious educator is socialised into the teaching profession and thus, in common with his lay colleagues, has access to the same professional culture. The difference arises when we contrast the "hiring" of lay teachers with the normative commitment of religious personnel. In his analysis of religious orders, Hill (1973) suggests that normative commitment is their pre-eminent feature. In this respect he rejects the appropriateness of Goffman's total institution concept in favour of Etzioni's classification of religious orders as a limiting case of normative compliance. The crucial difference between religious orders and Goffman's total institutions, of which prisons and some psychiatric hospitals are the prototype, is that social relationships within the former are oriented towards non-instrumental goals and that any regulation of behaviour will be legitimated by reference to these. The differences in the mode of orientation of social action within both kinds of institutions reflect Weber's distinction between "*wert*rational" and "*zweck*rational". Hill contends that while rational action (*zweck*rational) forms an important part of the orientation of active religious orders, it is secondary to non-instrumental normative behaviour which Weber describes as ". . . the orientation of action in terms of absolute value, where the ultimate values governing action are selfconsciously formulated" (Hill, 1973, p. 74).

The normative commitment which typifies the mode of affiliation of religious with the religious order is also likely to extend to the religious school since educational involvement represents a specialised apostolic work for which many of these orders were founded. A critical question which needs to be examined is the extent to which these differences in modes of affiliation account for qualitatively different orientations to work. Santy (1969) has raised this issue in his analysis of the problems of the female religious congregations. The congregations he studied performed work (socio-medical services and education) which is evidently not specifically religious. However, the sisters surveyed shared the belief that ". . . your existence as a religious should have an inspirational effect on your work". In asserting that their work had to be approached as religious they expressed the view that the specificity of the religious expresses itself in complete availability as opposed to availability which is limited due to other commitments. They contrasted their position with others for whom work was a segmental happening, bound to a number of hours, precise remuneration and description of the task. Santy reports the sisters' perception of their "greater performance" which expressed itself in many ways, for example, in continuous presence in the hospital and in doing a "little more" than only teaching. A similar theme is expressed by Battersby who discusses the commitment of

religious to their work as educators. "Our work as Catholic teachers is a vocation and an apostolate. It can never be for us merely a job, merely a question of salary" (Battersby, 1968). In this context it is interesting to note Fuchs-Ebaugh's (1977) assertion that the requirement of celibacy in religious orders may be viewed as a structural device for securing the necessary commitment; by requiring that a person renounce the psychological and social absorption demanded by a spouse and family it is possible for religious to dedicate themselves exclusively to their specific apostolate.

## V ORGANISATIONAL FEATURES OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

We have viewed the mode of affiliation of religious personnel with the religious order as if it were merely an individualistic orientation which was developed during occupational socialisation. However, the distinctive feature of religious life as an occupational category is the group context in which individuals function. Members of religious congregations live in communities where a special sense of solidarity is expected to pervade their group life. The development of the religious identity which commences during training is further deepened and sustained by this communal living. Fichter (1961, p. 237) has described the situation in the following terms when he says that "... religious are united under a common consensus of supernatural values, working towards common goals and in many instances performing similar tasks as a kind of team." Similarly, Fuchs-Ebaugh (1977) and Murphy and Liu (1969) describe the way in which religious communities develop a unique type of religious and professional identification. Thus, the orientation of individual members of a religious community comes to reflect the central values of an ideological community. The solidarity of the group becomes an important source of affirmation of the commitments and orientations of individual members.

Systematic analysis of the organisational properties of religious communities presents serious problems. O'Connell (1971) highlights the distinctiveness of religious orders and suggests that the constructs and research designs used to analyse non-religious organisations are not directly applicable. Fuchs-Ebaugh find it necessary to distinguish between pre-Vatican II and contemporary religious orders; pre-Vatican II religious orders can rightly be classified as utopian communities, while in their present format they are best described as a type of voluntary association. Fichter points to the fact that the group life of ecclesiastical personnel is not structured according to any clearcut and exclusive organisational principle. He argues that members of a religious congregation living together cannot be defined in a technical sense as univocally a family, a community, a bureaucratic or a professional organisation, although their group life is touched by all four of these structure types.



The familial-communal mode of organization guides the cultural patterns, the way of life that the members follow in their daily experiences. The system of authority under which they live seems to be derived mainly from the bureaucratic mode of organization. Their productive work or apostolic functions are mostly affected by the professional principle of organization (Fichter, 1961, p. 214).

The problem of organised social relations among them is that they are attempting to enact in the same group three social roles (family, religious and professional) that people in modern society ordinarily enact in three separate groups. It was because of this mingling of social worlds that Goffman categorised religious orders as total institutions.

The present discussion does not attempt a complete characterisation of the social relationships which prevail within the overall organisation of the religious community. Since the focus is primarily on the relationships within the school organisation the concern with the overall organisation has the more limited objective of attempting to assess the way in which behaviour within the school may be affected by the ethos of the religious community.

It is felt that one of the organisational processes which are greatly influenced by the ethos of the overall organisation is that of authority relations. Hill's analysis offers a good understanding of this process within the religious order (Hill, 1973, pp. 72-82). In rejecting the appropriateness of Goffman's total institution model, he points to the fact that religious orders do not manifest the staff/inmate division found in total institutions; religious orders, he argues, are best viewed as a single group of inmates with minimal differentiation of staff. While acknowledging the existence of certain differentiated authority positions, he suggests that the scope of these positions is often clearly circumscribed by formal regulation, by tradition and by normative prescriptions. Chief amongst the limitations to the authority of the religious superior is the impact of rules which represent a constitutional limitation to the expression of authority. In every religious congregation there exists a codified body of clear-cut rules which have been studied in detail by all the members and to which they have given assent; the existence of these rules may be as much of a restraint on the superior as on the subordinate. An additional feature of these rules which circumscribe the expression of authority is that they are enacted and reviewed at periodic chapters at which all members of the congregation are represented; the holding of periodic chapters means that all members are involved to some extent in the executive function. A further distinctive feature of the authority structure is the fact that many authority positions are filled by election and are usually only for a specified number of years. The lack of permanence highlights the interchangeability of personnel. Hill points to the way in which some religious

congregations reinforce this more dramatically by a kind of ritualised humiliation – like washing the feet of other members – which serves to symbolise the subordinate status of the official to the normative authority on which the relationship is based.

Hill's examination of authority relations within religious orders reveals the extent to which the expression of authority is a function of the degree of solidarity and the normative commitment of the members. This, of course, is the essence of Etzioni's typology in which coercive and normative organisations lie at the ends of a continuum. Etzioni (1961) suggests that a major difference between the two lies in their élite structure; whereas élites are rigidly differentiated in coercive organisations with the resulting staff/inmate division, they are almost completely amalgamated in normative organisations. He elaborates on the implications for the exercise of authority:

... lower participants in normative organizations are much better integrated into the organizational polity than lower participants in coercive organizations, and they are less likely to develop even a partial polity of their own (Etzioni, 1961, p. 102).

## VI RELIGIOUS AND LAY SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS CONTRASTED

Thus far the focus of analysis has been on the orientation of religious personnel and on the general organisational properties of religious communities. The justification for this focus is based on the belief that membership of a religious order is an important latent identity for principals of religious schools. In attempting to specify the effect of this latent identity on the orientation of religious principals it is important to compare the administrative structure of religious and lay schools.<sup>1</sup> In the case of both types of school there are three levels in the hierarchy of authority, viz., manager, principal and teacher. However, this same three-level hierarchy is superimposed on different organisational structures. The essential difference that emerges between the two structures relates to the degree of differentiation which is maintained between the three levels of the hierarchy. The most significant difference between the two structures concerns the location of

<sup>1</sup> A notable feature of Irish education is that the state does not itself found or conduct primary schools but provides for education by assisting other parties to do this. For that reason, at the time of the research on which this analysis is based, there was a manager for each school, reflecting the denominational character of the school concerned. In the case of the majority of National Schools, although the entire staff was comprised of lay teachers the manager was the local clergyman. In the case of religious schools which are also part of the national system, the manager was a member (usually the superior) of the religious community which operated the school. More recently the single manager has been replaced by a board of management; this change has not appreciably altered the power structure.

the managerial sub-system.

In the case of the religious school the managerial sub-system is located within the "overall organisation" of the religious community, while in the case of the lay school the managerial sub-system is located outside that organisation. This difference in the location of the managerial sub-system has considerable implications for the respective principals. In the case of the religious school the relationship of authority between manager and principal will reflect the characteristics of authority relations which pervade the total organisation; a high degree of internalised consensus among members of religious communities makes the exercise of positional authority unnecessary. Thus, the religious principal operates from within a secure power base; to the extent that the managerial sub-system acts as a constraint on religious principals, its influence is highly predictable, since the manager shares with the principal a similar socialisation and is subject to the same constitutional limitations.

In some respects the organisational structure of religious schools exhibits the characteristics of family businesses as compared to public companies. While, in a family business, there will be a functional division of labour, the consequent differentiation will not reflect qualitatively different types of commitment. The absence, in a family business, of a dichotomy between owners and employees is also found among religious personnel who work in schools; lay teachers who work in religious schools have frequently remarked that all members of the religious community see themselves as part of management.<sup>2</sup> A recognition of this fact in the case of religious-run secondary schools has led to the refusal by the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland to accept religious teachers into their ranks because of the possible conflict of interest between loyalty to the religious order as the employing body and to the teachers' union, which seeks to represent the interests of teachers as employees (Cronin, 1973). In contrast with his religious counterpart the principal of a lay school operated in a less predictable and less secure environment. The manager, in the case of a lay school, was (see footnote 1) a priest. He was located outside the organisation and since he was the product of a different socialisation it could not be assumed that his interest in education would be synonymous with that of the lay principal. Thus, it is argued that the different administrative structures were responsible for differing degrees of "vertical pressure" on principals.

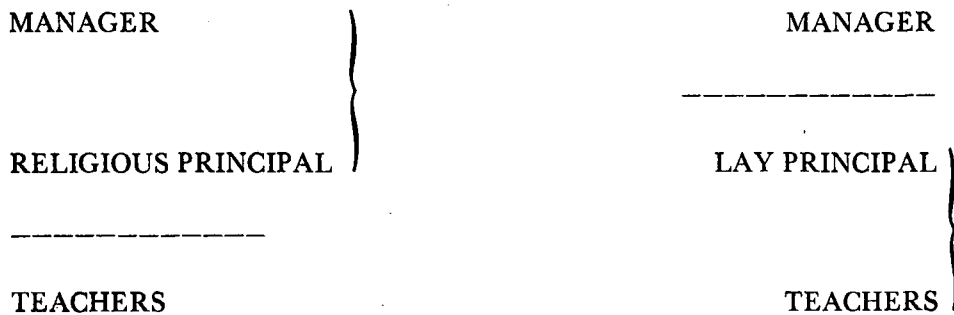
While it is felt that, from the principal's point of view, the differential linkages between principal and manager represent the most crucial organisational difference between religious and lay schools, it would seem that

<sup>2</sup> Regrettably, this assertion can only be supported by "impressionistic evidence" based on the researcher's involvement in Irish primary schools.

certain important consequences can also be attributed to differences in the composition of the teaching staff in a school. In the case of religious schools the staff is made up of a combination of religious and lay teachers. It is to be expected that religious teachers will have internalised the same orientation towards their work as that of their principals. Thus, the expression of authority by principals towards their co-religious will reflect the impact of this shared consensus. However, the majority of teachers in most religious schools are lay, thus it cannot be assumed that they will share with their religious principal an identity of interest. In contrast, lay principals preside over a more homogenous all lay staff. While there is a differentiation of rank between principal and teacher it is significant that this hierarchical differentiation takes place within the context of a shared professional subculture; lay principals share with teachers a common professional socialisation in addition to sharing membership of a single professional association.<sup>3</sup>

In summary, it is being suggested that the differing administrative structures of religious and lay schools are responsible for crucial differences in the hierarchy of authority; while in each case there are three levels in the hierarchy of authority the linkages are quite different. These differences are suggested in Figure 1.

Figure 1 *Hierarchy of Authority in Religious and Lay Schools*



In the case of the religious school, the greatest communion of interest is that which links principal and manager; the teacher sub-system, by virtue of a majority of lay staff, represents a more differentiated element within this structure. By contrast, in the case of the lay school, the principal and teachers share the more inclusive subculture, while the manager represents a qualitatively different element within the hierarchy.

<sup>3</sup> The absence of a separate association for school principals in Ireland is almost unique; such associations exist in most other countries (e.g., UK, US). It is significant that the INTO have sternly resisted any attempts at forming a separate association for lay principals.

## VII BOUNDARY EXCHANGES WITH CLIENTS

In the previous section it has been argued that the hierarchical structure within which schools are located is qualitatively different for religious and lay schools. The present section seeks to identify a further external contextual difference, viz., the boundary exchanges between school personnel and parents; the focus of attention here is on horizontal rather than on vertical relations.

Contemporary analysis of professional-client relationships reveals two opposing viewpoints; the perspectives differ on their interpretation of the significance of professional autonomy. The traditional view is based on an acceptance of the ideology put forward by professionals themselves. From this perspective the essence of professionalism is the "service ideal" — the norm of selflessness (Wenger, 1976). This exclusive commitment to client welfare is considered to provide an adequate safeguard for the apparent paradoxical exclusion of the client from occupational decision making. Intra-occupational control by the professionals is viewed as an occupational necessity; clients do not possess the requisite knowledge to judge the occupational performance of the professionals.

Critics of the functionalist perspective argue that professionalism is best viewed as a successful occupational ideology which is espoused as a means of controlling an occupation. It is contended that the kind of blanket autonomy sought by professionals is not a necessity for the effective functioning of an occupation, nor is it a technique for preserving the interests of clients. It is rather a very successful ploy in assuring intra-occupational control over the occupational environment, and thereby an assertion of dominance in the determination of occupational rewards (Wenger, 1976, p. 101; Johnson, 1972).

While the conflicting interpretations, based on rival appeals to client-interest and self-interest, reveal a fundamental cleavage, there is a common acceptance of the need for autonomy over *some* aspects of professional practice. Critics of the ideology of professionalism, however, part company with those who propose a functionalist interpretation when they point to the way in which what may be an occupational necessity is carried into occupational issues of far greater scope. The institutionalisation of expertise does imply that the professional-client relationship is asymmetrical; the "superiority" of the professional in technical matters must be acknowledged. However, this "occupational necessity" does not extend to such issues as the total control of entry into the occupation or complete autonomy in decisions regarding the mode of delivery of services. Wenger argues convincingly that little or no scientific/theoretical expertise is required to make decisions in this latter area; matters of utilisation and not of practice are involved.

While the self-conscious use of an occupational ideology based on the principle of autonomy may function as a legitimation of professional privilege, it is also possible to argue that the over-insistence on autonomy may be a structural by-product of an unpredictable relationship. Indeed, it may be that the ideology may serve a different function for different professional groups. For some occupational groups the maintenance of the requisite degree of autonomy for professional practice does not present a problem; in these instances, a desire to extend control into areas that are not functionally necessary may be viewed as an expression of self-interest. However, for other occupational groups the attainment of the requisite autonomy may be problematic; in these instances any effort made to extend the degree of autonomy may be viewed as a movement towards a situation where the requisite autonomy will be guaranteed.

In general it is felt that the "independent" professionals already have secured the requisite autonomy for effective functioning. Since the client chooses voluntarily to consult the professional practitioner the latter can assume that his "superiority" is accepted. The position of the teacher is less-certain for a number of reasons. First, as a professional in an organisation he deals with a number of clients at once, some or all of whom may be "captives" rather than voluntary members; this lack of voluntarism applies also to parents since, typically, parents do not have an effective choice of school and have no say in respect of choice of teacher. In addition, the bureaucratisation of schools has resulted in a situation in which transactions between teachers and their students are mediated by a third party. Thus, for the teacher, the situational context of professional practice does not guarantee the minimal requisite autonomy. Related to this lack of structural safeguards, the teacher's claim to autonomy is weakened by the uncertain professional status of teaching. Thus, in the absence of structural guarantees, the teacher is not in a strong position to negotiate his autonomy requirements.

In this section it will be argued that boundary exchange with parent clients is much less problematic for religious personnel than for lay educators, thus representing a major contextual difference between religious and lay schools. While the organisational properties of religious and lay schools are similar in many respects, it is felt that the "captivity" factor is less prominent in religious schools. At staff level the reduced sense of captivity felt by religious personnel may be a function of the normative commitment which typifies their mode of affiliation with the school. In addition, because of their explicit commitment to a value-oriented education, religious educators are more likely to assume that, in choosing to send their children to a religious-run school, parent clients will be more accepting of the professional initiatives taken by the school staff. Indeed, it would

seem that such an assumption may be justified since the religious educator would seem to enjoy an enhanced status compared with his lay counterpart. It is felt that this problem of status is central in understanding the degree of resistance by teachers to client involvement. Consequently it is necessary to examine the relative status of religious and lay teachers.

In his analysis of religious as an occupation, Fichter (1961) discusses the social status of religious personnel. He draws a sharp distinction between priests and religious Brothers and Sisters. He argues that since the latter two groups most frequently concentrate on a specific functional role in our society, they enjoy a prestige in society corresponding roughly to the occupational function they perform. While this delineation may be helpful in differentiating between priests and other religious, it is not adequate in the present instance, where the issue is one of a comparison between religious teachers and lay teachers. While it is true, as Fichter argues, that individual status is related to the status of the group to which one belongs, the difference between religious and lay teachers lies in the fact that the religious educator belongs to *two* status groups. Both lay and religious teachers enjoy the status of "teacher" and thus share in whatever general esteem the public accords this group; in addition, the religious teacher has another status based on his membership of a religious congregation.

The status of religious in any society is a function of the value placed on religion in that society. Where the practice of religion is both widespread and relatively intense the social status of religious personnel will be enhanced. In such a society it would seem that priests and religious become the external focus of religion for lay people, the convenient externalisation of their own religious responsibilities (Jehenson, 1969). Fuchs-Ebaugh (1977, p. 47) suggests that traditionally in the Catholic Church, members of religious orders have had a privileged status in the hierarchical system and have been accorded high esteem by the laity in the church.

The transfer of prestige from the religious status to the educational status is greatly facilitated by their historical association. Teaching has traditionally been part of the "sacred order", being linked to the core values of society (Charters, 1963). The advent of secularisation does not seem to have emptied teaching of its special moral qualities (Waller, 1932). This "special" connection appears to have ambiguous consequences for lay teachers. On the one hand, the link with the sacred would seem to enhance status, while at the same time the teacher is denied status because of the peripheral quality of that connection. Lortie (1975) has perceptively caught this "double bind" when he characterises the status of the teacher as "special but shadowed". While the teacher stands to benefit from this connection with the sacred, the degree of conferred prestige will be less than that accorded to the priest, since it is he, after all, who stands at the centre of

things in this domain. It seems that the religious teacher is more favoured by this connection. While it is possible that being a religious Sister or Brother is still to be less than "central", nevertheless, in view of the religious commitment associated with involvement in education it is clear that the religious teacher is "more special" even if still somewhat in the "shadow" of the priest.

The significance of the status attached to any occupation has two important dimensions. The first concerns the evaluations and prestige rankings made by others, while the second concerns the subjective evaluations made by members of the occupational group themselves. This latter subjective dimension reflects the collective ideology and occupational subculture which are shared by members of the occupation. It is felt that when this subjective dimension of status is examined significant differences between lay and religious teachers will emerge.

The professional's claim to expertise rests on his presumed mastery of a body of esoteric knowledge. The tentativeness of this claim in respect of teaching is a function, not just of a lack of acknowledgement by outsiders, but also of a lack of conviction by members of the occupation. Lortie argues that there is little evidence that teachers share a common technical subculture and that their doubts on this matter inevitably affect their collective status. It is felt that the absence of a highly developed technical subculture in teaching, as reflected in the lack of a technical vocabulary (Jackson, 1968, p. 144), is explicable when the socialisation experiences of teachers are examined.

Socialisation into teaching is largely "self-socialisation". The emphasis is on individualism, the reinforcement of idiosyncratic experience and personal synthesis. Lortie (1975, p. 79) has argued that in neither structure nor content is teacher socialisation well suited to inculcating commonly held, empirically derived, and rigorously grounded practices and principles of pedagogy. The absence of "shared ordeal" is one of the notable features of teacher socialisation which may have considerable implications for the prospect of developing a shared professional subculture. Lortie (1968) suggests that the absence of shared ordeal denies the neophyte an important self-enhancing ritual; shared ordeal contributes to the development of a subculture of self-confidence and to the solidarity and collegial feeling found in established professions. It would seem that Lortie's analysis of teacher socialisation is not equally applicable to religious teachers. The religious teacher undergoes concurrent socialisation, simultaneously into the "occupational profession" of teacher and into the "status profession" of religious. It is felt that some of the weaknesses that have been identified in relation to teacher socialisation may be "compensated for" by the experiences that form part of the socialisation of a religious.



Induction into the religious life is accomplished through a series of significant shifts in statuses. The first such shift involves a withdrawal from the lay world and this is followed by a number of important turning points, from novice to full profession; each of these rites of passage is marked by appropriate ritual. In addition, it is clear that since a number of people undergo this socialisation together, these rites of passage are experienced as shared ordeals. The cumulative effect of these processes is that religious personnel are more likely to develop a subculture of self-confidence; they are more likely to develop strong collegial bonds and a greater sense of solidarity. In short, it is felt that religious educators are more likely to exhibit the characteristics of a "community within a community" which Goode linked with professionalisation:

This refers in particular to the presence of a sense of common identity and common destiny as well as the possession of a distinct culture, the shared values and norms of which function to reinforce a sense of common identity as well as to control the behaviour of members (Pavalko, 1971, p. 25).

In summary, it has been argued that religious educators have a distinct status advantage over lay educators.<sup>4</sup> This status differential is experienced both "objectively" and "subjectively". At one level more deference is shown towards religious, while at another level religious educators are partakers of a more pervasive professional subculture which generates a greater degree of self-esteem. The status differential is closely related to the degree of support for boundary exchanges with parent clients. It is felt that higher status affords greater self-confidence and thus, interaction with clients will be perceived as less threatening. Conversely, lower status implies less self-confidence and thus a greater likelihood that boundary exchanges with clients will be perceived as a threat to professional autonomy.

### VIII RESEARCH FINDINGS

The foregoing ideal-typical description of the influence on religious principals of the latent identity associated with membership of a religious order has been prompted by research findings which revealed significant differences between the role conceptions of religious and lay principals. It is beyond the aim of the present paper to present detailed empirical findings to support

<sup>4</sup> This interpretation is consistent with that of Sieber, who argues that greater overall status security is one of the benefits of role accumulation (Sieber, 1974).

the theoretical argument; these findings will be reported elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> However it is appropriate to indicate in summary form the major findings. The role conceptions of religious principals differed significantly from their lay colleagues in two major areas, viz., authority relations with teachers and external relations orientation towards parent clients and school manager. It was found that the social control orientation of religious principals towards teachers was one which favoured an indirect influence strategy. In contrast, lay principals were more likely to endorse the exercise of positional authority. This de-emphasis on the use of positional authority by religious principals is consistent with the type of authority relation which is believed to permeate the overall organisation of the religious community. On the question of principals' orientation towards relations with people outside the organisation it was found that religious principals favoured a more permeable boundary both with parent clients and with school managers. The very strong degree of support by religious principals for close home-school liaison was particularly striking; this would suggest that, in contrast to their lay counterparts, religious principals felt less threatened by the involvement of parents in school activities.

The varying responses of religious and lay principals on the social control and external relations dimensions reveal an interesting pattern which appears to reflect the differential affiliations of the respective principals. In the lay school, where there is a sharper differentiation of management and administration functions, principals opt for maintaining a fairly rigid boundary between the school and higher authorities. One implication of adopting such a position is that, ultimately, these principals carry a greater degree of personal responsibility for what goes on in the school. Linked with this additional burden of responsibility is a greater uncertainty about relations with the manager. Thus while, within certain parameters, lay principals may favour the granting of considerable autonomy to teachers, it is not too sur-

5 The principals' responses to a sixty-six item Role Norm Inventory are reported elsewhere (Clancy, 1980). For the present analysis these replies were subjected to a series of factor analyses to identify the major dimensions of principals' role conceptions. Six social control, two leadership and three external relations factors were identified suggesting that the essential variability in the responses can be adequately represented by eleven separate dimensions. Composite scores were calculated for each respondent on each of these dimensions and these composite scores were then correlated with a number of personal and situational variables to attempt to explain some of the variability in role conception. Three personal (age, sex and religious vocation) and three situational variables (school socio-economic status, school size and location of school) were used in the analysis which combined the use of ANOVA and Multiple Classification Analysis. A striking feature of the results was the differential predictive power of the personal and situational variables. These results suggest that much of the variability in role conceptions can be attributed to latent identities. The most crucial determinant of variability in role conceptions was principals' vocation (whether religious or lay); age and sex also had considerable predictive power.

prising that on certain critical points there may be no room for consultation or negotiation. Paradoxically, in certain circumstances, the neutralisation of the manager's positional authority may be possible only by the invoking of the principal's own positional authority within the school. This evidence of a complex interaction between internal and external relations re-echoes the finding of Seeman (1960) who concluded that ". . . leadership behaviour and ideology are, in significant part, functions of status considerations which stem from the community and culture surrounding the given organization."

### IX LATENT IDENTITY RECONSIDERED

At a theoretical level the present analysis has used the concept of latent identity to help clarify how a person's status or statuses outside the social system under study can exercise an important influence on attitudes and behaviour within the social system. Specifically, it has been argued that the latent identity which is associated with membership of a religious congregation can have an important influence on the orientation of religious school principals. An attempt has been made to specify the type of influence exercised by this latent identity. It is felt that this analysis has served to demonstrate the analytical scope of the latent identity concept. However, while there is little doubt that it is an important sensitising concept it would seem that there is some need for further refinement. This final section of the paper will seek to identify possible directions for this reformulation.

While the use of the latent identity concept was first proposed by Gouldner twenty-six years ago it has not been widely used.<sup>6</sup> In addition, with one exception, no attempt has been made to refine its definition or extend its use. The only proposed extension in the use of the concept is that of Becker and Geer (1960), who suggest that analogously to Gouldner's distinction between roles of individuals, it is useful to distinguish between latent and manifest *cultures* as characteristics of organisations. Perhaps the major reason for the relative neglect of the concept stems from some ambiguities in Gouldner's original formulation.

In proposing the distinction between latent and manifest identities Gouldner (1957/58, p. 358) differentiates between identities which are "consensually regarded as relevant in a given setting" and those which members define "as being irrelevant, inappropriate to consider and illegitimate to take into account." This definition implies a simple dichotomous distinction when in fact it may be more appropriate to think in terms of a continuum rather

6 While Gouldner's paper has been frequently cited in the social science literature almost all attention has focused on the cosmopolitan/local formulation to the neglect of the more generic manifest/latent identity concept.

than a simple dichotomy. Specifically, while Gouldner's designation of manifest identity is appropriate, his definition of latent identity is unnecessarily restrictive. If manifest identities are those which are culturally prescribed as relevant, latent identities may be best understood as those which are not culturally prescribed as relevant in a particular setting. Clearly this latter category is not restricted to those identities which are defined as "irrelevant, inappropriate to consider or illegitimate to take into account."

Indeed if, as Gouldner insists, the prime reason for focusing on latent identities is to pinpoint those identities, which are sometimes invoked although not culturally prescribed, it would seem that irrelevant inappropriate and illegitimate identities are not likely sources of such influences. It would seem that the most likely source of significant latent identities is that category of identities which are neither culturally prescribed as being relevant nor culturally prescribed as being irrelevant. It is clear that this residual category of identities, the salience of which is neither culturally prescribed nor proscribed, represents considerable diversity. For example, some identities may be deemed to be partially relevant, while others may be deemed to be "not completely irrelevant" etc. Thus, in addition to the antithetical designations (relevant, irrelevant, legitimate, illegitimate, etc.) it is necessary to conceive of a continuum of latent identities which lie between these extremes.

It would seem that Gouldner himself was ambivalent on whether the manifest/latent identity concepts should denote a dichotomy or a continuum. In addition to the definition (quoted above) which specifies a dichotomy, he also suggests the idea of a continuum when he discusses expectations which are "most institutionally relevant and legitimately mobilizable" and those which are "most appropriately activated and have the fullest claims to application" (p. 358). In addition it is clear that, for Gouldner "cosmopolitan" and "local" are latent identities "because the conjunction of criteria involved is not normatively prescribed by the organisation" (p. 362), rather than because these criteria are normatively *proscribed* by the organisation.

The variability in latent identities is further accentuated when it is recalled that a number of different people are involved in making the judgements as to whether a particular identity is relevant, appropriate or legitimate to take into account, in a given setting. Thus, whilst manifest identities are characterised by agreement between group members — they are consensually regarded as relevant in a given setting — it cannot be assumed that group members will agree on the appropriate designation of all other identities. For example, an individual actor and his significant others may disagree on whether a particular identity is relevant in a given setting. Hence it can be assumed that frequently an individual will orient himself to an identity which he deems to be relevant while his significant other(s) will deny that this same identity is relevant in this particular setting. In addition, it is clear that group members

will not always agree on the degree of relevance of a particular identity in any setting.

A further problem which is not explicitly resolved in Gouldner's delineation of the concept is whether the influence of latent identities is always a conscious process. Gouldner's discussion implies that latent identities are always consciously invoked. Similarly, Becker and Geer (1960, p. 306) argue that "latent identities will not affect either individual behaviour within the group or the collective behaviour of the group, unless they are in some way mobilised and brought into play in the daily interaction of group members." Since the assignment of an identity is part of a perceptual process it does seem reasonable to assume that actors are consciously aware of this process; however, it is possible that expectations associated with a particular identity are being activated without an actor's being conscious of this.

The main problems which have been raised in respect of Gouldner's delineation of the concept can be illustrated with reference to the latent identity which is associated with membership of a religious order. While it is clear that the religious identity is not the culturally prescribed identity for all those who perform the manifest role of school principal, neither can it be said that the religious identity is illegitimate or inappropriate: while it is not culturally prescribed neither is it proscribed. *It is desirable therefore to add to Gouldner's dichotomy those identities which are neither culturally prescribed nor culturally proscribed.* It cannot, in practice, be assumed that all actors will concur on the degree of appropriateness, relevance or legitimacy. For example, religious principals themselves and some of their significant others may regard the religious identity as legitimately mobilisable in the school context, whilst some lay teachers, parents or pupils may regard it as irrelevant and inappropriate.

The analysis of vocation as a latent identity does more than merely point to the limitations in Gouldner's formulation. More significantly, it is argued that vocation is representative of an important category of latent identities. The foregoing analysis has suggested that the high probability of the religious identity's influencing the principal's behaviour within the school organisation is a direct function of the normative compatibility between the religious and educational identities. Extrapolating from this analysis it can be suggested that the closer the normative parallel between a manifest identity and any particular latent identity, the higher the probability that expectations associated with the latent identity will influence behaviour in the manifest role. Close normative parallels between any two identities facilitate the process of "role compounding" or "role fusion" such as has been suggested in the case of religious principals. Thus, in any search for latent identities which influence behaviour in any particular manifest role, it would seem appropriate to start with an examination of those identities of which the normative ex-

pectations parallel the expectations associated with the manifest identity under study, identities which are neither culturally prescribed nor culturally proscribed.

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