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## The "Detotalization" of a Teaching Sisterhood and Some Analogous Processes of Change

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**THE "DETOTALIZATION" OF A TEACHING SISTERHOOD AND  
SOME ANALOGOUS PROCESSES OF CHANGE**

**by**

**Brendan O'Dowd**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts**

**January**

**1970**

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting aspects of the changes which the Roman Catholic Church is undergoing as a result of the Second Vatican Council is the adaptation of religious orders and congregations to modern conditions. The emergence of nuns from their convents clad in a new style of religious garb or, more strikingly, dressed like lay women of their own age and professional status has attracted the attention of the news media, and these, in turn, have directed the eyes of the world onto what nuns are doing. The outward and visible change in dress is merely the symbol of far-reaching changes in the life-style, government, and ideology of religious orders of women. More penetrating insight and clearer appreciation of what is happening at these deeper levels is badly needed. I am personally concerned with this process of change among religious communities since I am a member of a congregation of priests which is equally committed to adaptation and renewal. As might be expected, this is a subject upon which very little has been written before, and this circumstance adds to my study the excitement of exploring a virtually untouched area of inquiry.

From a sociological point of view, this study of the process of change among a community of teaching sisters comes

under the heading of the sociology of organizations and also of the sociology of work and occupations. Organizations are social units or human groupings deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals. Clearly, a congregation of teaching sisters is such a social unit which, at the moment, is being deliberately reconstructed to carry out specific tasks. Fundamentally, work may be defined as a social activity with the two main functions of producing the goods required by society and binding the individual into the pattern of inter-relationships from which human society is built. An occupation is a specific, relatively continuous activity engaged in by people in order to earn their livelihood, maintain a definite social status, and give meaning to their lives. Clearly, again, teaching nuns are engaged in work, both inside and outside the classroom, and their particular kind of activity coupled with their quality of consecrated persons constitutes an occupation. The adaptation and renewal of a teaching sisterhood is, therefore, a type of social change which is of interest to sociologists from several points of view.

A religious congregation is what Erving Goffman calls a "total institution", that is, one which encompasses the whole life of its members.<sup>1</sup> As far as I know, nobody has ever examined in detail a religious congregation of sisters, its

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<sup>1</sup>Erving Goffman, Asylums (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 4.

constitutions, rule-books, and practices to see how nearly they coincide with Goffman's model of a "total institution". This is one of the aims of the present study; but ongoing happenings among sisters suggest an extension of it. The present process of change can be viewed as "detotalization," or the unfastening of the all-embracing grasp in which a religious congregation formerly held its members. Written accounts are available of how such communities fasten their grip upon an aspirant through their resocialization procedures. Monica Baldwin, for example, describes this very vividly in her book, I Leap Over the Wall. She also makes clear the problems of adjustment which she experienced on leaving the convent. But nobody has dealt with the loosening of the congregation's total grip on sisters who continue to be members of it. Of course, it was only very recently that such a thing occurred for the first time. This is another area upon which this study will try to shed some light in so far as the available data will allow. This relaxing of a religious congregation's grasp is the negative aspect of this process of change and renewal, but it also has a positive side, namely, the structures which are developed to replace what was taken away. These are of interest to sociology too, as are speculations about the future of the modified congregation.

Though the present study is sociological, it must be borne in mind that the changes in which we are interested were neither initiated nor guided by sociological considerations

primarily, though these were not without influence on the sisters' thinking. The rationale and justification for change must be sought in the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, which directed religious orders to look closely at themselves and their apostolate against the background of modern times and make the necessary adjustments. The decree, "Perfectae Caritatis", makes it quite clear that the Council fathers intended to make provision for the needs of religious orders "as the tenor of the times indicates."<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that their adaptation and modernization is the express will of the Church.<sup>2</sup> This becomes clearer when one reads the norms and guiding principles laid down by the Council. We shall quote a few passages: "The appropriate renewal of religious life involves two simultaneous processes: (1) a continuous return to the sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration behind a given community and (2) an adjustment of the community to the changed conditions of the times."<sup>3</sup> Sociologists would see in this the Church's consciousness of a culture lag which has left the way of life of religious orders far behind that of a rapidly changing society. It may also indicate an awareness of a "performance gap," that is, the

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<sup>1</sup>W. M. Abbott (ed.), The Documents of Vatican II (New York: Guild Press, 1966), p. 466.

<sup>2</sup>Andrew M. Greeley, The Hesitant Pilgrim (New York: Image Books, 1969), p. 130.

<sup>3</sup>Abbott, loc. cit., p. 468.

difference between what religious congregations are doing and what they believe they ought to be doing. The document goes on to say that "the manner of living, praying, and working," and also, "the way in which communities are governed" should be suitably adapted "to the physical and psychological conditions of today's religious and also, to the extent required by the nature of each community, to the needs of the apostolate, the requirements of a given culture, the social and economic circumstances anywhere."<sup>1</sup>

Constitutions, directories, custom books, books of prayers and ceremonies, and similar compilations are to be suitably revised and brought into harmony with the documents of this sacred Synod. This task will require the suppression of outmoded regulations.

Successful renewal and proper adaptation cannot be achieved unless every member of a community cooperates.<sup>2</sup>

.....  
 Since they are signs of a consecrated life, religious habits should be simple and modest, at once poor and becoming. They should meet the requirements of health and be suited to the circumstances of time and place as well as to the services required by those who wear them. Habits of men and women which do not correspond to those norms are to be changed.

Where the Church has newly taken root, special attention should be given to the establishment and development of fresh forms of religious life. These should take into account the natural endowments and manners of the people, and also local customs and circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 469.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 479.



These directions for renewal can only be fully understood in the light of the other decrees of the Ecumenical Council, and especially of "The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World." This latter document reveals the bishops' understanding of "the physical and psychological conditions, the requirements of a given culture, and the social and economic circumstances" to which adaptation and renewal must be suited. These variables will not be the same for all the nations of the world, but there are certain fundamental convictions which the bishops share about the nature of man and of human society. These make the principles of renewal stated in general terms by the bishops more specific. We shall pick out a few of these for emphasis.

Many quotations could be adduced to show how firmly the Council asserts the dignity of man. All men are persons, i.e., "beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility";<sup>1</sup> each man is called to communion with God, to converse with God being created by God's love and constantly preserved by it. Hence, they proclaim the exalted dignity of the human person, "since he stands above all things, and his rights and duties are universal and inviolable."<sup>2</sup> Man has a claim to "everything necessary for

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<sup>1</sup>Abbott, loc. cit., p. 679.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

leading a life truly human,"<sup>1</sup> and that includes "the right to education, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of his own conscience, to the protection of privacy and to rightful freedom in matters religious."<sup>2</sup> This theme of man's freedom runs like a golden thread through all the Council documents: "Only in freedom can man direct himself towards goodness; man must seek his Creator spontaneously. He must act according to a knowing and free choice which is personally motivated and prompted from within."<sup>3</sup>

This legitimate freedom of man requires that "constitutional limits should be set to the power of government, in order that there may be no encroachment on the rightful freedom of the person."<sup>4</sup> Among the ways in which the integrity of the human person is violated the fathers include "attempts to coerce the will, disgraceful working conditions where men are treated as mere tools...rather than as free and responsible persons."<sup>5</sup> Instead of these "infamies," the "human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>4</sup>Abbott, loc. cit., p. 286.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 226.

social sense."<sup>1</sup> This involves "freedom on inquiry and of thought, and the freedom to express their minds humbly and courageously about those matters in which they enjoy competence."<sup>2</sup> "Totalitarian or dictatorial forms of government are injurious to the rights of persons and social groups."<sup>3</sup> The bishops acknowledge that throughout the world there is "a growth in the combined sense of independence and responsibility" which is "of paramount importance for the spiritual and moral maturity of the human race."<sup>4</sup> The Council favors Christians living in close contact with men of their time seeking an understanding of their ways of thinking and feeling. It urges dialog and communication among all men; the active participation of everyone in running various enterprises.<sup>5</sup>

Most of these statements on the dignity of man, his freedom and responsibility, his right to develop all his talents and powers without interference from any source were made with reference to lay people and civil governments. Clearly, they have much wider application, based as they are on the bishops' concept of the kind of being man is. While it is true that religious women have consecrated themselves freely to God by

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 270.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 277.

vow, yet they have not lost their human nature, its values, its needs, and its rights; these are things which they cannot renounce irrevocably. Yet some religious congregations have not shown in the past as much awareness of these Christian emphases as they ought. This is especially true of the training of young sisters and of the life-style sanctioned for, if not imposed upon many nuns. Andrew Greeley goes so far as to speak of "that training which in novitiates, seminaries and houses of formation attempts to reduce the subject to a state of dependence and infantilism without a personality or an inclination of one's own."<sup>1</sup> This seems especially undesirable when viewed against the democratic, individualistic, personalist culture of the modern United States. When we turn our attention to the concept of a "total" organization, we will find that many of its features fit very poorly the teachings of Vatican II which we have briefly reviewed. And yet, as we shall see, Goffman was not being completely extravagant when he instanced convents and monasteries as examples of "total institutions." The present study can now be seen as justified both from the sociological and ascetical-theological points of view.

There is one last point which must be made before we proceed to the main body of this study. It is that I do not

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<sup>1</sup>Greeley, op. cit., p. 135.

claim to maintain a value-free posture throughout the course of it. Alvin Gouldner has described a value-free sociology as "a myth," and he attributes the cult of such a sociology largely to a misunderstanding of Max Weber who wished to keep his sociology free from any political alignment.<sup>1</sup> The very choice of a research topic implies some systems of values upon which the criteria of selection are based; the same is true of viewpoints adopted in the course of research work because these also involve some valuation. Nevertheless, the researcher must be aware of the fact that his values impinge upon his work; to assist him in approximating to an impartial treatment of his subject and for the guidance of his readers, he would do wise to make explicit his values. I shall attempt to do this very briefly.

As a Roman Catholic and a member of a religious congregation, I cannot avoid having a deep respect for the religious life and for the dedication of the sisters who have given themselves to it. Though I value highly its ideals, this does not mean that I am committed to an uncritical acceptance of all aspects of its ideology, structures, and practices, past and present. The ideals of the religious life are of permanent value, in my opinion, but the ways in which they are expressed in the daily life of religious professionals need not share that

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<sup>1</sup>Alvin W. Gouldner, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology," Sociology on Trial, Maurice Stein and Arthur Vidich (eds.), pp. 35, 39.

permanent value. Yet I believe that the world of men and the Church would be impoverished if the religious congregations were to disintegrate and disappear. Thus I obviously desire that the Congregation of St. Raphael, about which I am writing, should flourish and continue to serve mankind, though not necessarily in the form which it had in the period prior to Vatican II. I believe that the happiness, maturity, and personal fulfillment of individual members of religious congregations are not incompatible with the ideal of serving God and men within a congregation which has been updated to suit the needs of the present age. These value-positions will constantly appear in my writing and the reader will obviously have to take them into consideration in shaping his own opinion about the problems which are being discussed. A sincere attempt has been made to present all the aspects of the various issues which came within the terms of reference of this thesis. It has not been written as a piece of propaganda in support of any single position.

#### Outline of the Chapters

Next I shall briefly outline the sequence of chapters. Chapter I introduces the religious congregation with which we are dealing and gives a short account of its history. Chapter II inquires how closely Goffman's model of a "total institution" fitted the Congregation of St. Raphael. The next chapter examines the notion of "detotalization" and how it has been planned for and partially implemented in this sisterhood.

Chapters IV and V introduce the data which we propose to analyze while Chapters VI and VII set forth our hypotheses and the actual analysis of the data. These chapters seek to give some idea of the impact of change upon the sisters. Chapter VIII looks on the process of change as the debureaucratization of the congregation, a process analogous to "detotalization." It also deals with the growth of professionalism among the sisters--an important component of these changes. Chapter IX asks if the congregation retains the essential characteristics of a complex organization; going on from this, Chapter X speculates about the future of the Congregation of St. Raphael now that quite revolutionary change has begun. Chapter XI, by way of conclusion, seeks to summarize the findings and their implication for future research.

## CHAPTER I

### OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION ITS ORGANIZATIONAL STANCE

To preserve the anonymity of this religious community we shall call it the "Congregation of St. Raphael." Most of what we know about its beginnings is derived from "an undocumented and rather dull volume named In the Early Days written in 1911 by one of the earlier members of the community."<sup>1</sup> This work was composed in a pietistic tone with the object of edifying rather than informing its readers. Nevertheless, the basic facts are clear enough. Five young Irish women of middle class families banded themselves together in Dublin to make a contribution to the education of poor children. They were drawn together originally by their charitable work among the poor during the cholera epidemic which swept through many British cities in 1831. They saw that education was needed even more keenly than medicine as a means for uplifting the common people. They were women of firm religious faith which impelled them to do something constructive to improve the lot of their fellow citizens. At first, they had no clear intention of founding a

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Mary DeCock, "Sources for a History of the Congregation of St. Raphael" (unpublished paper), p. 2.



religious institute, but for reasons of convenience, they shared the same house in which they opened their first elementary school in 1832. Their work was much appreciated by local Catholic laity and clergy. They were permitted to have a private chapel in their home, and a priest from Philadelphia, who had been sent home to recuperate from a serious illness, acted as their chaplain.

Their venture in education met with success. Meantime, almost imperceptibly, the life which these young women shared and their dedication to the needs of others, led them into adopting the practices of a conventual social organization. They became convinced that, if their work was to last, it must have some formal structure. Gradually, they came to believe that they were called to a religious life which would be devoted to Christian education. About this time, their chaplain was recalled to America. He spoke to the ladies about the Irish emigrants' need for Christian education in the new world, a need far greater than any which existed in the home country. In short, he succeeded, against all the probabilities, in persuading the ladies to accompany him to the United States and start the work of teaching there. In spite of their own misgivings, which their families shared, the five ladies gathered together their belongings and sailed for America. It was an extraordinarily unselfish act; many would say that it was a foolhardy thing to do, but much good was to come of it.

A local Irish pastor in Philadelphia, named Donaghue, made them very welcome, helped them to find living quarters in the city and encouraged them to open a school. He became their guide and friend; their association with him became so close that he acted as their director in their gradual evolution towards becoming a formal religious congregation. This relationship changed everything in the lives of those who shared it. The pastor became the cofounder of the Sisters of St. Raphael; the five Irish ladies became the foundation members of a great religious congregation; a chain of events was begun which finally brought all of them to find their life's work in virgin country west of the Mississippi. After eight years of fruitful teaching in Philadelphia, during which the rules and constitutions of the infant society were gradually elaborated by a process of trial and error, a pressing invitation to pioneering work was offered to the sisters. The first Catholic bishop of an enormous diocese beyond the Mississippi asked them to send him a few sisters to set on foot the work of Catholic education "among the Indians, miners and immigrants in the poorest diocese in the Union."<sup>1</sup> They complied with this request, which ultimately led, in 1843, to the transfer of the whole congregation with its priest-director to the sparsely settled territory of Iowa. Tradition relates that an old Jesuit laybrother in Philadelphia named Faye had predicted that "the far West will

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

one day resound with the praises of the Sisters of St. Raphael."<sup>1</sup> The one history of the congregation in existence, entitled In the Early Days, returns again and again to this prediction to justify and ratify the continuous expansion of the sisterhood westward, until today they are in twenty-five states, most of them west of the Mississippi. This prophetic utterance, whatever one makes of it, is part of the congregation's tradition and made a formative impression on its members. It oriented them towards extending their works to the west, and, to some extent, accounts for their eagerness not to hold back if they were invited to make a new foundation. Theirs is an amazing story of rapid growth; they started with five foreign ladies in 1833, and in little more than a hundred years, grew into a body of more than two thousand members. At present, they conduct more than 180 schools at all levels of education dispersed through 25 states of the Union.

### The Congregation's Organizational Stance and Change

An interesting study has been made on the influence of "organizational stance"<sup>2</sup> on the process of change in three religious sisterhoods. Perhaps some of its insights may be applicable to the Sisters of Saint Raphael. The authors point

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Lambertina Doran, In the Early Days (privately published, 1943), p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Roseanne Murphy, SND, and William T. Liu, "Organizational Stance and Change: A Comparative Study of Three Religious Communities," Review of Religious Research, VIII (Fall, 1966), p. 41.

out that the "institutionalization process" is a stage in the development of all formal organizations. This means the building into the organization of many habits, values, and vested interests. These reflect the organization's own peculiar history, the people who have been members of it, the groups formed within it and the way it has adapted to its environment. Complex organizations need to develop such a character or ethos to supply the members with moral support and to motivate them to achieve its goals. On the other hand, this organizational character can also be narrow and resistant to change. As Selznick points out, the influence of top leadership can be crucial here. If the leaders feel that they have plenty of leeway to act, they tend to be creative and unafraid of development and change. The authors of this study which has been cited identified three factors as being most responsible for the variation in organizational development in the three communities which they examined; these factors constitute what they call the "organizational stance" of the communities in question. They are: first, the model upon which the community was originally patterned, that is, its organizational base; second, the orientation which that model imposed upon the organization, that is, whether its goals were specific, as being the goals of an existing society, or left diffuse and unspecified; and third, the perception of the underlying value of organizational change as it was structured from the beginning.

In the case of the Sisters of St. Raphael, it is hard to say that they were founded according to any existing model. The five foundation members could have joined many existing teaching communities in their homeland, yet they chose to innovate.<sup>1</sup> They formed a loosely structured community of their own which they would adapt to the needs of their clients and the demands of time and place. They went as a unit to the United States where they came under the influence of a priest-director who, in turn, was much influenced by the Jesuit order. Their Irish traditional background and the Jesuit influence were both factors making for conservatism. Yet, their rules and constitutions were not taken over en bloc from any existing sisterhood, nor did they serve a religious apprenticeship under a member of any other religious order. Nevertheless, in reading their rule books of 1928 and the revised text of 1958, one can see rigidities built into it which probably derive from the Jesuit rule and the prescriptions of Canon Law. For instance, superiors are told that "they shall not introduce anything new"; similarly, the General Chapter and the Superior General "cannot change anything" in their way of life. The co-founder, Donaghue, also tried to keep a very tight control of financial outlay; and as late as 1926, we find that special permission from the highest authority is required for expenditure of more

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Mary DeCock, "Sources for a History of the Sisters of St. Raphael," unpublished paper, p. 3.

than ten dollars, which seems unrealistically restrictive. In spite of that, the circumstances of the foundation of the community seem to have given them a pioneering spirit which no rules or regulations could crush. Moreover, in the matter of leadership, the rigidity of Father Donaghue was more than counterbalanced by the inspired daring of the Irish co-foundress --a creativity which seems to have had more scope after the death of the former in 1869.<sup>1</sup>

It can be maintained, then, that the Sisters of St. Raphael had a unique beginning which owed little to any established model. It was really quite unlike the foundation of an American branch of an existing European congregation; this was an original venture. They had no traditions to fall back upon nor customs to maintain. Once they moved across the Mississippi, it was clear that they would have to cope with pioneering conditions; they deliberately chose this course, knowing what was involved. In the last analysis, they were profession-oriented. This means that, having no model, their point of reference was outside the community structure, namely, the Church, and ultimately, the teaching profession. The members of the sisterhood would positively need to collaborate a great deal in solving the problems posed by the inexperience and a challenging environment.<sup>2</sup> Granted that certain features

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Sister Roseanne Murphy, "Factors Influencing the Developmental Pace of Religious Communities," Sociological Analysis, XXVII (Fall, 1966), 157.

of the religious life would remain constant, they had consciously opted for an apostolate in which flexibility and adaptation to change must be prime values.

The Sisters of St. Raphael were founded to work as educators. From the very outset it was understood that they would go wherever they were needed and would not confine themselves to any social stratum nor to any particular level of education. This unity of professional purpose can be interpreted as a factor making for adaptability. In a congregation whose works are varied, the rule and an exact order of day can become essential symbols of unity in a situation where diverse works draw the members in various directions.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the third element in the congregation's stance, namely, the perception of the underlying value of organizational change has already been dealt with implicitly. A community which started with five ladies from overseas, untrained in any other religious rule, simply had to build its own organizational framework as it went along, and as adaptation to circumstances demanded. From the beginning, then, a situation fraught with change, where flexibility was important, formed an accepted element in their way of life. In all the innovative decisions involved, the prophetic words of old Brother Faye that the far West would one day resound with the praises of the Sisters of St. Raphael

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<sup>1</sup>Murphy and Liu, loc. cit., p. 41.

furnished a corroborative and justifying legitimization of what reason and faith indicated.

Zelda Gamson provides some support for this point of view. She says that a new organization must, of necessity, be responsive to influences originating either inside or outside itself.<sup>1</sup> When an organization is in its infancy, its goals and procedures are not institutionalized enough to be impervious to such pressures. Early experiences often define what a new organization will be like in later years. Gamson calls this a kind of "institutional imprinting." In the infant stage of an organization, commitments are generated which determine its future development. In the later stages of an organization's life cycle, these very commitments which were made in circumstances of greater freedom of action and of greater variety of alternatives limit its flexibility and adaptability.

It is also quite important to notice the pace of growth of this community, which has been quite remarkable. In one hundred and thirty-five years, it has made more than a hundred and eighty "foundations," (i.e., local elementary and secondary schools) an average of more than one a year, and has accumulated more than two thousand members. One cannot think of any other sisterhood which has grown so rapidly. To give just one example: the Sisters of St. Raphael were the thirteenth

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<sup>1</sup>Zelda F. Gamson, "Organizational Responses to Members," Sociological Quarterly, IX (Spring, 1968), 146.



community in chronological order to enter the archdiocese of Los Angeles when they made their first foundation there in 1924. By 1945 they had made thirteen foundations and were fourth among the sisterhoods in the number of schools conducted, thus outstripping nine other communities in the pace of their growth.<sup>1</sup> They have also been progressive in other ways. They opened a college for Catholic women in Iowa in 1901, which makes it one of the oldest colleges of its type in the United States. They reorganized the congregation into four separate provinces under individual provincial superiors in 1915. Then they established a large skyscraper college for women in a great Midwestern city in 1933--a fitting memorial of their centenary year. As early as 1911, a member of the congregation was instrumental in winning acceptance for nuns at the Catholic University in Washington. This led to the establishment of the Sisters' College at that university for the higher education of nuns of all congregations.

Thus far, the adaptability of the Congregation of St. Raphael has been stressed. Yet it would be a misrepresentation to say that it has always displayed eagerness for internal, structural change. As Katz and Kahn point out, "the basic type of system does not change directly as a consequence of expansion," the commonest type of growth being "a multiplication

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<sup>1</sup>Sister M. Emerita Taylor, "Raphael's Children in the Far West," (unpublished Master's thesis, Dept. of Education, De Paul University, 1947), p. 121.

of the same type of cycles or subsystems."<sup>1</sup> The maintenance system of any organization, in its efforts to achieve stability and predictability of behavior, will always tend toward organizational rigidity, the preservation of the status quo in absolute terms.<sup>2</sup> The readiness to expand and make new foundations, which we have noted, is not necessarily compatible with conservatism in internal affairs. Though there are no data to prove it, apart from the recollections and impressions of sisters, it is altogether likely that, on the death of the co-foundress in 1887, the Congregation of St. Raphael entered a period of organizational rigidity in internal matters which lasted until the nineteen fifties, as the sisters of today testify. Houtart thinks that this happens especially in Church organizations where, as soon as a rule is codified, it is almost "sacralized," especially in minds formed in a legalistic tradition.<sup>3</sup> By this last phrase he means English-speaking peoples. It used to be said, he recalls, "that in the Church the Italians were making the laws and the Irish and the Americans were keeping them."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>Francois Houtart, The Eleventh Hour: Explosion of a Church (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), p. 101.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

However that may be, during the period when the Congregation of St. Raphael was expanding very rapidly in California, that is, between 1935 and 1945, it was virtually at a standstill in the matter of adapting its way of convent life to changing times. Those in the upper levels of the congregation's hierarchy were rather elderly and conservative, so much so that the congregation did not participate in the early stages of the Sister Formation movement which was to bring badly needed improvements to the training and education of nuns in the United States.<sup>1</sup> As one of the largest and most influential of the teaching sisterhoods, they might have been expected to be leaders in this development. During the nineteen fifties, they began to relax from this rigid posture; younger superiors began to be appointed, many sisters were sent on for higher studies; sisters began to join organizations, professional and otherwise, outside their own community. Inevitably, the influx of new ideas had its effect. In the nineteen sixties, the congregation was better prepared to welcome Pope John's throwing open of the windows to let in a draught of fresh air.

Immediately upon the Council's publication of its decree on the renewal of religious life, the sisters began to study it. During the summer of 1966 they held an Institute entitled, "The Problems that Unite Us." This series of lectures and discussions posed many of the questions which the General

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<sup>1</sup>Interview.

Chapter of the community would have to handle in 1968. This fact is of great significance: the Institute was not allowed to become a forgotten piece of history. Quite spontaneously, the sisters of the Chicago area, who teach mainly in grade schools, started to hold regular meetings to discuss the problems uncovered by the Institute. This was a genuine "grass roots" movement. Significantly, it had its origin in a great city; and cities have always been centers of learning, thought, creativity, and innovation. The movement spread to other cities like San Francisco and Kansas City where the congregation is numerically strong. Study groups were set up to explore areas for renewal such as government, personal growth and development, education, and indeed, the very nature of the religious life. This mushroom growth was a manifestation of the power of ideas and also of how intensely sisters felt the need of change; it engaged the interest of the whole community. A movement which could bring together more than three hundred sisters in Chicago alone was not to be ignored; the intellectuals of the congregation joined it; the superiors gave their approval. In a very real sense, then, the impulse for change came from the bottom upwards in this sisterhood, though, of course, the signal from Rome was a necessary part of the process. It became very plain that the impending General Chapter of 1968 would be taken very seriously and that the sisters would elect delegates in no perfunctory way, but with a deep realization that this Chapter had unique

possibilities. An observation by Robert Michels is very apposite to the "grass roots" movement which has been described: "It is not the simple existence of oppressive conditions, but it is the recognition of these conditions by the oppressed, which in the course of history has constituted the prime factor of class struggles."<sup>1</sup> It is not here suggested that "oppressive conditions" existed in this community, but simply structures and practices which needed changing.

We have now seen how the Sisters of St. Raphael resuscitated the change-orientation which was part of their heritage but had been allowed to die almost, and added it to the pioneering spirit which they had never lost. Even before their General Chapter, they have been among the leaders in experimentation with new forms of dress and modifications in the daily timetable. We shall now have to look at the sisters' way of life before the process of change began, and also at the direction which change has taken.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Michels, Political Parties (New York: The Free Press, 1962), p. 228.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CONGREGATION OF ST. RAPHAEL AS A "TOTAL" ORGANIZATION

Among the examples which Goffman gives in his discussion of "total institutions" are prisons, mental hospitals, army barracks, convents, and other cloisters.<sup>1</sup> We shall have to see how closely his concept of such an institution fits the Congregation of St. Raphael or one of its convents. Goffman defines a "total institution" as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life."<sup>2</sup> Every institution, Goffman declares, captures something of the time and interest of its members; in fact, all institutions have encompassing tendencies. He is concerned with those whose degree of encompassment marks them off as different in kind from others. The totality of grasp aimed at and achieved by these organizations is shown even in physical ways by locked doors,

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<sup>1</sup>Erving Goffman, Asylums (New York: Anchor Books, 1961), p. xiii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

high walls, and sometimes, barbed wire, which are the symbols of the barriers to social intercourse with the outside world. Goffman's concept, then, means something much more than Allport's "partial inclusion," which implies that people need be involved in the functioning of a social system only on a segmental or partial basis. Katz and Kahn are of the opinion that "willy-nilly the organization seeks to bring within its boundaries the entire person."<sup>1</sup> This is especially true of the type of institution envisaged by Goffman. At the first glance, from general knowledge, and from a reading of such books as Monica Baldwin's, Goffman's definition of a total institution fits disconcertingly well. We must, however, examine the matter rather more closely than that.

In modern society most people sleep, work, and take recreation in different places, with different companions, under different authorities, and without any single plan imposed by a single authority. In many convents, including those of the Congregation of St. Raphael, it was quite otherwise; this dispersion of life into compartments was not the pattern. All the activities of life were carried out in the same place, under a single authority, and according to a rigid plan which the individual sister had not helped to formulate. Furthermore, most of the daily activities were done in common,<sup>2</sup> always with

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Constitutions of the Sisters of St. Raphael (Privately circulated, 1958), #173-185.

the same group of people for whom the procedures were minutely prescribed, sometimes by formal rule, sometimes by accepting customary ways of doing things. All the daily duties were performed according to a tight schedule; the sound of a bell signaled the end of one activity and the beginning of the next. At its sound, the sisters had to be ready "to obey instantly, leaving any occupation whatever."<sup>1</sup> All of these normatively prescribed activities were integrated into a single overall plan designed to achieve the aims of the congregation. The local superiors were "bound to ensure the observance of the Constitutions;" surveillance was an explicit part of their duty; in turn, they were responsible to the Provincial Superior who was to "govern her Province according to the Constitutions, under the direction of the Superior General."<sup>2</sup>

This raises another question: was there a basic split between rank and file sisters and their superiors such as Goffman found in "total institutions" between the managers and the managed, the staff and the inmates? It seems certain that this was never desired or even envisaged by those who drew up the rules of the congregation. "Superiors," and "subjects," to use terms which are unpopular nowadays, were equally bound to the observance of rule. Ideally, there should have been no social distance between sisters of the same community. Yet, the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., #50.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ##313, 308.



role prescriptions made strain inevitable. "As excessive severity and harshness are injurious, so also is too much indulgence; therefore, the Superior should govern with a certain maternal kindness and with due moderation."<sup>1</sup> This is just one intimation of the familial model which was traditionally used to explain the religious life and especially, its type of authority. It is a relic of tribal and feudal eras "in which those in authority were perceived as parents or as rulers."<sup>2</sup> It implied for superiors a "dominative authority fitting for children, but a gross anomaly for adult religious women."<sup>3</sup>

A few illustrations from the role-prescriptions for subjects will show what this concept of authority involved in practice. The sister was obliged to obey her superior "in those things which pertain directly or indirectly to the life of the Institute,"<sup>4</sup> to subject herself completely and with great humility to her, "whether amiable or severe,"<sup>5</sup> "perform whatever penances are enjoined" by her "for defects, negligences or any other cause, even though they should be enjoined for some

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., #316.

<sup>2</sup>Sister Marie Augusta Neal, "Religious Communities in a Changing World," The New Nuns, ed. Sister Charles Borromeo (New York: Signet Books, 1968), p. 121.

<sup>3</sup>Sister M. Audrey Kopp, SNJM, The New Nuns: Collegial Christians, (Chicago: Argus Communications Co., 1968), p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Constitutions, #42.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., #47.

defect not blameworthy.<sup>1</sup> Every sister must be solicitous "that all her errors, defects and dangers which the sisters may notice be manifested to the Superior."<sup>2</sup> Such ordinances were bound to inject tension into the superior-subject relationship and create social distance. This could be particularly the case, when a superior, instead of relying upon leadership by example, stressed the surveillance function. This would tend to set the watched against the watcher; it could cause hostile stereotypes to develop, such as the "prison warden" type; it could lead to feelings of acute inferiority on the part of the managed, and even to subterfuges to outwit the watcher. The old rule wryly remarks that "it is impossible for the Superior herself to see and hear all things,"<sup>3</sup> as if to say that, ideally, she should be the all-seeing eye and the all-hearing ear.

Another reason for the gulf between staff and inmates which Goffman mentions is that the staff are socially integrated in the world outside, whereas the inmates have restricted contacts with it. This is not really true of the sisters whom we are discussing. Both superiors and subjects were bound by "milieu control," whereby "the totalist environment seeks to establish domain over not only the individual's communication with the outside, but also--in its penetration of his inner

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., #51.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., #112.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

life--over what we may speak of as his communication with himself."<sup>1</sup> Thus, there were rules governing the admission of visitors to the convent, the amount of time that could be spent with them depending on whether they were relatives or not; there were, likewise, rules regulating when sisters might go outside the convent, laying down whom they might speak to (nobody, ideally!), what they might say, the obligation of always being accompanied by another sister who was further bound to report to the superior on all that occurred in the course of the outing.<sup>2</sup> It is true that superiors didn't have to seek permission to receive visitors or to go out, but they did have to tell their house councillors "when and for what purpose they leave the house."<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the control which was constitutionally built into the superior's position, further leverage could be exerted by her in virtue of her control over the passage of information. We have noted some of her sources of information. She was also empowered to read all outgoing and incoming letters except those to or from higher superiors; she was, however, obliged to keep their content secret.<sup>4</sup> The rule of silence outside times of

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<sup>1</sup>Robert J. Lifton, Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961), p. 420.

<sup>2</sup>Constitutions, ##85, 89, 86, 90, 91.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., #139.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., #152.

recreation (which had to be in common) left very little opportunity for an exchange of news or confidences between two individual sisters.<sup>1</sup> Besides, sisters were not to relate "worldly rumors," nor were they to "curiously inquire into the actions and words of another"; they were forbidden even to discuss the actions and commands of the superior.<sup>2</sup> In short, the superior was the repository and fountainhead of all information. The rank and file sister was "excluded from knowledge of the decisions taken concerning her fate."<sup>3</sup> They were obliged not to "seek to know why, for instance, a Sister is sent hither or goes to another house, what qualities others possess, and the like.... Yet should a sister notice anything which she thinks should be communicated to the Superior, let it be told to the Superior alone."<sup>4</sup> All this reminds one of Zurcher's "sailor aboard ship" in the Navy who is "often not formally aware of the fact that he is to be transferred until handed his orders."<sup>5</sup> Such a monopoly of information when set over against exclusion from it, gave superiors "a special basis of distance from and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., ##124, 177.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., #130.

<sup>3</sup>Goffman, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>Constitutions, #129.

<sup>5</sup>Louis A. Zurcher Jnr., "The Sailor Aboard Ship: a Study of Role Behavior in a Total Institution," Social Forces, XLIII (Fall, 1964), p. 391.



control over inmates."<sup>1</sup> A further powerful source of dominance was the superior's prerogative of approving all expenditure of money and of the allocation of furniture, food, and clothing. From the command-obedience point of view, this was what the vow of poverty prescribed.<sup>2</sup>

For the majority of people, the separation of the work place from the home and from the place of recreation provides variety and a haven of refuge from the tensions which may develop in any one of these. Many modern workers of the unskilled type find in the home and in leisure pursuits the "psychic income" which they fail to find at work. Work thus becomes instrumental to them; it is simply used as a means to procure the income which will purchase various types of satisfaction at home or in places of entertainment. For the sister of St. Raphael the work place was, and in most cases still is, the convent, or a school adjacent to it. Most often, her superior was also headmistress of the school. Even if the headmistress happened to be another nun, the sister-teacher was bound to obey "with great humility the Sister Directress."<sup>3</sup> In a word, the work place was dominated by the same authority as the place of residence. Nevertheless, the school building proper generally had the atmosphere of a work place rather than

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<sup>1</sup>Goffman, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Constitutions, ##77, 89, 90.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., #356.

that of a convent on account of the presence of lay teachers and children; ironically, this gave the school and school hours an atmosphere of freedom from an all-embracing authority which the convent didn't have.<sup>1</sup>

We might here ask how a sister was and is motivated to give of her best in her work. Normally, a worker's activity in an organization should "carry either some intrinsic rewards, some instrumental or extrinsic rewards, or some combination of the two."<sup>2</sup> Clearly, a sister lacks the instrumental satisfaction of a financial incentive. Ideally, she is motivated by the love of God to whom her life is devoted. This would be an intrinsic reward; the sister would be infusing her task with an expressive value as a symbol of her commitment to God's cause. Yet, there must be many good nuns for whom this abstract motivation is not as powerful as it would be for an advanced mystic. Motivation might come from her professional interest in teaching, from the urge which impels the professional to keep abreast of developments in her field and give the best possible service to her clients, the school children, and their parents. This is, again, an expressive reward. But it is hard for an American girl reared in an environment which celebrates achievement and "getting ahead,"<sup>3</sup> which relies mainly on the

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Goffman, op. cit., pp. 233-34 for a similar example from a mental hospital.

<sup>2</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1949), pp. 126-133 on American emphasis on wealth as a basic symbol of success.

instrumental cycle of motivation, to adapt to a purely expressive cycle. These incompatibilities between the professional educator's ideology and that of the dedicated religious sister on the one hand, and the work-payment structure and the work without material reward structure on the other, are in a sense, a more deeply rooted paradox than can be met elsewhere in total institutions.

So far, some of the salient features of the religious type of "total institution" have been dealt with in the context of the rules of the Sisters of St. Raphael. If we narrow our focus and look at the experiences of an entrant to convent life in the days before the Second Vatican Council, we shall be able to examine the impact of the "totalizing" process upon the young aspirant. This should enable us to see more clearly the contrast between the life which is largely self-managed and the "total" life which is largely managed by others.

Goffman speaks of the self-concept which people have and which is dependent on certain stable social relationships in the home world. On entrance to a convent, the young girl is deprived of the psychic support provided by these relationships. We have already seen how barriers are erected between life inside and life outside. These are most impermeable during the two year novitiate period. This is the aspirant's first full participation in the religious life proper and it is preceded by a six month orientation process called "postulancy" which is

not generally spent at the house of formation.<sup>1</sup> This seclusion from the outside world, which is so strict in the novitiate, disrupts almost completely the role structure of the entrant's life. If the person remains for years in the convent, this loss of former roles is one of the significant adjustment problems which the former nun faces if she decides to leave. Monica Baldwin brings this out very clearly in her two books on this theme, The Called and the Chosen and I Leap over the Wall.<sup>2</sup> With time and patience, these roles can be reconstructed by the former nun or priest; but for the religious professional who perseveres in that way of life, the role-loss can be permanent. In the context of a penitentiary, also a "total institution," Atchley and McCabe speak of the "prisonization" of inmates, that is, the taking on in greater or lesser degree, of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary. This means adopting a set of values oriented to the criminal subculture. These authors quote Donald Clemmer to the effect that "the extent of 'prisonization' was inversely related to success in adjustment following the inmate's release."<sup>3</sup> However, there is no real parity with the convent situation. Acceptance of the

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<sup>1</sup>Constitutions, ##24-32.

<sup>2</sup>Monica Baldwin, The Called and the Chosen (New York: Signet Books, 1958); I Leap over the Wall (New York: Signet Books, 1958).

<sup>3</sup>Robert C. Atchley and M. Patrick McCabe, "Socialization in Correctional Communities," ASR, XXXIII (October, 1968), p. 774.



prison subculture is likely to bring the former prisoner into conflict with the law after his release; there seems to be no reason for thinking that it would be the same for a nun who accepts the convent culture and leaves the religious life later.

Apart from the deprivation of roles, the entrant encounters other processes which are likely to help to destroy the earlier self and construct a new one. For example, the entrants generally make a spiritual retreat lasting from eight to ten days which involves a general confession of the whole past life.<sup>1</sup> Then there is the haircutting, the putting off of secular clothing and being dressed in the religious habit, the instruction in the formal and informal rules, the allocation of the entrant to a cubicle in a dormitory, the loss of one's family name, and the taking or assigning of a new religious name. These things which must be renounced are among those with which a person has become identified in the minds of others and which she uses to identify herself.<sup>2</sup> "These practices undoubtedly operate to strip the individual of her former identity," testifies a sister who has experienced them and has studied them as applied to others.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Constitutions, #31.

<sup>2</sup>Goffman, op.cit., pp. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup>Sister M. St. George Thompson, "Modifications in Identity: A Study of the Socialization Process During a Sister Formation Program" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation abstract, University of Chicago, 1962), p. 6.

Sister M. St. George Thompson relates the novitiate and its practices to four specific mechanisms which, it has been suggested, operate to produce a change in one's professional self: (1) the acquisition of a professional title and ideology, (2) investment, (3) internalization of motives, and (4) sponsorship." Each of these has its counterpart in the novitiate. At her formal reception into the noviceship the future nun receives her professional title; further, to stress the change in identity, she receives the religious habit and a new name. The solemnity of these rites de passage and the visible symbols which keep their memory fresh reinforce the taking on of the new role. The externals, however, are indicators of the internal change and uniformity which the formation process is designed to achieve. "The Novice devotes her time to learning the ideology and to internalizing the values of the religious life."<sup>1</sup> At the end of the novitiate, the young sister is allowed to commit herself temporarily to the life she has learned by making her first vows. This involves her being sponsored by the Mistress of Postulants and of Novices. The congregation itself undertakes a kind of sponsorship of the young sister also and accepts certain obligations toward her. Thus there is a twofold sponsorship: that of an individual and that of the congregation as a whole. "Undoubtedly these processes contribute to the sister's identification with the organization of which she has become a member."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sister M. St. George Thompson, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

There is a curious similarity between Lifton's description of Chinese communist indoctrination and learning the religious ideology as the present writer experienced it. In addition to formal instruction in the scriptural and theological basis for self-renunciation and the vows, much of the ideology was transmitted by informal contact with older novices. They tended to apply to every situation a set of maxims which were a kind of popularization of the ideology for every day use. This is what Lifton meant by the communists' "loading the language," that is, imposing a kind of private language used to interpret the world from a communist viewpoint. He describes it as being "charged with thought-terminating cliches which compress life's most complex problems into brief highly reductive, definitive-sounding phrases, easily memorized and easily expressed."<sup>1</sup> One can recall such maxims as: "There is no such thing as a vacation in the spiritual life," and "The superior can be wrong in commanding, but the subject is always right in obeying." As Lifton says, "These were the start and finish of all ideological analysis;" they were "ultimate terms."<sup>2</sup>

The active acceptance of the religious role as defined in the convent constitutes what Goffman terms "a primary adjustment," which takes place "when an individual cooperatively contributes required activity to an organization and under

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<sup>1</sup>Lifton, op. cit., pp. 429-30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 429.

required conditions, ... he is transformed into a cooperator; he becomes the 'normal,' 'programmed,' or built-in member."<sup>1</sup> But might there not be "rapine in the holocaust" (another example of loaded language) at a later stage? It is conceivable that novices would seek to develop a new personal self by expressing it in dress, in a "singular" way of acting, perhaps in attachment to a particular cubicle or seat in the chapel as "personal territory."<sup>2</sup> This has been provided for. In the pre-Vatican religious life absolute uniformity in dress was insisted on; novices were changed from cubicle to cubicle periodically lest any sense of proprietorship should develop, and they were told not to monopolize anything. Everything they used was standardized, impersonal, and belonged to the congregation and not to them personally. They could not seek support in friendship with others;<sup>3</sup> all, even their former school or neighborhood friends had to be addressed as "sister"; they could not seek their companionship at recreation, but had to spend the time with the group. Goffman, with prisons in mind mainly, speaks of the lack of choice of associates as a contamination of "forced personal contact."<sup>4</sup> This is not suitable language in the

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<sup>1</sup>Goffman, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 243-44, where Goffman describes mental patients' "favorite sitting or standing places" and the significance of a "private room" in the hospital.

<sup>3</sup>Constitutions, #12.

<sup>4</sup>Goffman, op. cit., p. 28.

context of a religious community, but the fact remains that one had to spend much time with people whom one didn't like, or even whom one found uncongenial.

Cognate to this was the complete lack of privacy in the novitiate. Even when the Mistress of Novices was not present, the novice was under the eyes of her companions who were in duty bound to admonish her for breaches of rule. Even without considering informal rules, the formal rules alone left very few actions unregulated; for example, the rule enjoining "modesty of the eyes"<sup>1</sup> was generally taken to prescribe downcast eyes as the ideal. Even at recreation, deportment was not left to the mood of the moment; they had to "refrain from childish levity, immoderate laughter, frivolous words and gestures."<sup>2</sup> That didn't leave much room for spontaneity of any kind. The Chapter of Faults, with the accompanying possibility of being publicly admonished, kept even the smallest items of external behavior and its regulation in the forefront of the novice's consciousness.<sup>3</sup> None of the defences which protect the individual from encroachments of this kind were available. A

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<sup>1</sup>Constitutions, #100.

<sup>2</sup>Constitutions, #119.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. the "demand for purity" in Chinese communist Thought-reform technique. They create what Lifton calls a "guilt and shame milieu" in which all outside influences are defined as evil. The "cult of confession" is another element in the system; one admits, e.g. "bourgeois mentality." Cf. Lifton, op. cit., pp. 423-27.

defensive response was in itself a fault, and hence, another ground for reproach. Passive resistance by sulking, sullenness or any other indication of the rejection of criticism was a sign of unsuitability for the religious life.

The defensive responses which have been referred to would be similar to Goffman's "secondary adjustments." By this term he means "any habitual arrangement by which a member of an organization employs unauthorized means, or obtains unauthorized ends, thus getting around the organization's assumptions as to what he should do and get and hence what he should be."<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that in mental hospitals, army camps, and prisons these are very common. "The prison...has complete control in time and space over the physical activities of the inmate, but psychologically he struggles to make his responses to these demands as minor a fragment of his personality as he can."<sup>2</sup> In the context of a coercive institution such subterfuges which defeat the system are defined as admirable by the inmates. It is quite otherwise in the religious life. There, every rule and every intimation of the superior's wishes is defined as an expression of the will of God, so that perfect compliance is normative and any deviation a fault. Merton remarks that discipline or "an unusual degree of conformity with prescribed patterns of action" can be as highly developed in a religious

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<sup>1</sup>Goffman, op. cit., p. 189.

<sup>2</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 120.

bureaucracy as in the army.<sup>1</sup> I think he fails to appreciate the higher level, and therefore the greater cogency, of the religious motivation. Interviewing members of the Congregation of St. Raphael I have probed for examples of "secondary adjustments" without success. The most frequent reply was that much depended on one's Mistress of Novices or superior, who could greatly reduce the tension inherent in living a totally regulated life. Here is one sister's reply: "All of us who were trained under the rule, we wanted to be obedient, we wanted to do the right thing, and as we had been trained this way, we followed it rather strictly; and as I look back, we shouldn't have, we should have spoken up earlier; we were like sheep."<sup>2</sup>

By means of the devices which we have described, the novice was deprived of the quality of self-direction in her own life. She had to ask permission for all kinds of trivial actions such as writing a letter or borrowing a small article--actions which are done from habit outside. A strict and old-fashioned superior could turn the granting of these small permissions into a very humiliating inquisition. Such practices could reduce an adult to the level of a child and tend to destroy the novice's adult consciousness. As Goffman shows, not merely does the novice strive to submit with a good grace to humiliations inflicted on her by others, but the whole ideology

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<sup>1</sup>Merton, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>Interview material.

of the pre-Vatican religious life impelled her to seek out opportunities for self-abasement; mortification is complemented by self-mortification, restrictions by renunciations,... inquisition by confession."

We have described various elements in the process of the demolition of the self in a religious community. All of this is intended to clear the way for the building up of the institutional model of the self, the total reorganization of the person. Firstly, in sociological terms, stripping the recruit of her past supports is half the work of preparing her to live by the institution's rules. St. Paul calls this "putting off the old man and putting on the new man who is created according to God in holiness and truth." Secondly, Goffman says that "a small number of clearly defined rewards or privileges are held out in exchange for complete conformity."<sup>2</sup> This is not in accordance with the explicit ideology of any religious rule known, though Katz and Kahn would not absolve the Church from the charge of using "carrot and stick principles."<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, there are subordinate positions of limited authority which can be achieved even in the novitiate; and in the larger sphere of the religious life there are superiorships with their perquisites to be acquired. O'Dea calls this "the institutionalized reward

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<sup>1</sup>Goffman, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 134.



system," and goes on to say that in any such promotion system, there is, "as an unintended concomitant of the very necessary stability that institutionalization provides, a tendency to reward in some form everything which does not threaten the status quo."<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, one cannot exclude entirely the notion of punishment as a deterrent to nonconformity. One has in mind here not penances or formal penalties of any kind, but rather difficulty in obtaining permissions and the like, which would be met more often by those who failed to conform adequately to prescribed behavior patterns.

Goffman points out that total institutions often claim to rehabilitate their inmates, that is, reset "the inmate's self-regulatory mechanisms so that after he leaves he will maintain the standards of the establishment of his own accord."<sup>2</sup> He doubts if this is often achieved but thinks that in some religious institutions it may be effective.

It is very important to our subject to form some kind of opinion, in so far as this is feasible, about the effectiveness of the "totalizing" process. There are some valuable insights to be gained from Lifton's study of people who had been subjected to "brain-washing" in China. He makes a distinction between Westerns and native Chinese. In the case of Westerns, he says

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas F. O'Dea, American Catholic Dilemma (New York: Mentor Omega Books, 1958), p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Goffman, op. cit., p. 71.

that if the long-range success is to be judged by the subjects' being won over to a communist view of life, then the brain-washing program was a failure. "Only one out of twenty-five people studied could be regarded as a truly successful convert."<sup>1</sup> In general, there was a deliberate rejection of communism. Nevertheless, he reports, they retained "unconscious influences" from their experience. They were still engaged in inner combat with the ideas they had had pressed upon them, charged as they had been with powerful emotions. The spirit of Christian communism could never be completely exorcised. It had narrowed the outlook of some and broadened that of others. He mentions two priests in whose cases brain-washing had "broadened their personal vistas and enlarged their sense of identity." Others had narrowed their focus, were defensive and afraid of exposure to life. Former prisoners also retained some other residues in the shape of fear of a repetition of their trials mingled with guilt feelings in which Lifton could detect "a deeply repressed desire for such a repetition as a means of atoning for a troubling sense of guilt."<sup>2</sup> He could also discern a therapeutic effect. They felt that they had benefitted and been "emotionally strengthened, that they had become more sensitive to their own and others' inner feelings, and more flexible and confident in human relations." Lifton explains that "they had undergone

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<sup>1</sup>Lifton, op. cit., p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 238.

the ultimate in physical and spiritual pain, and had yet survived; they had been forced to hit rock-bottom in their imposed negative self-analysis, and yet emerged with some measure of self-respect."<sup>1</sup>

Still more interesting is Lifton's report on how Chinese subjects had fared. With them, thought-reform had been much more successful. Of course, they had been predisposed to accept it by the immense appeal of nationalism, the force of the whole Chinese environment, the sense of belonging to Chinese society as an in-group, and the general appeal of their own culture. He detected three kinds of response from Chinese intellectuals: (1) "Zealous converts" felt "genuinely reborn along with their society" and looked on thought-reform as "fine and ennobling." These were the young--adolescents and university students. China was their world, and their future in it seemed unlimited. (2) "Resisters" felt suffocated by thought-reform and considered it "bad and coercive." These were middle-aged people, especially those who had been exposed to Western influence. Yet, the experience had left them full of self-questioning and guilt feelings for not throwing in their lot with the majority of Chinese people. (3) "Adapters," who were partly but not wholly won over to the program. Their greatest concern had been to cope with a dreadful experience, weather the storm, and find a place in the new Chinese society. At times,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

they had tried to behave like a "zealous convert," but without a great deal of inner commitment; they were really intent on finding a *modus vivendi*. We shall return to these three types of response shortly.

What does Sister St. George Thompson think of the effects of socialization into the religious life? Her opinion is based on personality data, both projective and self-report, which she gathered from all the sisters of her community in their first, third, fifth, and eighth year of their training.<sup>1</sup> These years were chosen as representing pivotal points in the program. Broadly speaking, these sisters were typical members of "Catholic middle class urban families who live in areas in which the community conducts schools."<sup>2</sup> All had completed high school and thirty one per cent had had some university education. They tended "to be more intelligent, more confident and secure, and more composed than women in general." Sister St. George found that the Vow sisters, who had completed their novitiate training, had "become more withdrawn, more serious, more submissive, and more shy" than the postulant group. They appeared to be "less sure of themselves, less confident and more excitable." This change toward greater excitability was tentatively explained as being, perhaps, a "function of the psychological stress of a period of preparation for the making

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<sup>1</sup>Sister M. St. George Thompson, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

of vows."<sup>1</sup> The data supported the assumption that the congregation had imparted to the young sisters "the set of values and attitudes encompassed within the role of a religious."<sup>2</sup> The researcher sums up the training thus:

A diverse group of young women enters the Postulate. These women must go through the narrow gates of the Novitiate and they emerge more similar to each other than when they entered. However, having been given five years of personalizing their new ideals and role, the variation returns and differences among Vow Sisters more resemble differences among Postulants.<sup>3</sup>

Her data lead Sister St. George to believe that "strength of character, intelligence, and to a certain degree, ego strength are valued characteristics when aspirants to her congregation are being assessed." Secondary qualities which are valued are: seriousness, self-confidence, conservatism, and composure. "With respect to their origin the data indicate that those who enter possess the valued characteristics to an above average degree. The program does not develop them." She would hold, then, that the Formation Program does not, or perhaps cannot modify a basic, core structure of personality. The training aims at altering "the individual's view of herself and providing her with a new value system."<sup>4</sup> It seeks to do so by

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

giving the young sister a more accurate self-concept aided by a situation in which wearing a mask is difficult, and by inculcating in her the Christian ideals which sisters undertake to practice. It seems, then, that the formation process achieves these limited objectives in varying degrees with different sisters; as to the permanence of the results the data do not afford any evidence.

To return briefly to Lifton's three categories of response, we may speculate a little aided by interview material. As regards the religious life, as Katz and Kahn observe, "the person enters of his own accord, can leave of his own accord."<sup>1</sup> In view of this, I would suggest that almost all entrants to the convent are "zealous converts" of varying degrees of intensity. With novitiate experience, some become "resisters"; they cannot meet the demands of the life; they are encouraged to withdraw and they do so. Of course, some "zealous converts" also leave for health or other reasons. It is also possible for a "zealous convert" to become an "adapter." Such a girl genuinely wants to be a nun and to serve others by teaching, for example. She knows that the years of formation are not representative of the religious life as a whole and that life as a fully fledged sister is less restricted. Why not, then, endure a few years of rigidity and inflexibility in view of the opportunities for real service later on? Such an "adapter" will

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 142.

conform to all or most novitiate practices, but she will have her own opinion of some of them and will remain mistress of her own thoughts. Several sisters admitted that there was a considerable element of this sort of thinking in the novitiate. This, I would say, has been increasingly the case in the post-war period when Sister Formation and the updating of the religious life have been topics for discussion. In earlier times, I suspect there would have been very little of the "adapter" attitude. For me this response is summed up in a comment by one of my own contemporaries about a rather rigid Director of Scholastics: "I'd put up with the devil himself for a couple of years."

One must always bear in mind that Lifton's three responses were those of unwilling participants in a total institution. In the religious life, the exposure to the system and the mortification involved is voluntary. This is not the time nor the place to enlarge upon the religious principles underlying all these ascetical practices. Lifton could detect some gains even from communist brain-washing; it is no surprise that Sister St. George should suggest that "the process of self-mortification may have a therapeutic effect which persons other than religious might stand to profit by."<sup>1</sup> Much of modern Western culture, she thinks, and especially mass communications systems provide the young adult with the means of masking the

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<sup>1</sup>Sister St. George Thompson, op. cit., p. 15.

real self and thus prevent her from arriving at any clearcut concept of the self. The religious life doesn't allow such masking. To persevere in it, the young girl must "accept a way of life which allows only those traits which are personally hers to differentiate her from other sisters."<sup>1</sup> The self is stripped of its masks and is thereby freed to achieve the spiritual and psychological growth of which the person is capable.

We have now seen how "total" the Congregation of St. Raphael could be, and in many convents was. Speaking of the old system, a sister had this to say: "For me, personally, it was very intolerable....It was certainly something that was not free and spontaneous and flowed from the inside, really....It was you have to do this, you have to do that, at this time, in this place, and with these people, and it was deadening--it was not alive....But now we are taking this on ourselves and it's springing from within and it's happy and spontaneous and more joyful, and it's like it's ours; it's not like something being imposed from without." And again: "I really feel the General Chapter brought us up to the twentieth century in many ways."<sup>2</sup> This is a useful transition to our consideration of "detotalization."

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Tape-recorded interview.



## CHAPTER III

### "DETOTALIZATION:"

#### ITS DESIGN AND PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION

At the outset, even in the context of "detotalization," it must be said that the ideal of religious perfection remains the same, though there are some changes of emphasis. The practices, however, by which religious professionals sought to achieve it in the past, the life-style which was thought conducive to it and the types and methods of the apostolate, are all being reassessed. In effect, this is what Vatican Council II called for. The Sisters of St. Raphael took this to mean scrutinizing the governmental structure of their congregation, its goals, its rules, its customs, and the assumptions about human behavior which underpinned them. We have seen how the Institute on "The Problems That Unite Us" of Summer, 1966, gave rise to much serious study on the part of many spontaneous groupings of the rank and file. Governmental authority in the congregation showed corresponding concern. It initiated a process of self-study with official sanction, which took eighteen months to complete and was methodically planned and executed.

The self-study operation was placed under the direction of a priest-professor of religious history. This ensured the

services and insights of a friendly outsider, who, being a member of a religious order and a teacher, would be attuned to the problems of a teaching sisterhood. On the other hand, he was sufficiently uninvolved and unconnected with the congregation to be an impartial guide uninfluenced by any possible pressure groups within the community. To provide further counselling, a Board of Consultants was empanelled containing some distinguished names, not all of which were Roman Catholic; for example, Robert McAfee Brown of Stanford University was one of the members. Under the director, there was a steering committee of six sisters, and a 225 member Task Force divided into six commissions. These commissions rendered very valuable service in drawing up documents on such topics as: Formation, Apostolate, Personal Growth and Development, Government, Community Life, and Communication.<sup>1</sup> The entire congregation of over 2300 members took an active part in the self-study by "regional and area dialogs, special group studies, interviews, pilot projects and research."<sup>2</sup> An important part of the search for information was the participation by the sisters in two surveys carried out by means of questionnaires. One of these was a nationwide one administered to all sisters in the United States under the auspices of the Conference of Major Religious Superiors of

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Rita Mary Benz and Sister Rosemary Sage (ed.), Self-Study For Renewal, 1968, pp. v-xiii.

<sup>2</sup>Benz and Sage, op. cit., p. v.

Women's Institutes (CMSW). The second was the congregation's own very searching questionnaire drawn up by a professional sociologist under the advice and direction of a committee of sisters. We shall be making use of these two sets of data in the partial form in which they have been made available for this study.

In the light of the reports of the six commissions, published under the title Self-Study for Renewal and the privately circulated community "Newsletter", we shall see how far the present-day ideology and emerging new life-style of the sisters departs from the former theory and practice, which justified Goffman in putting convents into the same category as prisons.

As I see it, the ideology underlying the pre-Vatican life-style of nuns can be reduced to three main points: first, fear of the world as a danger to the soul; hence, hostility to it, flight from it, and the erecting of barriers to keep the sisters from contamination by it. Allow as little as possible of the world into the convent; limit to a minimum the occasions for sisters to go out into it. Second, make the sisters devout and holy by standardizing their outward behavior which is closely bound up with their interior dispositions. Standardization is achieved (a) by depriving sisters of all the symbols and expressions of individuality; (b) by the "common life" narrowly understood. Cause the sisters to work in common, eat in common,

take recreation in common, sleep and waken at prescribed times (ignoring, for example, changes in the order of day suggested by the invention of electric light and the growing complexity of modern life); (c) by organizing for them a daily round of religious practices which would build up a new self to fill the void caused by the dismantling of the old self. Third, a hierarchical system of centralized authority is the only one capable of implementing points one and two, thus sanctifying the sisters and achieving the aims of the congregation in its educational work.

The reports of the six self-study commissions reveal a significant departure from the traditional ideology of Roman Catholic religious orders. Nowhere is this plainer than in the outlook upon the world which these reports express, and in which they take the decrees of Vatican II as their headline. The world is no longer perceived primarily as dangerous to virtue and, therefore, to be fled. It must not be abandoned to the secularists. The Church's mission is to be the light of the world; to perform this task she must be acquainted with the characteristics of the modern world. Religious sisters, in particular, must not remain marginal to society, staying out on the periphery of what is happening.<sup>1</sup> Instead, they must locate themselves in the midst of the action; they must understand what is going on so that they may speak to the world in terms of

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<sup>1</sup>Benz and Sage, op. cit., pp. 88, 108.

current happenings. The sisters explicitly recognize that in the past they have been too remote from life, that they have grown up in an unreal atmosphere of otherworldliness which is a barrier to communication with the people of the world, even with those who are practicing Christians. They have now become aware that Christ's own apostolate, as distinct from His special times of withdrawal and contemplation, was carried on by interaction with His fellowmen. "He was totally present to His environment --to the social problems and the conflicts of His time."<sup>1</sup> He did not set Himself apart, but plunged into the mainstream of life. The sisters of St. Raphael, being dedicated to continuing Christ's mission to mankind, must do the same by their concerned presence in the midst of men. Their main work may continue to be the education of children and young adults, but they must not confine themselves to interaction with these age groups, nor within the walls of a classroom.

All of this is being currently put into practice on a trial basis. Even during the years of formation, when locking out the world was most extreme, a policy of openness has been adopted. For example, the sisters now make it their ideal "to foster and encourage deep personal relationships with men and women."<sup>2</sup> This is to be done by having young nuns attend co-educational colleges or universities, and by arranging

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

opportunities for them to meet and work with different age groups, religions, and all segments of society. They are also encouraged to maintain warm family ties. For the professed sisters the barriers against the world are also down. Nowadays, if one visits a sister in the convent, there is every likelihood that one will be invited to join the sisters in their dining room for a meal; similarly, sisters can now eat outside the convent, in private houses or in restaurants. They are permitted to attend the theater and other cultural activities. All this is made easier by their freedom, now, to wear the ordinary dress of professional women, without a veil and in colors, if they so wish. The latter freedom in the matter of dress has important implications for my next purpose, which is to show that this congregation has given up seeking to eliminate the individuality of its members by standardizing them.

In this connection, the mere setting up of a commission to plan for "personal growth and development" speaks volumes. This was never an explicit concern of the community in the past. Now it is seen that the sisterhood should aim at a fuller development of each member so that she can grow in her humanity, enhance her worth, and become more a person. It is expected that this individual development will contribute a richness and diversity to the Community."<sup>1</sup> It is a positive obligation on the community's part "to create conditions where a person can

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

grow and develop, where a person can find self-fulfillment."<sup>1</sup> This personal growth will be achieved "by dynamic living of the vows in community, through vital deep relationship with Christ and with His members within the sisterhood and in the worldwide community." It is also experienced in the sister's "professional life, in cultural and leisure time activities, and in the physical and psychological helps which are available."<sup>2</sup>

This new emphasis on personalism and individuality is an implied criticism of past practice. At times, this becomes explicit; for example, one practical recommendation was, "Gradually eliminate from our attitude and practice the near-worship of regularity as an end in itself."<sup>3</sup> The context makes it clear that regularity here means not something akin to punctuality, but standardized behavior according to the letter of the rule. The unwelcome effects of "totalization" on the individual nun are acknowledged, though, of course, that term is not used. "Certain structures and methods have contributed to the perpetuation of an adolescent approach to life."<sup>4</sup> Intense research has led the commission on "formation" to conclude that "there are definite indications of immaturity and irresponsibility in the attitudes and behavior of many sisters,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Benz and Sage, op. cit., p. 67.

both young and old. On occasion we seem to lack adequate maturity to be self-directing in a responsible manner."<sup>1</sup> This is one reason why techniques of training must be changed. Another rests on the changed character of the young girls who are likely to join the congregation in the future. Even at present, they come to the religious life from a person-oriented world; they are "vital, sincere persons of these times,... they are the instant generation, barren of historical sense and traditional import,...they are mobile, critical of institutions, skeptical of 'airtight' programs, cool and detached, sober and unsentimental, perceptive of phoniness in any form." "Personalism and existentialism, the philosophical stresses of the twentieth century society and culture, have helped mold these young women."<sup>2</sup> To meet their needs, and through intellectual conviction that the new way is better, the commission can claim that the sisterhood is "already moving away from a single set pattern of formation." Flexibility, diversity, and creativity are to be the prevailing ideas from now on, so that each aspirant "may experience what is most conducive to personal growth." The personalism in which they have grown up no longer permits the sacrifice of the individual to the institution.

This sort of thinking is very much in line with the insights of modern social psychology. For example, Katz and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-58.



Kahn make a distinction between organizations processing social objects as against those which process physical objects. The sisters of St. Raphael, of course, must be looked upon as an organization which processes people in both its internal and external activity. The authors make two points which are very relevant to our argument. First, in a "people-processing" organization, the internal procedures and forms "must attract and motivate" the entrants who are to be trained or treated. This has clear implications for the vocations' problem which we must take up later. The second point is that the great degree of insulation from market place pressures enjoyed by "people-molding organizations" justifies and strengthens popular demands that they should be "guided by norms of somewhat gentler, more individually oriented nature" than are found in object-molding organizations which are sensitive to market pressures.<sup>1</sup>

It is not extravagant to claim that the new approach to formation amounts to a volte-face from what has been described earlier. The following list of practices to be avoided in the formation of sisters indicates a fundamental change in the concept of the religious life for which novices are being trained:

Prolonged peer grouping, regimentation and excessive external conformity, isolation from the world in which we really live, segregation from heterosexual contacts, lack of integration and coordination in the different phases of personality

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 116-17.

development, too much theory without a corresponding practical application and inadequate, insufficient forms of responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

The new approach and spirit will, in time, pervade the whole community; even now, professed nuns who desire to live in its light are being given every opportunity to do so. Sisters are enjoying a freedom to manage their own lives to a degree inconceivable before. During the experimental year ending in August, 1969, most convents of the Congregation of St. Raphael are being run by collegial authority and have no formal superior. Small groups of sisters are also experimenting with apartment living which takes them away almost completely from the convent atmosphere, though they return there during school hours, if they are teachers. As one sister expressed it: "It's a liberation from a very closed environment. Personally, it's a liberation from being locked in, literally; for me, it's an opening up to the world. I wanted to relate to other adults and just be with ordinary people as they go about their ordinary lives, and I feel much more relevant this way."<sup>2</sup>

At the moment, the rules and constitutions of the congregation are under revision. The new rule, when it comes to be written, will express chiefly the Gospel values and its concept of perfection; it will be inspirational and not legalistic; it will not attempt to force all into the same old

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<sup>1</sup>Benz and Sage, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Tape-recorded interview.

mold.<sup>1</sup> Other changes subtly remind one of some of Goffman's pinpointing of "totalizing" techniques; for example, it is now recommended that there be no "sudden break from former life patterns"<sup>2</sup> when a girl enters the convent; necessary rules are to be kept to a minimum; uninhibited communication is to be allowed; all are to admit that the right of thought and expression are inalienable; the young girls who enter the convent are to be listened to; they are to be given plenty of freedom to make real choices, even if they make some mistakes and fumble around a bit. All of these measures have opposites which we noted when outlining the old "total" system.

Turning now to the third element which was discerned in the old style of the religious life, we said that it viewed a centralized hierarchical system of government as the only feasible one for its purposes. When such a form of government is reinforced by a theology which gave to lawfully constituted authority the prerogative of "the grace of office," and of being the mouthpiece by which the will of God could be known, one can understand how effective it was in the past in procuring a high degree of uniformity and close adherence to the details of the rule as written. Modern theology of ecclesiastical authority regards it as a form of service which "deserves to be respected

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<sup>1</sup>Benz and Sage, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

when it protects the freedom of the children of God."<sup>1</sup> Nobody has a monopoly of the will of God. Rather, theology now sees the governors and the governed together engaged in a search for the will of God; by putting their ideas, ideals, insights, and prayers together, they seek to approximate to what God would wish them to do in any given set of circumstances. The sisters' commission on "government" perceives the present clamor for freedom as a cry for obedience "as it should always have been practiced [and by implication, wasn't], i.e., with consideration for the dignity and responsibility of the mature, dedicated Christian."<sup>2</sup>

To secure this, the sisters have now turned to the writings of Pope John XXIII for some norms of government. One of the Pope's principles was that a governmental structure had to take into account the historical background and culture of those being governed, and that they should have a structure which would be suitable to the time, place, and circumstances of the people involved. For a wholly American congregation such as the Sisters of St. Raphael, this would appear to justify a form of government incorporating democratic principles in preference to the traditional methods of religious communities. The important concepts here are "collegiality" and

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<sup>1</sup>George H. Tavard, The Church Tomorrow (New York: Image Books, 1966), p. 70.

<sup>2</sup>Benz and Sage, op. cit., p. 6.

"subsidiarity."<sup>1</sup> As applied to the religious life, they mean that authority should never be exercised at a level higher than is truly necessary for the common good of the institute. In practical terms, then, the running of a house of the Sisters of St. Raphael at the local level becomes a team effort. Under the old system, the superior and a few advisers did all the decision-making and the administration; it was their show, they were running it; the rest of the community's part was to obey and ask no questions. This type of government, apart from the fact that it failed to enlist the personal commitment of each individual sister, is no longer sensible, because with the growth of specialization and professionalism, no one person and no small group of advisers has all the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions. The specialized knowledge of all sisters must be pooled, if sensible decisions are to be made which will engage the loyal cooperation of all. Hence, the experiments with collegial, collective government which are going on today. As the commission remarked, "One-man rule works fine if problems are simple and responses are simple--but it is inefficient and ineffective when society has advanced beyond its elementary forms."<sup>2</sup> Even the old terms used, such as "superior" and "subject," seem psychologically unfortunate. They imply a relationship which is not well calculated to call

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 131 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

forth the kind of individual initiative and responsibility which are necessary to respond to the complex challenges of the modern world. We shall return later to this problem of collegial rule.

Let us see now how the sisters have built an experimental government which, applying the principle of "collegiality" and "subsidiarity," is sensitive to the needs and opinions of the rank and file of the community. The old structure was very simple. The supreme head of the community was the Superior General, elected for a term of six years with a possible renewal for a second term.<sup>1</sup> She was elected by the General Chapter which also elected the four Councillors General for a similar term. Without going into details, the General Chapter contained a disproportionate number of "line" officers who were ex officio delegates. Provincial superiors, their councillors, and all local superiors were chosen by the Superior General and her council. The Provincial superior, in turn, selected the two local councillors to advise the local superior in each house. This was a tight hierarchical structure with all control vested in the hands of a very few people. There was a minimal element of representative government; there was no formal provision for discussion or decision making at any level by persons other than the "line" of hierarchical officers. The one body containing some popular delegates, namely the Chapter, was convened mainly for electoral purposes, though it could treat of "the graver

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<sup>1</sup>Constitutions, #198.

affairs pertaining to the state of the whole Congregation."<sup>1</sup> But, outside of meetings necessitated by elections, it could be convened "for no other cause,... without the permission of the Sacred Congregation."<sup>2</sup> This meant that the problems of the community could be regularly aired only once every six years, and then by a body largely composed of current superiors together with some elected delegates who could represent the views of their electors very imperfectly through lack of the democratic processes of canvassing for votes and of meetings with constituents.

The Superior General was obliged to visit, in person or through a representative, every house of the congregation once every six years. Similarly, a Provincial superior was required to inspect each house in her province at least once a year. On the occasion of such visitations, each sister used to have an interview with the higher officer, but there was no provision for a general meeting of all members of a house where sisters could bring the weight of public opinion to bear, and where they might derive courage from numbers. Besides, as the flow of information was controlled by office-holders, this system was a very inadequate method of getting "feedback" from the rank and file. As we shall see from the data, communication among the sisters of St. Raphael could scarcely be reckoned good.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., #243.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., ##249, 311.

We shall turn now to the new experimental system of government which was developed by the commission on "government" and approved by the General Chapter of 1968. The aim was to change an organization which totally controlled the individual member into one which, in theory at least, is very largely controlled by the ordinary members. Basically, the sisters see government as having legislative, executive and judiciary functions.

There has to be legislation: general norms have to be given to the whole institute. These norms should act as main directives, clear guide lines, also as a liberating force achieving a deep union with the Spirit. They should be a source of unity with respect for diversity. Then there should be organs in the community who are in charge of executing these laws. Their concern should be the application, not the making of the laws. Finally, there should be some judicial organ in every institute to resolve doubts about the interpretation of laws and to redress injustices if and when they happen.<sup>1</sup>

At all three levels the General Chapter has tried to do this. We should note first that what follows was enacted by an old style General Chapter elected by the limited suffrage which we have described, and that during this first year of experimentation, Fall 1968 to Fall 1969, the highest officials of the congregation are those chosen by the old style Chapter. Their titles, of course, are different. The Superior General is now known as the President; her two senior Councillors are now

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<sup>1</sup>Ladislaus M. Orsy, S.J., quoted in Benz and Sage, op. cit., p. 138.



called the First and Second Vice-Presidents.<sup>1</sup> The former Third Councillor is now Vice-President for Public Relations. Also remaining in office are the Secretary and the Treasurer General. The congregation's recent publication, Kinetics of Renewal, provides a complete role description for each of these officers. It is outside our terms of reference to explore these thoroughly; our concern is to show how the ordinary sister in the ranks has her rights protected and can influence by her vote and her opinion all these governmental levels of the congregation.

#### The Legislative Level

The supreme law-making body is an entirely new assembly called the Senate. It is composed of both non-voting and voting members. The non-voters are there to provide expert and up-to-date information to the voters. These "idea" people are: (1) the Secretary and Treasurer General and the Vice-President for Public Relations; (2) the Chairmen of the congregation's five Standing Committees.<sup>2</sup> In the future, these will be appointed by the Senate; (3) the twelve Chairmen of the National Commissions which "study the effectiveness of the congregation in serving the needs of the world and of individual sisters, initiate programs of action, and direct the implementation of

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<sup>1</sup>These three are known collectively as the Executive Officers.

<sup>2</sup>These deal with: Liturgy, Elections and Rules of Order, Constitutions and By-Laws, Steering and Agenda, and Finance.

these."<sup>1</sup> These commissions are largely composed of various numbers of elected personnel. The methods of election vary, but they involve self-nomination of candidates and the giving of the vote to all those sisters whose work lies in the specialized areas concerned. The commissions deal with the various levels of education, elementary, secondary, and higher, religious education, minority groups, fine arts, special works, personnel assignment, finance, communications, experimentation, and research.

The voting members of the Senate are: (1) the three Executive Officers (who may soon be elected by universal suffrage); (2) the nine Regional Directors. These are the former Provincial Superiors. It is worth noting that the four previous provinces have now been replaced by nine regions in the interests of decentralization and better communication. In these smaller units, the role of the Regional Director is explicitly defined as concern for the "person" of each sister, to be shown by availability for consultation. As she is to be elected by the sisters of the region for a two-year term, she should be well aware of both collective and individual problems; (3) two senators to be elected by the sisters of each of the nine regions; (4) fifteen at-large senators elected by sisters voting without regard to regions.<sup>2</sup> This seems to be a very

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Rita Mary Benz and Sister Rosemary Sage (ed.), Kinetics of Renewal, 1969, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-70.

democratic and representative college of voters and legislators. Now that candidates can be declared beforehand and meet their constituents for discussion of policy, the views of the rank and file should carry great weight. The Senate will meet annually, every August, for a wide-ranging assessment and discussion of community affairs. This is quite a change from the unrepresentative old Chapter which was grudgingly permitted some discussion every sixth year.

### The Executive Level

The supreme executive body is called the Administrative Board. Its functions are:

(1) to coordinate the work of the National Commissions mentioned above. The Board will be kept constantly informed of projects and developments by the Commissions, and keeping the overall interests of the congregation in view, will decide upon priorities within the boundaries of policy decisions handed down by the Senate.

(2) The Administrative Board will function mainly through the two committees which largely make up its membership. The first of these is the Community Council, meeting monthly, which comprises the three Executive Officers and the nine Regional Directors. This body replaces the former Superior General's council and is required by the present provisions of Canon Law. The second is the Council of Commissioners, also meeting monthly, which includes as members the three Executive Officers

and the twelve full time National Commissioners. The Administrative Board will meet in plenary session once a quarter, when its full membership will include the Secretary and Treasurer General, the Vice-President for Public Relations and some coopted lay advisers. At such quarterly sessions it has a decisive vote on major issues.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The Administrative Board holds a veto over the activities and projects of the National Commissions and over the acts of the Community Council which are not mandatory according to the current requirements of Canon Law. If it cannot achieve consensus on a major issue, a simple majority vote is decisive.<sup>2</sup>

Here again, we have a highly representative body whose personnel is largely elected by popular vote and which has provisions for expert advice from sources outside the congregation. It has twenty-five members who are also either voting or non-voting members of the Senate; this provides for linkage and coordination between the transactions of the two bodies. All of these have the vote on the Administrative Board.

### The Judicial Level

Here, the supreme body is called the Board of Appeals. It is made up of fifteen members chosen by the Administrative Board from a list of names submitted by the candidates

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<sup>1</sup>Benz and Sage, Kinetics of Renewal, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

themselves or by others. The Board will be governed in its choice by considerations of having all specialized areas of the community represented. It elects its own chairman. Any sister or group of sisters who has a grievance against another, whether she be an officer or a rank and file member, may make an appeal to the Board outlining the complaint and naming the person or persons allegedly at fault. The sister charged is formally notified and invited to present her version of the affair. Each party may choose a sister-advocate to represent her. The chairman of the Board of Appeals then appoints a panel of three members of that body (one named by the plaintiff, one by the defendant, and the third by the chairman) to hear the case. All evidence and the final decision is tape-recorded and filed. The panel of three is at liberty to call on expert advice "to settle points of law, civil and canon, matters of mental and physical health, or any other specialized knowledge required for the rendering of a sound and equitable verdict."<sup>1</sup>

Types of cases envisaged are: sister against sister; sister against household or a group in the household; faculty against sister-principal or vice versa; sister against sister-principal of school, or vice versa; household against intruding principal; sister against official of the congregation, or vice versa.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

This is a big improvement on past practice. Formerly, the only redress open to a sister with a grievance was, in practice, an appeal to the Provincial Superior at the time of a visitation. Most of these major superiors, in the past, were guided by the principle that authority must be upheld at all costs. Often, then, the result was that the aggrieved person was fobbed off with a few soothing (and maddening) words. .

At present, it is almost impossible to find out how these new structures are working. When the new Senate meets for the first time in August, 1969, one of its chief tasks will be to assess the experiments which are going on at the moment. This will be a big challenge.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND THE DATA

There are two sets of data which have been drawn for the purpose of this study. It must be stressed at the outset that neither set of data was collected with the notions of "total institution" and "detotalization" in view. We are, therefore, engaged in a secondary analysis of data which were gathered for an entirely different purpose. This is one limitation to what can be gleaned from them; there are others which will be explained later.

#### The CMSW Questionnaire

This has been briefly mentioned before. It was a nationwide survey of the opinions and attitudes of religious sisters carried out under the auspices of the Conference of the Major Superiors of Religious Women (CMSW) in April, 1967. In all, there are about 181,000 sisters in the United States and 160,000 of these answered the questionnaire which was drawn up by a research committee under the direction of Sister Marie Augusta Neal, SND, of Emmanuel College, Boston. The questionnaire comprised 649 items; it was divided into twelve sections whose titles were as follows: (1) Statement about Beliefs;

(2) Vows and Apostolate; (3) Structural Changes Introduced; (4) Attitudes; (5) Census Data and Community; (6) Current Conditions: Communication and Community; (7) General Opinions; (8) Opinions on Future Plans; (9) Social Assessment; (10) Assessment of Structures; (11) Proposals on Structure; (12) Conclusions. The underlying purpose of the survey is expressed in these words:

Youth as well as the adult world is listening and watching for the relevant responses to the invitation to renew [the religious life]. Major superiors are faced today with serious decisions, decisions that should be made with a rich understanding of resources and needs. In this survey, we have an opportunity to share with them our views, our desires, our anxieties and concerns.<sup>1</sup>

Since the frame of reference of this survey was quite different from that of the present thesis, we cannot expect it to answer questions which we would like to have asked, but which, in fact, it did not ask. We are obliged, therefore, to select carefully from the data whatever seems to throw light on our topic. Not all of the data emerging from this extensive survey were communicated to the participating communities, but only such a selection in such a form as might be useful to a General Chapter planning renewal. Hence, we have not been able to draw upon raw data but on data already processed with an end in view other than ours.

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from the Research Committee of CMSW introducing their Sisters' Survey, April 1, 1967.



Part five of the CMSW survey deals with "Census Data and Community." These thirty items elicit information about the respondents' background. Reading over the schedule, one notices items like age, father's ethnic background, number of generations the family has been in the U.S., father's educational attainment, mother's and nun-daughter's educational attainment, respondent's occupation and status in her religious community, and so on. We have here, a considerable amount of information about the environmental factors which contribute much to the individual's physical, mental, moral, emotional, and social development. Added to genetic endowment, these factors have helped make the individual sister what she is, have contributed to the formation of her attitudes, and must, to some extent, underlie her orientations. It is proposed to treat some of the salient background factors as independent variables for the purpose of this study.

Part four of the CMSW questionnaire was devoted to "Attitudes." It consists of a series of statements with which sisters are asked to agree or disagree. To the ordinary reader, it looks like a heterogeneous collection of judgmental statements thrown together haphazardly. Actually, we have here the elements of several attitude measurement scales, such as, the Neal Scale which measures change, non-change, value and interest orientations; an Anomie scale; an "F Scale" adapted from Adorno to measure authoritarian trends in the personality; a

Pre-Vatican theology orientation scale; lastly, a Post-Vatican theology orientation scale. The first three of these scales which we propose to use, will be explained in some detail later.

Apart from these background and attitude items, we also have access to the responses to 72 questions which deal with structural conditions, present and proposed, current conditions in the social life of the community and its apostolate, formation procedures, and the like. We shall select from among these the responses which illumine out topic most.

The way of looking at this body of data which has been adopted is as follows. The background characteristics of the sisters are to be used as independent variables which influence the sisters' responses to the various questions about aspects of the religious life. But, between these independent variables and the responses which are the dependent variables, come, as intervening variables, the various orientations and attitudes measured by the three scales. The scheme is shown on the following page.

There is one severe handicap in using the data. While the independent variables have been cross-tabulated with the three scales, neither they nor the scales have been cross-tabulated with each other. The implications of this may be illustrated as follows: let us take, for example, the 61-70 age group among the sisters. We know that 20 per cent of it are non-change in orientation, that 21 per cent are very high

Independent VariableIntervening VariableDependent Variable: Response

Father's Occupation

Sister's Age

" Educational  
Attainment" Status in  
Community" Present  
Occupation

Change-NonChange

Interest-Value  
Orientation

Anomic Trend

Authoritarian  
TendencyNeal  
ScaleAnomie  
ScaleF  
Scale

Answers to questions e.g.

"Do you feel that your  
religious community is  
sufficiently engaged in  
work for the poor?"

Answer:

Yes

No

Don't Know

scorers on the Anomie scale, and that 23 per cent are very high authoritarian personality scores. What we don't know is: whether the sisters comprising the 20 per cent who have the non-change orientation are the same people who make up the 21 per cent with very high Anomie scores, or whether they are the same people who are very high in authoritarian personality scores. The sisters of St. Raphael do not possess the raw data which would provide the answers to such questions. One can of course make intelligent guesses at the answers. A great deal more research based on complete control of the raw data, when certain variables could be held constant, and, perhaps, the technique of multivariate analysis used, would be needed to attempt answers to the deeper issues touched upon by the CMSW survey.

#### The St. Raphael Self-Study Questionnaire (SRSQ)

For convenience, we shall refer to this as the SRSQ. As has been said, it was drawn up by a professional sociologist advised by a committee of sisters. It comprises over a thousand items and parallels the CMSW survey in many areas. The last returns were received on September 10, 1967, which means that about four months had elapsed since the CMSW survey. It was hoped that a comparative study of the two sets of data might be made, but this was found impracticable for reasons to be explained later. Again, the raw scores were not accessible for this study, but simply the percentages which responded in

various ways to the different items. The most unfortunate thing about this questionnaire is that section seven, "Background Data," which provides the kind of information suitable for use as independent variables, is not regarded by the sisters as reliable. Here, one has to accept the sisters' opinion, especially since there are sound reasons which support it.

For one thing, the SRSQ, unlike the CMSW survey, was an operation internal to the congregation. The processing of the data would be done by the sisters themselves; hence, the guarantee of anonymity was not at all as reassuring as that for the nationwide survey whose processing was done by strangers. Merely the postmark on the envelope might reveal from what convent the completed questionnaire came. If this were a house where there were only a few sisters, a little inspired guesswork could reveal the respondent's identity. Section seven, to which we have alluded, could help in the guesswork, since it was to give the age, region of assignment, rank in the community and so forth. Some sisters are convinced that this section was incorrectly filled in, at least by some sisters. Some of the items in the same section were also ambiguous and could lead to bad answering. For example, when the sisters were asked what was their present work assignment, some of the categories provided as possible answers were not mutually exclusive, e.g., "elementary teacher or administrator" and "high school teacher or administrator" overlaps with "administrator non-superior."

Again, in the section on rank, "perpetually professed non-superior" overlaps with "perpetually professed former superior." A sister could, in perfectly good faith, put herself in the wrong category in these cases.

The upshot is that the only background variable which the sisters are inclined to trust is "age." The distribution of answering by age groups was made available in the case of certain questions; some use will be made of these. Actually, as we shall see, age is very likely the most important independent variable.

## CHAPTER V

### THE THREE SCALES

#### The Neal Scale

This was developed by Sister Marie Augusta Neal, S.N.D. for her doctoral dissertation on attitudes toward change in the Roman Catholic Church on the part of a sample of Boston clergy. Her experimental study was developed in 1959, before the announcement of the Second Vatican Council; it was published in 1965.<sup>1</sup> In explaining the structure of the scale I shall speak in the context of the Sisters of St. Raphael.

We are chiefly concerned here with change and non-change orientations, terms which Sister Neal doesn't define in her book but she does use "a literal or conservative orientation to change,"<sup>2</sup> as synonymous with them. At any rate, the basic ideas seem simple enough. I am taking a "non-change" orientation to mean an attitude which favors the retention of the status quo, and a "change" orientation to mean an attitude which is critical

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Marie Augusta Neal, Values and Interests in Social Change (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. iii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 163.

of the status quo and wants progressive social change,<sup>1</sup> i.e., an openness to change, if it is perceived to be necessary or useful. Sister Neal thinks that to divide the human race into two categories based on mere attitude to change is too simplistic an approach. People must choose or reject change for some objective reason if they are acting rationally, or perhaps for some subjective reason based on a deeply rooted attitude, if they are acting somewhat less than rationally. Hence, her scheme postulates another pair of categories indicating the motives leading to the acceptance or rejection of change, namely, the categories of interest and value. She calls this the value-interest dimension.<sup>2</sup> As she sees it, when a person is confronted with a problem situation involving the decision either to promote or reject change, the decision reached depends very largely on how the person defines the situation. A change-oriented person defines it very differently from the person opposed to change. Furthermore, within these categories of change and non-change, the justification put forward for the decision tend to be very different; some justify their attitude on the basis of values, while others base it on interest. Values are "widely shared conceptions of the good" in universalistic terms; interests are "desires for special

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (New York: Signet Books, 1958), p. 403.

<sup>2</sup>Neal, Values and Interests in Social Change, pp. 7-10.



advantages for the self, or for the groups to which one belongs" in particularistic terms.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Sister Neal arrives at four types of response to a situation which could involve change: (1) a value-change orientation (abbreviated VC); (2) an interest-change orientation (IC); (3) a value-non-change orientation, (VNC); and (4) an interest non-change orientation, (INC). Each of these derives from the way the actor defines the situation.

Neal then went on to design a questionnaire which would measure these types of orientation. Her procedure is fully outlined in her book.<sup>2</sup> Briefly, since "the outlook of any group...is determined and reflected to an important degree by the cliches they constantly use,"<sup>3</sup> she decided to use cliché-like statements as the items in her scale. She tells how she pretested them and determined their power to discriminate between the orientations before she used them in her study of the Boston clergy.<sup>4</sup> The items which proved to have the greatest discriminatory power were included in the CMSW survey. The Neal scale, then, consists of twenty statements expressing attitudes to change, values, and interests. In the schedule they appear separately, that is to say, mingled with other items

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<sup>1</sup>Neal, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Chapter 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 45-53.

designed to measure different attitudes; they are not recognizable as forming a special scale. They appear as an appendix to this thesis.

Let us here take just one example: "When you come right down to it, it's human nature never to do anything without an eye to one's own profit." This is one of the "interest" indicators. Sisters were asked to mark whether they (i) disagreed very much, (ii) disagreed somewhat, (iii) neither agreed nor disagreed, (iv) agreed somewhat, or (v) agreed very much with each such statement. Sister Neal describes the scoring system as follows:

Scores were determined by rating each response from -2 to +2 depending on whether the subject strongly disagreed, disagreed somewhat, neither disagreed nor agreed, agreed somewhat, or agreed very much. These scores were summed for each of the four variables, values, interests, change and non-change. Then the absolute distance between the change and non-change scores and the value and interest scores was determined. These two numbers became the subject's final score, each marked according to which of the two variables concerned was more positive.<sup>1</sup>

Of the total number of sisters who turned in questionnaires, 2239, there were eight per cent who were unclassifiable because of incomplete answering or an absolute zero score. In the study of the Boston cerlgy, there were five per cent who could not be classified for the same reason. The following table shows the distribution of the orientations in the

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<sup>1</sup>Neal, op. cit., p. 52.

Congregation of St. Raphael and also among the Boston clergy for purposes of comparison.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES ON THE ORIENTATION TO VC, IC, VNC,  
AND INC FOR THE SISTERS OF ST. RAPHAEL AND FOR  
THE SAMPLE OF BOSTON CLERGY

Orientation	Percentage	
	Sisters of St. Raphael	Boston Clergy
VC	68	35
IC	13	11
VNC	6	21
INC	5	28
Unclassified	8	5
Total	100 (N=2239)	100 (N=259)

This sisterhood shows very high change orientation percentage, and that mainly for value reasons. The figures for the clergy show much more conservatism; this is understandable, because the survey was carried out before the announcement of Vatican II, whereas the figures for the sisters were recorded in 1967 when the invitation to change had been given and justified for reasons of value import. Besides, as we shall see, the sisters are a very well educated body; college education has been acquired by 47 per cent, while a further 33 per cent have been to graduate school. The corresponding figures for the

clergy are 83 per cent and 13 per cent. But whereas the priests' studies were confined almost exclusively to philosophy and theology, and thus were rather narrowly conceived seminary courses, it is highly unlikely that this is so for the sisters who teach a variety of subjects at all levels of education. The nuns' education seems to have been more liberal, in Cardinal Newman's sense, more oriented towards the humanities and the sciences than that of the secular clergy. Newman says that such a liberal education leads to an "enlargement of mind," and a broadening of sympathies, in contrast with a professional or utilitarian education. This may help to account for the greater percentage of value and change orientations among the sisters. Speaking of the traditional formation of priests, Houtart says that it has always taken the line that it was "better to 'conserve' what the Church had and not permit any experimentation or change for fear of the risk."<sup>1</sup>

Before we go on to the application of the Neal scale, we should note that some reservations have been expressed about it. Smelser, in his introduction to Sister Neal's book, questions her restriction of "interest" almost exclusively to the concept of self-interest. He also feels that the four types of orientation to change "overlap conceptually with her dependent variables,"<sup>2</sup> namely, the specific evaluations of events and issues in the modern world on the part of the clergy.

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<sup>1</sup>Houtart, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>Neal, op. cit., p. viii.

For my own part, in working with these categories I was forced to wonder whether these orientations, which are ideal type constructs, really exist in the world in sufficiently pure form to be distinguishable. There are clear conceptual distinctions between change and nonchange orientations and between value and interest orientations. The data bear this out for change and non change; but when one comes to the value-interest dimension, one finds VC distinguished from the other three more often than not. In other words, when the sisters are asked a question where change is the main issue, the discrimination is clearly along that dimension. This is much less the case when the question involves a clear idealistic value issue; then the VC group and the INC group are at polar positions, while the IC and VNC are in intermediate position, but closer to the INC position. Of the two dimensions, then, the change-nonchange one seems to be a more powerful discriminator than the interest-value dimension.

### The Anomie Scale

The Research Committee of CMSW borrowed in its entirety the instrument for measuring anomie devised by McClosky and Schaar and published in the American Sociological Review.<sup>1</sup> The scale consists of nine items cast into the form of statements which the respondent is asked to agree or disagree with

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert McClosky and John H. Schaar, "Psychological Dimensions of Anomy," ASR, XXX (February, 1965), pp. 14-40.

"somewhat" or "very much" or to remain uncommitted. The items were designed to express manifestly one or another dimension of the anomic mentality. By various tests the joint authors satisfied themselves first, "that the scale items do, in fact, embody the feelings and beliefs associated with the concept," and second, "that the anomie scale correlates well with measures of other attributes which one would expect to find associated with anomie, e.g., alienation, bewilderment, pessimism, feelings of political impotence, and political cynicism."<sup>1</sup> From a survey of previous studies, McClosky and Schaar report that earlier investigators "have uniformly reported that anomie is highest among sectors of the population: old people, the widowed, the divorced and separated, persons of low education, those with low income and low prestige occupations, people experiencing downward social mobility, Negroes and foreign born, farmers and other rural residents."<sup>2</sup>

It was in relation to change and its possible effects on people that the CMSW included this scale in their questionnaire. Durkheim showed how economic and marital change can so upset the equilibrium of human life as to lead to states of "disturbance, agitation, and discontent which inevitably increase the possibilities of suicide."<sup>3</sup> He called these states

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<sup>1</sup>McClosky and Schaar, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Emile Durkheim, Suicide (New York: Free Press, 1951), p. 271.

"anomie"; for him it meant a condition of de-regulation or relative normlessness in a social group. Such a weakening of restraints gave men a feeling of wandering through an empty space with no landmarks from which to take a bearing and set a course. Parsons links increase in anomie with change, saying that it may be "a consequence of almost any change in a social situation which upsets previous established definitions of the situation, or routines of life, or symbolic associations."<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the "detotalization" of a "total institution" would match Parsons' outline of one possible influence in the direction of anomie. He briefly characterizes anomie itself as "the state where large numbers of individuals are to a serious degree lacking in the kind of integration with stable institutional patterns which is essential to their own personal stability and to the smooth functioning of the social system."<sup>2</sup> Sister Neal thinks that "religious orders, at this moment of change in the Church, could very well become anomic systems,"<sup>3</sup> characterized by apathy, a feeling of helplessness allied to a conviction that the orders are no longer relevant to the work which they were founded to do.

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<sup>1</sup>Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory, (New York: Free Press, 1966), p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>3</sup>Neal, "Sociology and Community Change," loc. cit., p. 43.

McCloskey and Schaar hold that the fundamental logic of all sociologists when dealing with anomie is the same. They tend to speak of a social condition which leads to a psychological state which, in turn, leads to deviant behavior. The two authors think that more attention needs to be paid to the middle link in the chain, namely, the psychological state. Thus, Merton speaks of "a society in which there is an exceptionally strong emphasis upon specific goals without a corresponding emphasis upon institutional procedures" for achieving these goals. "The technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, becomes typically preferred to institutionally prescribed conduct," and as this attenuation goes on, "the society becomes unstable and there develops what Durkheim called 'anomie' (or normlessness)."<sup>1</sup> McClosky and Schaar, however, focus more on the psychological state. They hold that "anything which interferes with a person's ability to learn the norms of a society, or which weakens one's socialization into its central patterns of belief, must be considered among the determinants of anomie."<sup>2</sup> Such factors might be found in a person's social setting, or in his personality characteristics, or in both. The joint authors concentrate on the personality factors in formulating their scale. We shall briefly outline their indicators of anomie, introducing the scale items where appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup>Merton, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>McClosky and Schaar, loc. cit., p. 20.



They divide into three categories the personal factors which hamper learning and socialization thus leading to anomic feelings. They are:

(1) Cognitive factors which limit a person's ability to learn and understand. People of low intelligence, awareness, alertness and educational attainment have this difficulty. It begets bewilderment and anxiety. "In modern rapidly changing complex societies, such incapacities may be especially important determinants of anomic feelings."<sup>1</sup> One of the items is:

"Everything changes so quickly these days that I often have trouble deciding what are the right rules to follow." This expresses bewilderment and difficulty in interpreting the world and guiding one's life.

(2) Emotional factors that tend to lower one's ability to perceive reality correctly. The authors list a variety of psychic states which "warp perception, interfere with cognitive functioning, or render one very uncomfortable in the face of ambivalence and ambiguity." These are: inflexibility, anxiety, low ego strength, and generalized aggression which shows itself in hostility to others and poor personal relationships. We shall have to content ourselves with a few words about each, introducing the indicators where appropriate.

Inflexibility leads people to cling to their established schemata of perception and cognition, to interpret everything

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

only in terms of these, and to reject new ideas and ways.

"They crave order, fixed patterns, clear and simple alternatives."<sup>1</sup> To quote our authors, "Blind to the continuities and stabilities, and hypersensitive to the novelties and instabilities, such persons cannot perceive that...a remarkably stable core of values and beliefs has endured."<sup>2</sup> The following scale item seems to take in a lot of such inflexible attitudes: "I often feel that many things our parents stood for are just going to ruin before our eyes." They are also discernible in "People were better off in the old days when everyone knew just how he was expected to act," and in "What is lacking in the world today is the old kind of friendship that lasted for a life time."

Anxiety is included by the authors for two reasons; first, because it can impair cognitive functioning; second, because anxiety tends to become all-pervading. People who are anxious about themselves, their health, their personal worth, their reputation, tend to project their fears and doubts onto the world. They tend to perceive it as ambiguous and treacherous--in a word, anomic. The following two items seem to express such anxiety: "With everything so uncertain these days it almost seems as though anything could happen," and "Everything changes so quickly these days that I often have trouble deciding what are the right rules to follow." Here we see that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

a single item can indicate more than one of the emotional states which the authors regard as being related to anomie.

Low Ego Strength is defined by the authors as "generalized feelings of personal inadequacy and self-contempt."<sup>1</sup> These are found in people who "feel psychologically maimed and crippled and ... unsightly in their own eyes and those of others." Lack of self-confidence, poor capacity for enjoyment, and a pessimistic view of the world are typical of them. They find a scapegoat in society and, in blaming it for their unhappiness, they judge it to be lawless, disorderly and cruel. This is close to seeing it as anomic. Here are some scale items to indicate this complex: "I often feel awkward and out of place," and "It seems to me that other people find it easier to decide what is right than I do."

Generalized aggression is an emotional state which reveals itself in hostility and poor personal relationships. McClosky and Schaar note that persons high in hostility "tend to be judgmental and severe towards others and deficient in their capacity for sympathetic and trusting responses; their personal relationships are often tense and unrewarding."<sup>2</sup> They evoke a like response from others which exacerbates their emotional state. They can easily attribute their unsatisfactory social life to the defects of society and define it as uncertain,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

unworthy of trust, unsatisfactory--in short, as anomic. The item, "What is lacking in the world today is the old kind of friendship which lasted for a life time," seems to express the poor personal relationships and distrust of society. Hostility and severity of judgment appears in "The trouble with the world today is that most people really don't believe in anything."

(3) Substantive beliefs and opinions is the third personal factor listed by McClosky and Schaar as likely to hinder learning and socialization. Individuals whose beliefs differ widely from those current in their social setting are not likely to be fully accepted into the community. Extreme beliefs are a rejection of the beliefs of the majority, and by implication a rejection of the people who profess them. They are often a barrier to communication with others; they can hinder socialization into the beliefs and practices of the majority. The result is isolation in mind if not in body and an imperfect awareness of what other people believe and value. As Gordon Allport observes, "Ignorance tends to make a person an easy prey to rumor, suspicion and stereotype."<sup>1</sup> In the present situation of the religious life, a sister holding strong traditionalist views could easily, through ignorance of the intellectual and theological underpinning of modern trends, confuse her own ignorance of the opposite position with the conviction that the holders of such opinions have no standards or norms. More

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon W. Allport, op. cit., p. 220.

liberal sisters might appear to her to be devoid of values and to be cloaking laxity under the disguise of renewal.

So much for the composition of the scale and some indication of the theory underlying it. The Research Committee of the CMSW quantified the responses to the nine items as follows: a score of +1 was assigned to (1) Disagree very much; +2 to (2) Disagree somewhat; +3 to (3) Neither agree nor disagree; +4 to (4) Agree somewhat; and +5 to (5) Agree very much. The score of each sister was then determined by simple addition. The raw scores were not available for this present study. How the data were processed for the 160,000 sisters who participated must now be explained. When the totals for all respondents had been calculated, they were arranged in order of magnitude from the lowest to the highest scores. Then the complete array of scores was divided into five equal parts, each containing 20 per cent of the sisters. The pentachotomized parts were then labelled as follows: (1) Very low in anomie; (2) Low; (3) Middle; (4) High; and (5) Very high in anomie. In this way, each religious congregation could compare its own anomie score distribution with the national distribution for sisters. For example, if a congregation found that its anomie scores distributed 20 per cent into each category, the distribution would be very similar to the national. But, if 30 per cent of the sisters' scores were in category (5), then the congregation would be aware that the incidence of a high degree of anomie

among its members was above the national average for sisters. The following table shows the distribution for the sisters of St. Raphael.

TABLE 2  
DISTRIBUTION OF ANOMIE SCORES

Category	St. Raphael Cong.	All U. S. Sisters
	%	%
Very low	28	20
Low	22	20
Middle	18	20
High	19	20
Very high	12	20
N=2239	100%	100%

We can see immediately that the Sisters of St. Raphael have relatively few cases of very high anomie scores, an average number of low, middle, and high scores and a relatively large number of very low scores.

For convenience in cross-tabulation, and to make the results easier to read and understand, the anomie scores were also trichotomized as follows. The list of national scores was divided evenly into thirds; the resulting thirds were labelled low, middle, and high. Again a community could compare its distribution with the national, according as a category

contained more or less than thirty three and one-third of the distribution. The following table shows the trichotomized distribution.

TABLE 3  
PERCENTAGES OF LOW, MIDDLE, AND HIGH ANOMIE SCORES

Category	St. Raphael Cong. %	All U.S. Sisters %
Low	45	33 $\frac{1}{3}$
Middle	28	33 $\frac{1}{3}$
High	27	33 $\frac{1}{3}$
N=2239	100%	100%

From this table it emerges even more clearly that the Congregation of St. Raphael has less of an anomie problem than the national average.

What is one to think of the Anomie Scale and its use in this survey? First, one must remember that anomie is a state of society, not a state of an individual; it is easy to forget this while reading McClosky and Schaar. It is very difficult to measure a societal state directly. One can only "get at" anomie by concentrating on the causes and effects of that condition in the individual, as Yinger points out.<sup>1</sup> This means

<sup>1</sup>J. Milton Yinger, "On Anomie," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, III (Spring, 1964), p. 154.

that we have to establish certain indicators of anomie and measure them as they exist in individuals, as our two authors have done. One develops a scale as an instrument for doing this; here a further difficulty arises, in that "there is no recognizable group of anomics to which one might turn to validate the scale."<sup>1</sup> Then, we must never forget, in our analysis, that the individual measures are used simply as an index of the group property. Nettler accuses the two authors of confusing the "Durkheimian anomie referring to a societal state and the allegedly related personal states."<sup>2</sup> She dislikes the use of the adjective "anomic" to qualify "feelings" and "persons." While she concedes that the portrait of the anomic individual is clarified by the wealth of correlates described, she holds that "the validity (meaning) of their 9 item scale remains in question."<sup>3</sup> She doubts especially "their assumption of an inverse relationship between level of cognitive functioning and anomie." In fact, her view is that "Srole's Anomia and the present Anomy scale are really measures of despair."<sup>4</sup> Leo Srole himself sharply criticizes the McClosky and Schaar on the grounds of biased unrepresentative sampling, but he confines

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<sup>1</sup>McClosky and Schaar, loc. cit., p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Gwynn Nettler, "A Further Comment on 'Anomy'," ASR, XXX (October, 1965), p. 762.

<sup>3</sup>Nettler, loc. cit., p. 762.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 763.



himself to this aspect of the technical design and nowhere attacks the scale itself, which is our chief concern.<sup>1</sup>

In relation to the CMSW survey, one other point must be made. One wonders if a scale developed at a different time and place and designed for use with a different population is suitable for use with nuns whose experience of the world and life-style are so unlike, say, those of a cross-section of the population of Minnesota.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, we must receive the anomie statistics from the CMSW survey with considerable caution. While we acknowledge that the Sisters of St. Raphael are below the national average in high anomie scores by individual sisters, we don't know what percentage of a society or social group needs to have high anomie scores in order that it be considered anomic. Whatever it is that the Anomie Scale measures, whether it be normlessness or despair, I think it is true to say that it indicates a psychic disturbance of sufficient gravity to warrant notice and attention. A congregation of sisters of whom 27 per cent have high scores on this scale has a real problem which could injure social relationships within it. And it is almost certain that change is the cause, or perhaps, the occasion of this manifestation. To quote Eugene Kennedy, "Unhealthy people whose

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<sup>1</sup>Leo Srole, "A Comment on 'Anomy'," ASR, XXX (October, 1965), p. 762.

<sup>2</sup>Curtis R. Miller and Edgar W. Butler, "Anomia and Eunomia: A Methodological Evaluation of Srole's Anomia Scale," ASR, XXXI (June, 1966), p. 406.

inadequacy or pathology was previously masked by rigid control in institutionalized convent living are disintegrating in an atmosphere of freedom, trust and uncertainty."<sup>1</sup> This could be true of at least some sisters in this congregation.

### The Authoritarian Personality Scale (F Scale)

The third scale with which we are concerned is a modification of the F (for Fascist) Scale developed by T. W. Adorno and his fellow-researchers, which is fully dealt with in their joint book, The Authoritarian Personality.<sup>2</sup> Whereas the final version of the F Scale contained thirty items, the CMSW scale was a selection of twelve of these items. Naturally, the CMSW committee chose their items to serve their own particular population and purpose which were different from those of the inventors of the scale. On theoretical grounds Adorno isolated nine variables or personal traits derived from psychoanalytic theory which earlier studies of the project had indicated were basic to the personality of the prejudiced, anti-democratic, fascist-inclined individual. Then he constructed scale items in the form of positive statements of opinion and attitude which respondents would be asked to agree or disagree with. These scale items were designed to read like ordinary innocent

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene Kennedy, M.M., "The Women Who Are More Than Poor," The Critic, XXV (December, 1966), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>T. W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, D. J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, The Authoritarian Personality (New York: Harper Bros., 1950).

opinion-attitude questionnaire items, but they were actually indicators of deep-seated trends towards fascism.<sup>1</sup> The ideas underlying the scale items were drawn, in the main, from records of clinical discussions, answers to projective questions, and materials arising from Thematic Apperception Tests. The choice of items, of course, was guided by theoretical considerations. Hypotheses were formulated about the ways in which some deep-seated personal need might express itself in some opinion or attitude which was dynamically, though not logically, related to authoritarianism or anti-democratic trends.

In this way, then, the nine variables which we mentioned were identified, each of which was thought to be related functionally to various manifestations of prejudice and authoritarianism. The thirty items of the scale were indicators of these nine variables, certain items being comprehensive enough to indicate the presence of two or three of the variables. Here is how the CMSW Research Committee describes their own modification of the scale:

The F Scale describes an authoritarian tendency which allows the person having this attitude to be over-submissive to authority, no matter what the command, than is normally expected or than the situation demands, while at the same time, being over-arbitrary in commanding when placed in an authority position. This characteristic combines over-submissiveness to legitimate authority along with an aggression against defenseless people, a tendency to superstition, cynicism, fascination with power,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

over-curiosity about sex, and a resistance to looking at one's own inner motivation, plus a pseudo-toughness and a high stress on conventional norms.

This measure was included because current studies indicate that an over-stress on discipline can generate this kind of orientation under certain conditions. Such persons have a proneness for fascism, that is, an easy acceptance of arbitrary strong command. This kind of orientation is inimical to modern Christian needs.<sup>1</sup>

We shall now take the nine variables which Adorno isolated, or rather the eight which are featured in the CMSW adaptation of the F Scale and show what facet of the authoritarian personality they are designed to measure, associating the scale items with their appropriate variable. We should note that a single item often indicates more than one variable.

(1) Authoritarian submission.

Item 151: "Young people sometimes get rebellious ideas, but as they grow up they ought to get over them and settle down."

Item 160: "Science has its place, but there are many important things that must always be beyond human understanding." (Indicates superstition also.)

Item 169: "The best teacher or boss is the one who tells us just exactly what is to be done and how to go about it."

Item 172: "No sane, normal, decent person would ever think of hurting a close friend or relative."

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<sup>1</sup>CMSW Research Committee, "Explanation of the Meaning of the Scales," (Mimeographed material privately circulated, October, 1967), p. 2.

These items avoid any overt political overtones, yet they do convey submission, desire for a strong leader, and the subservience of the individual, all of which are aspects of fascist dictatorship.<sup>1</sup> These statements were so designed that agreement would indicate not merely "a realistic balanced respect for valid authority, but an exaggerated, all-out, emotional need to submit."<sup>2</sup> Item 169, for example, leaves no role to the subject except carrying out instructions like an automaton without any exercise of rational thought. It grossly exaggerates the role of the superior. Item 160 indicates an inclination to relinquish needlessly the rational struggle to investigate and understand the world and a reverent submissiveness to some vague power or force outside human experience. Adorno remarks that "complete submissiveness toward 'supernatural forces' and the readiness to accept the incomprehensibility of 'many important things' strongly suggests the persistence of infantile attitudes to parents, that is to say, of authoritarian submission in a very pure form."<sup>3</sup>

(2) Authoritarian aggression.

Item 145: "What youth needs most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and to fight for family and country." (Also indicates "Power and 'Toughness'.")

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<sup>1</sup>Adorno et al., op. cit., p. 231.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 220.

Item 154: "Sex crimes, such as rape and attack on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped or worse." (Also expresses the "Sex" indicator.)

Item 163: "Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked and feeble-minded people."

Item 166: "If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off." (Also indicates "Conventionalism" and "Anti-intracception.")

The remarks of Adorno on this variable are very enlightening when taken in the context of people living in a "total institution." The individual who has been forced to give up basic pleasures and to live under a system of rigid restraints, and therefore feels victimized, is likely to resent others who succeed in having their pleasures and to take revenge on them if the situation allows it. This is the active component of authoritarianism, as submission was the passive one. The conventional passive submitter who never opposes accepted authority will have a tendency to oppose and condemn the non-conformists who are less submissive.<sup>1</sup> Adorno suggests that by a process similar to "scapegoating," hostility which was aroused by authority figures is displaced onto non-authority figures.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Adorno et al., op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 233.

This type of authoritarian is psychologically unable to attack the authority figures who are the real source of his unhappiness and by an inner necessity is drawn to attack non-authority figures. Hence this variable should be highly correlated with authoritarian submission. Such people would tend to be over-arbitrary in commanding, if placed in authority.

### (3) Power and "Toughness".

Item 157: "People can be divided into two classes: the weak and the strong." (Also indicates "Stereopathy.")

Item 145: Shown on p. 106.

Exaggerated toughness is closely related to a fascination with power and an over-emphasis on its place in human relationships. There is a tendency to dichotomize which Allport associates with prejudice.<sup>1</sup> People are categorized and stereotyped as strong-weak; dominant-submissive; leader-follower; in-group-out group. The subject appears to admire power in others, is inclined to submit to it, and at the same time is afraid of the weakness implied by such a course. This power complex involves contradictory elements which may at different times show themselves.<sup>2</sup> A possible solution to the individual's dilemma suggested by Adorno is to align himself with powerful figures and thus share in the reflected glory of that power, while, at the same time, gratifying the urge to submit. Anybody with

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon W. Allport, op. cit., p. 376.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 233.

experience of the religious life will recognize the personality type which meets its needs by becoming a "satellite" or "hanger-on" of a power figure.

(4) Conventionalism.

Item 178: "More than anything else, it is good hard work which makes life worthwhile."

Item 166: Shown on p. 107.

Adorno quotes the hypothesis that susceptibility to fascism is a middle-class phenomenon where the culture approves this idea. Those who conform most to middle-class norms will be the most prejudiced. But the kind of conventionalism which Adorno wanted to measure was where the conformity resulted from external social pressures and from identifying with those who hold power in the community and with their prescribed standards. He is not concerned with the type of conservatism which arises from the individual's personal convictions and formed conscience. In short, the items aim at uncovering a rigid absolutist adherence to conventional values which does not proceed from any deeply felt convictions of the person but which is necessary to keep in with the power structure. This is also an aggressive, illiberal type of conservatism which seeks to force others to conform also. Item 166 shows the urge to apply the conventional norm to everybody; less clearly, item 178 is a maxim of universal application. One can easily imagine a person who accepted it wanting to impose a life of strict hard work on others.



### (5) Anti-intraception.

Item 175: "When a person has a problem or a worry, it is best for him not to think about it but to keep busy with more cheerful things."

Item 166: Shown on p. 107.

Adorno defines this variable as "an attitude of impatience with and opposition to the subjective and tenderminded which might well be a mark of a weak ego."<sup>1</sup> The extremely anti-intrceptive individual is against exploring his own feelings because he is afraid of what he might find, or that his emotions might get out of control. He is against "prying," against concern with people's feelings and thoughts; dislikes "unnecessary talk." Instead, he would keep himself so busy as not to have time for sensitive inquiry or talk. This attitude is fundamentally opposed to the dignity of the human person which it devalues into an object, while it over-values inanimate objects which it invests with emotional appeal.<sup>2</sup> In the context of the religious life, this could lead to an unquestioning glorification of rules and regulations, an unwillingness to examine one's own motivation, and a failure to face up to real problems. Both items listed above express this attitude very clearly.

### (6) Projectivity

Item 148: "Nowadays when so many different kinds of people mix

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 235.

together so much, a person has to protect himself carefully against catching an infection or disease from them."

By this mechanism the suppressed impulses of the subject are attributed to, or projected onto other people who then become an object of hostile feelings. Adorno says that most of the items of the F Scale contain an element of projectivity; "they involve the assumption that judgments and interpretations of fact are distorted by psychological urges."<sup>1</sup> Whereas Adorno's scale contained five measures of projectivity, the CMSW adaptation contains only one. This is an example of how the Research Committee tailored their scale to meet the needs of their own population.

(7) Sex.

Item 154: Already listed under "Authoritarian aggression." Whereas the Adorno scale had three items to measure this exaggerated concern with sexual "goings-on," the CMSW survey contains just this one item which can indicate sexual turbulence as well as authoritarian aggression. This again shows the close connection and mutual influence of these variables upon each other. A strong urge to punish sexual offenders may suggest that the subject has repressed sexual urges which have to be strictly controlled. In passing, I may say that I wouldn't consider this a startling discovery about any human being! However, as we saw earlier, this item may also indicate an

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

aggressively punitive attitude toward those who fail to conform with authoritarian norms which the subject embraces completely.

(8) Superstition and Stereopathy.

Items 160 and 157 are the indicators of these two variables respectively. Item 160 has been already listed under "Authoritarian submission." Item 157 was treated under "Power and 'Toughness'."

(9) Destructiveness and Cynicism.

The final form of the F Scale contained two indicators under this heading. Neither was used in the CMSW adaptation of the F Scale.

The F Scale of Adorno and his colleagues has been attacked and defended quite a lot in social-psychological journals. For example, it has been criticized because all the items which go to make up the scale are negative, i.e., are statements, which, when agreed with, indicate authoritarian attitudes. Chapman and Campbell say that this wording of the items in a single direction is a weakness, inasmuch as the "authoritarian" tends to agree with them and the "non-authoritarian" to disagree. There may, therefore, be some systematic variance which does not proceed from the content of the items, but rather from a "response set" of acquiescence.<sup>1</sup> Jackson, Meisick, and Solley likewise think that agreement with such items "may represent merely a passive and acquiescing response."

<sup>1</sup>Loren J. Chapman and Donald T. Campbell, "Response Set in the F Scale," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LIV (January, 1957), p. 132.

They go on to make a further criticism which could be levelled at any scale which is made up of statements, namely, that disagreement with an item may or may not indicate disagreement with its content; the respondent may simply be expressing rejection of the style or the choice of words. A more serious criticism is that if one end of an attitude continuum is defined by agreement with a set of positive statements, it does not follow that the other end of the continuum can be safely defined as disagreement with these same statements. Both ends should be defined by agreement with positively-framed unidimensional items.<sup>1</sup>

Sundberg and Bachelis raise an interesting point. They quote T. S. Cohn as reporting that college students could fake an unprejudiced score when asked to respond to the F Scale as highly educated intelligent people would, and that they could also fake a prejudiced score when asked to respond in the manner of unintelligent manual workers. The authors' own research project found that fifty-two elementary psychology students could fake a prejudiced response, but could not fake an unprejudiced one.<sup>2</sup> In our particular survey, I think it is

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<sup>1</sup>Douglas Jackson, S. J. Meisick, and Charles M. Solley, "How Rigid is the 'Authoritarian'?", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LIV (January, 1957), p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>Norman D. Sundberg and Warren D. Bachelis, "The Fakability of Two Measures of Prejudice," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LII (January, 1956), p. 142.

safe to assume that sisters were not consciously trying to fake in either direction.

In support of the F Scale, Gage, Leavitt, and Stone see a definite merit in its use of unidirectional items. Their study showed that "the psychological meaning of acquiescence resembles that of authoritarian conformity, low ego strength and low intelligence." Thus, in their view, the use of items inviting acquiescence from respondents with authoritarian tendencies probably "contributes positively, and in a psychologically meaningful way to the validity of the F Scale."<sup>1</sup> Weima gives it as his opinion that acquiescence response set did not, to any considerable degree, impair the validity of Adorno's F Scale.<sup>2</sup>

The scoring of the F Scale was done in the same way as has been described for the Anomie Scale. The pentachotomized table is presented on the next page, and subjoined immediately is the trichotomized distribution.

It is particularly clear from the trichotomized table that the Congregation of St. Raphael is much below the average in high F Scale scores. As used by the CMSW Research Committee,

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<sup>1</sup>N. L. Cage, George S. Leavitt and George C. Stone, "The Psychological Meaning of Acquiescence Set for Authoritarianism," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LV (September, 1957), pp. 101-102.

<sup>2</sup>J. Weima, "Authoritarianism, Religious Conservatism and Sociocentric Attitudes in Roman Catholic Groups," Human Relations, XVIII (August, 1965), p. 236.

TABLE 4  
DISTRIBUTION OF F SCALE SCORES (PENTACHOTOMIZED)

Category	St. Raphael %	All U.S. Sisters %
Very Low	33	20
Low	25	20
Middle	17	20
High	13	20
Very High	12	20
N=2239	100%	100%

TABLE 5  
DISTRIBUTION OF F SCALE SCORES (TRICHOTOMIZED)

Category	St. Raphael %	All U.S. Sisters %
Low	50	33 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
Middle	30	33 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
High	20	33 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>3</sub>
N=2239	100%	100%

the modified F Scale focuses more finely upon authoritarian submission and aggression, to a lesser extent on conventionality, fascination with power and anti-intraception. Again, one has some doubt about its suitability for use with a population so different from any of those upon whom it was previously tried. From the content of the scale items, we have a reasonably good idea of what a high score means. We cannot be quite so sure about the meaning of a low score, because there seems no question of a continuum of which authoritarianism is one end.

## CHAPTER VI

### HYPOTHESES: EXPECTATIONS FROM THE DATA;

### BACKGROUND VARIABLES AND THE SCALES

In this study we are using empirical data in the hope that by secondary analysis we may be able to shed light on the reactions of sisters to an on-going process of change. Obviously all sisters will not react in the same way. At the outset of this study we had certain expectations of how different sisters, or categories of sisters, in so far as it is possible to categorize them, might react to the "detotalization" process. Here, one must specify beginning and end points for the process of change. To speak sensibly about change, Parsons notes "there must be an initial and terminal pattern to be used as points of reference."<sup>1</sup> Our initial point is the old "total" system which we have described. The terminal point is what existed at the moment of filling in the CMSW questionnaire--substantially the old system but now informed by a completely different mental attitude. The decree for the renewal of the religious life had gone forth, widespread discussion was taking place in the aftermath of the Institute on "The Problems That

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<sup>1</sup>Talcott Parsons, The Social System (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 483.



Unite Us," quite revolutionary experimentation in dress had already started and it was clear to all the sisters that a very fluid situation was developing in which every element in the old way of life would be examined. The very items of the questionnaire made this very plain.

Adorno analyzes personality as "an organized system of needs."<sup>1</sup> Human needs influence the opinions, attitudes, and values which are held by individuals. Therefore, human needs, through the medium of personality, exert this influence. He does not suppose that personality is static and fixed unchangeably at birth. There is a basic genetic equipment, but this develops under the influence of the social and physical environment of the growing human being, especially during the child's earliest years. It follows that the early socialization process is crucial to the development of various personality types; though this is not to deny that the personality can be modified by experiences later in life.

When formulating our expectations about the sisters' reaction to change, we made the assumption that the response to change would depend upon the personality of the sister, which, in turn, is largely determined by her social, economic, and educational background and the kind of life experience which she has had before the onset of change. Hence the importance of the background variables which go so far in determining the

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<sup>1</sup>Adorno et al., op. cit., p. 5.

personality structure of the individual. The three scales provide clues to certain personality traits which would incline people to respond in characteristic ways to change. Two of the scales have a close, inbuilt relationship to change, i.e., the Neal Scale and the Anomie Scale. The third scale is a measure of authoritarian tendencies in the personality which are likely to find unwelcome the relaxation of controls implied by "detotalization." We shall now set forth briefly our expectations as to how the background variables are related to the three scales.

#### Age and the Three Scales

The older a sister is, the more thoroughly she is likely to have internalized "the institutionalized patterns of action and relationship"<sup>1</sup> of the old system, and the more likely she is to experience strain in a situation of change. The older the sister then, the less likely is she to be change oriented. The older she is, the more of herself she will have invested in the old system; therefore vested interest should incline her to an interest rather than a value orientation.

We have seen that Parsons associated anomie with almost any change in a social situation which upsets previously established definitions of the situation. The older the sister, the more likely she is to be deeply "grooved" in life

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<sup>1</sup>Parsons, The Social System, p. 491.

according to the old rules and in attachment to old symbols like the religious habit. Change will disrupt her life-pattern more than it will in the case of a younger sister, and the more likely she is to feel de-regulated and normless, i.e., higher on the anomie scale.

I should expect the older age groups who were reared by less well-educated parents, close in spirit to European peasant origins, to exhibit more signs of authoritarian personality.

#### Father's Occupation and the Three Scales

The occupation of the father largely determines the socio-economic level of the family, and is generally correlated with his level of education and degree of exposure to "Americanization." It is anticipated that if we consider the continuum unskilled manual laborer--professional, the nearer the father's occupation is to the professional end of the continuum, the more open to change his nun-daughter will be.<sup>1</sup>

McClosky and Schaar have already been quoted as saying that, among others, anomie has been found highest among old people, persons of low education and of low prestige occupations. Hence, it is expected that there will be an inverse ratio between high status occupation of the father and high anomie scores among the sisters. Daughters of farmers may be expected to stand highest in percentage of high anomie scores.

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<sup>1</sup>Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor (New York: Anchor Books, 1963), p. 209.

Higher occupations generally go hand in hand with higher education. Higher education exposes the family more to Americanizing influences. Better educated people who are more Americanized and better off financially are more likely to rear their children in a more liberal atmosphere and under conditions of less economic pressure than those who have less of these qualities. The higher the father's occupational status, the lower should be the F Scale scores. One might expect the children of farmers to show a large percentage of high F Scale scores.

#### Sister's Educational Attainment and the Three Scales

On this variable, sisters will be placed somewhere on the continuum Grade School--Graduate School. It is expected that the nearer to Graduate School the sister is placed, the more open to change and value orientation she will be.

Relying again on McClosky and Schaar, we would expect more high anomie scores from sisters with lower educational attainment.

Levinson says "that one of the main stated aims of our educational system is the teaching of democratic values as expressed in our Constitution and in other great documents." His expectation is that such attitudes as ethnocentrism, prejudice, and authoritarianism ought to be negatively correlated with years of education.<sup>1</sup> Accepting this analysis,

<sup>1</sup>Adorno et al., op. cit., p. 287.

we should expect higher education to be accompanied by low F Scale scores.

#### Sister's Present Status in the Congregation and the Three Scales

If, at present, a sister holds a position of authority in the congregation, or if she has held such a post in the past, it is anticipated that she will have a vested interest in the system which has given her high status and recognition. She is likely to be non-change and interest-oriented. In general, one would expect professed nuns to be more committed to the old system than the unprofessed.

Age and status in the congregation are quite obviously related. We should expect to find more high anomie scores among the professed sisters; the older among them will tend to perceive change as the destruction of their whole pattern of life and to feel that they are somewhat adrift.

A very similar pattern to the Age and F Scale cross-tabulation should appear. Superiors and former Superiors should show higher percentages of high F Scale scores; their time as Superiors may have given them an exaggerated regard for unquestioning obedience which makes life so much easier for a Superior.

#### Present Occupation and the Three Scales

Sisters of St. Raphael operate all levels of schools from Grade Schools to Colleges. The more highly educated

sisters are likely to be teaching at the College level; they will also have less hours of actual teaching to do, and will, therefore, have more leisure to read widely and keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in the world of ideas. By contrast, an elementary school teacher has a very full schedule of lessons which is physically and mentally tiring. She will have less time and energy to devote to reading. She is also less likely to be as well qualified academically as the College teacher. Hence, one expects more value and change orientations among the teachers at higher level, and less among those at the lower level.

One expects a similar pattern to the cross-tabulation of Education with the Anomie Scale. In a teaching congregation, one might expect nursing the sick to be a less prestigious and less learned occupation. This suggests higher anomie scoring among the sisters employed in "Health Care."

It is suggested that sisters whose work is non-academic and so time-consuming that they can do little serious reading will be more prone to stereotyped thinking and lack of insight into themselves--qualities which are characteristic of the authoritarian personality.<sup>1</sup> As we noted above, Superiors and administrators should show higher F Scale scores.

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold M. Rose, "Prejudice, Anomie and the Authoritarian Personality," Sociology and Social Research, L (February, 1965), p. 141. He defines the authoritarian personality as "a compulsive conformist, exhibiting anxiety at the appearance of social deviation, with little insight into himself, with a trend

We shall now turn to the tables themselves to see what patterns emerge from them. The same order will be followed as that of the hypotheses.

Tables 6, 7, and 8: Age Cross-tabulated with the Three Scales. (See pages 125, 126, 127.)

Looking at Table 6, we notice that there is little polarization of attitude in this congregation. Of the 2060 classified respondents, 88% were change-oriented, and only 12% nonchange-oriented. Clearly, there is an inverse relationship between age and change orientation. Yet, even among the over 70s, 57% are favorable to change either from interest or value considerations. The conservative element expected among the older sisters exists, but it is surprisingly small for a religious congregation. The most marked rise in nonchange orientation is that between the 61-70 group and the over 70 group--much later in the age scale than one would have expected. Since change orientation is inversely related to age, one can guess that this community will become more and more open to change with the passage of time. And since the great majority of change-oriented sisters seem to be motivated by values, by idealism, by deep commitment to charity and justice, one can foresee the consolidation of changes initiated and further change in type of apostolate and the methods by which it will seek to bring its message to society at large.

toward stereotyped thinking and toward projecting his own undesired traits onto others, aggressive, but claiming an aversion against emotionality."

TABLE 6  
SISTER'S AGE AND THE NEAL SCALE

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Over 70 %	Total %
VC	90	85	76	68	62	38	74
IC	8	10	16	17	18	19	14
VNC	1	3	5	8	11	24	7
INC	1	2	3	8	9	19	6
No. of Cases	(440)	(402)	(304)	(388)	(252)	(206)	100

N = 2060

chi square = 321.112 (Significant beyond the 0.005 level)



TABLE 7  
SISTER'S AGE AND THE ANOMIE SCALE

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Over 70 %	Total %
Very Low	39	37	32	21	20	11	28
Low	25	24	25	21	15	14	22
Middle	19	17	18	21	18	16	18
High	13	14	18	21	26	33	19
Very High	4	8	7	16	21	26	12
No. of Cases	(464)	(425)	(319)	(429)	(295)	(230)	100

N = 2239  
chi square = 238.860 (Significant at 0.000 level)

TABLE 8  
SISTER'S AGE AND THE F SCALE

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Over 70 %	Total %
Very Low	52	48	39	24	12	6	33
Low	28	30	30	24	21	10	25
Middle	14	11	17	22	20	17	17
High	5	8	10	15	23	24	13
Very High	2	3	5	14	23	42	12
No. of Cases	(464)	(425)	(319)	(429)	(295)	(230)	100

N = 2239  
chi square = 600.593 (Significant at 0.000 level)

The hypothesis relating greater age to higher anomie scores is verified. The biggest rises in anomie scoring are at the 50 and 70 year marks. The high scores are concentrated in the over 50 age groups. This suggests that the next ten years will be the period of greatest difficulty here.

Here are the combined high and very high F Scale scores for the age groups: under 30, 7%; 31-40, 11%; 41-50, 14%; 51-60, 30%; 61-70, 46%; over 70, 66%. The hypothesis of association between age and higher F Scale scores is clearly verified. The biggest "jumps" come at the 50 and 70 dividing lines. A sister who was fifty years of age in 1967 was born in 1917. Her seniors belong to the pre-World War I world which was so different from later periods.

Tables 9, 10, and 11: Father's Occupation Cross-tabulated with the Scales. (See pages 129, 130.)

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Respondents were asked to pick the occupational group which came nearest to describing that of the head of their family when they were growing up. All the categories are meaningful with the exception of that of farmer. This certainly implies that the sister was brought up in a rural area; but does farmer mean farmer-proprietor or farm worker? From the questionnaire, one cannot tell. No regular pattern emerges from Table 9. In general, it is true that the higher up in the occupational scale the head of the family was, the more change orientation is found in the sisters and the less conservatism.

TABLE 9  
FATHER'S OCCUPATION AND THE NEAL SCALE

	Unskilled %	Skilled %	Farmer %	Professional %	Total %
VC	74	72	64	80	74
IC	15	13	17	11	14
VNC	6	7	9	6	7
INC	5	8	11	3	6
No. of Cases	(498)	(602)	(233)	(671)	100

N = 2060

chi square = 47.318 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

TABLE 10  
FATHER'S OCCUPATION AND THE ANOMIE SCALE

	Unskilled %	Skilled %	Farmer %	Professional %	Total %
Very High	31	34	17	41	33
High	25	26	23	25	25
Middle	17	15	22	16	17
Low	12	13	18	10	13
Very Low	15	12	20	8	12
No. of Cases	(547)	(650)	(266)	(714)	100

N = 2239

chi square = 83.170 (Significant at 0.000 level)

TABLE 11  
FATHER'S OCCUPATION AND THE F SCALE

	Unskilled %	Skilled %	Farmer %	Professional %	Total %
Very High	31	34	17	41	33
High	25	26	23	25	25
Middle	17	15	22	16	17
Low	12	13	18	10	13
Very Low	15	12	20	8	12
No. of Cases	(547)	(650)	(266)	(714)	100

N = 2239

chi square = 83.170 (Significant at 0.000 level)

The farmers' group doesn't quite fit in with this pattern. It shows the lowest change and value orientation. Vidich and Bensman make a distinction between "rational" and "traditional" farmers. For the former, "rationality rather than sentiment governs the work and the mentality." For the latter, farming is "a way of life to be practiced in all its ceremonial and ritual complexity." They represent "a closed frontier psychology...an inability or unwillingness to adapt to the requirements necessary to seize opportunity."<sup>1</sup> The figures for sisters whose fathers

<sup>1</sup>A. J. Vidich and J. Bensman, Small Town in Mass Society (New York: Anchor Books, 1960), pp. 55-56, 67-68.

were farmers tempt one to suggest that they were chiefly traditional farmers in the sense described. The pattern of this table is more complex than the hypothesis supposed.

Table 10 confirms the hypothesis associating low prestige occupation of sisters' fathers with high anomie scores on the part of the sisters. Generally speaking, it should be the older sisters whose fathers had low occupational status, being more probably newly arrived from a rural background in the United States, lacking an extended education, tending to rear the children in a traditional tight pattern of assumptions and rules. As expected, the farmers' daughters have the highest percentage of high anomie scores; this strengthens the likelihood that the farmers were traditional.

Table 11 is very much as we expected it to be. Low F Scale scores go with high occupational rank and vice versa. Farmers' daughters have the biggest percentage of high scores--38% high as against 18% high among the daughters of professionals, and 26% for the daughters of the unskilled.

Tables 12, 13, and 14: Sister's Educational Attainment and the Three Scales. (See pages 132, 133.)

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The general pattern of Table 12 is that the higher the sister's educational attainment, the more change-oriented she is likely to be, and the more likely this change orientation will be linked with value rather than interest considerations. Of those who received only high school or part high school

TABLE 12

## SISTER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND THE NEAL SCALE

	High School or Part %	Post High School %	College %	Graduate School %	Total %
VC	34	69	76	76	74
IC	24	15	14	12	14
VNC	16	8	5	8	7
INC	26	8	5	4	6
No. of Cases	(38)	(317)	(967)	(677)	100

N = 2060

chi square = 59.490 (Significant at 0.000 level)

TABLE 13

## SISTER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND THE ANOMIE SCALE

	High School or Part %	Post High School %	College %	Graduate School %	Total %
Very Low	4	21	29	32	28
Low	21	20	22	23	22
Middle	17	19	17	19	18
High	26	21	21	16	19
Very High	32	18	11	10	12
No. of Cases	(47)	(341)	(1049)	(735)	100

N = 2239

chi square = 57.873 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

TABLE 14

## SISTER'S EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND THE F SCALE

	High School or Part %	Post High School %	College %	Graduate School %	Total %
Very Low	4	21	29	32	28
Low	21	20	22	23	22
Middle	17	19	17	19	18
High	26	21	21	16	19
Very High	32	18	11	10	12
No. of Cases	(47)	(341)	(1049)	(735)	100

N = 2239

chi square = 57.873 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

education, there were 34% VC and 24% IC orientations. Contrast these with the corresponding figures for those who had been to graduate school, 75% VC and 12% IC. Strangely, the college educated are higher in VC and IC percentages than the graduate school people. They may be younger, as a group, than the graduate school educated, and that would explain the flaw in our expected pattern.

The data bear out the hypothesis relating high anomie scores with low educational attainment. This must be viewed with caution, because it is the older sisters who are the least well educated, generally speaking.



The following are the percentages of high F Scale scores for the groups: High School or Part High School, 64%; Post-High School, 37%; College, 21%; and Graduate School, 21%. The gap between the Part High School and Post-High School groups is very large. There are only two per cent of the sisters in the 81-90 age group; there are only two per cent of sisters who got only a Part High School education. These are very likely to be substantially the same people; this, of course, is a mere guess. The percentages of low scores in the groups is also quite revealing; contrast 64% of Graduate School alumni with low scores with the 8% of the lowest educational category who are low in authoritarian scores.

Tables 15, 16, and 17: Sister's Present Status in the Congregation and Scales. (See pages 135, 136.)

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Sister Muckenhirn has said that "the ordinary sister, not only sees problems from a different angle than the sister in an official position, but she is often much more in touch with the details of the apostolate as it is lived from day to day."<sup>1</sup> In keeping with this thinking, it was expected that superiorship holders, past and present, would be more committed than any other category of sister to the system which gave them status, and hence nonchange and interest oriented. This is partly borne out by Table 15. The big surprise is that the most

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Charles Borromeo Muckenhirn, The Changing Sister (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1965), p. 1.

TABLE 15

## SISTER'S PRESENT STATUS AND THE NEAL SCALE

	Junior %	Temp. Professed %	Perpet. Professed %	Former Superior %	Superior %	Total %
VC	94	90	72	62	87	74
IC	4	8	15	20	7	14
VNC	2	2	7	11	4	7
INC			6	7	2	6
No. of Cases	(98)	(193)	(1225)	(323)	(166)	100

N = 2060

chi square = 117.833 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

TABLE 16

## SISTER'S PRESENT STATUS AND THE ANOMIE SCALE

	Junior %	Temp. Professed %	Perpet. Professed %	Former Superior %	Superior %	Total %
Very Low	37	43	26	22	34	28
Low	23	24	22	20	22	22
Middle	25	19	18	17	20	18
High	11	10	21	23	15	19
Very High	3	3	13	18	8	12
No. of Cases	(99)	(206)	(1332)	(359)	(176)	100

N = 2239

chi square = 94.087 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

TABLE 17  
SISTER'S PRESENT STATUS AND THE F SCALE

	Junior %	Temp. Professed %	Perpet. Professed %	Former Superior %	Superior %	Total %
Very Low	52	58	32	20	46	33
Low	27	23	25	24	27	25
Middle	16	13	17	21	16	17
High	5	4	14	17	6	13
Very High		2	13	19	4	12
No. of Cases	(99)	(206)	(1332)	(359)	(176)	100

N = 2239

chi square = 202.578 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

conservative and interest-oriented group is that of the former superiors. The current superiors show higher change and value orientations than the great body of professed sisters. In fact, they resemble most the temporarily professed sisters. One can only recognize and pay tribute to the wisdom of the higher authorities for appointing to superiorships people so flexible, who have such high ideals, and who are so well attuned to the younger generation. It seems that in the past, it was this congregation's policy to appoint to superiorships strong supporters of the status quo, but such had ceased to be the case for some time before this survey. Noteworthy in this table is

the very high percentage of Junior and temporarily professed sisters who are VC oriented.

Table 16 turns out very much as had been expected. Former superiors have 41% with anomic tendencies among them; contrast this with 14% among the Junior sisters. Again, current superiors are nearest to the young sisters and have a lower percentage of high anomie scores than their fellow perpetually professed sisters.

Table 17 is very close in overall pattern to Table 8, Age and F Scale. Former superiors have 35% high scores on the F Scale, the perpetually professed have 27%, current superiors have 11%, the temporarily professed have 6%, and the Junior sisters, still in training have 5%.

Tables 18, 19, and 20: Sister's Present Occupation and the Three Scales. (See pages

It was hypothesized that Table 18 should resemble Table 12 very closely, since educational attainment determines, to a great degree, the sister's employment. In the main, this is verified by the table. The single most striking feature is the great contrast between sisters engaged in health care and those engaged in teaching. Of course, one must be cautious, because only 2% of the congregation are engaged in looking after the sick and elderly. But they appear to be very much lower in value and change orientation than the congregation as a whole. At the other extreme we have the sisters who are engaged in

TABLE 18

## SISTER'S PRESENT OCCUPATION AND THE NEAL SCALE

	Elem. %	High School %	College %	Superior Administrator %	Health Care %	Student Sister %	Total %
VC	73	76	84	74	48	94	76
IC	15	15	8	15	24	5	14
VNC	6	6	4	5	14	1	6
INC	6	4	4	5	14		5
No. of Cases	(595)	(708)	(102)	(39)	(29)	(97)	100

N = 1570<sup>1</sup>

chi square = 41.816 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

<sup>1</sup>As there was a series of questions about occupation and many categories, not all of the respondents could be included in this table. This accounts for this N being smaller than N on other tables.

TABLE 19

## SISTER'S PRESENT OCCUPATION AND THE ANOMIE SCALE

	Elem. %	High School %	College %	Superior Administrator %	Health Care %	Student Sister %	Total %
Very Low	24	32	45	38	18	36	30
Low	22	22	20	14	18	22	22
Middle	18	18	22	19	24	26	18
High	21	20	8	12	27	12	19
Very High	16	9	5	17	12	3	11
No. of Cases	(651)	(769)	(108)	(42)	(33)	(98)	100

N = 1701<sup>1</sup>

chi square = 67.239 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

<sup>1</sup>Limitation of space prevented the inclusion of all categories, hence the lower N in this table.

TABLE 20

## SISTER'S PRESENT OCCUPATION AND THE F SCALE

	Elem. %	High School %	College %	Superior Administrator %	Health Care %	Student Sister %	Total %
Very Low	26	36	65	43	12	52	35
Low	27	27	22	21	12	26	26
Middle	18	17	6	12	9	18	17
High	15	12	4	10	36	4	13
Very High	14	7	3	14	30		10
No. of Cases	(651)	(769)	(108)	(42)	(33)	(98)	100

$N = 1701^1$

chi square = 145.661 (Significant at the 0.000 level)

<sup>1</sup>Limitation of space prevented the inclusion of all categories, hence the smaller N in this table.

undergraduate studies; these, presumably, are young sisters, and will display the high degree of value and change orientations which we have seen associated with the young. And so it proves to be; here are the scores: 94% are VC, 5% are IC, 1% are VNC, and there is a zero for INC, the most conservative category.

In the main, the higher the level at which the sisters are teaching, the less high scoring they are on the Anomie Scale. The group engaged in "Health Care" do have the largest

percentage of high anomie scores, but it is little greater than that of the elementary school group. The questionnaire did not provide a category of sisters in retirement or semi-retirement who were not infirm enough to be sent to the house for sick and elderly sisters. There are many such sisters living in communities which are engaged in grade and high school teaching. It follows that under these headings in our tables we have included a number of sisters who help around the convent and schools in various very valuable ways, but whose response to the questionnaires are unlikely to be of a piece with those of the sisters who are actually teaching.

Table 20 relates occupation with the F Scale. The pattern emerging is: the higher the level at which sisters are teaching, the lower the percentage of high F Scale scores--very similar to the table relating educational level to the F Scale. "Health Care" sisters, with 67% high scores are worth contrasting with the young undergraduate sisters who have a mere 4% with high scores.

We have now had a look at the relationship between the background variables and our three scales. It is worth noting again that the Sisters of St. Raphael are unusually change-oriented for a religious community.

We must express here one important conviction which has been reached from the use of the background variables, namely, that "Age" seems to be the most important of them. The reason

for saying this is, that it seems to influence all the others. For example, if a sister is very elderly, it increases the probability that her father was either an immigrant to the United States or the son of an immigrant, and therefore likely to be low in the occupational scale.<sup>1</sup> Again, if a sister is elderly, she is likely to be less well educated than younger sisters, because the great improvements in the training and education of sisters are of very recent date. Educational attainment, in turn, influences present occupation; sisters who lack degrees are not likely to be appointed to teach, while those with higher qualifications are likely to be teaching at a higher level. Age is also related to a sister's status in the community; a sister in the Juniorate at the age of forty or fifty years is something of a rarity. Almost all of the higher age groups will be perpetually professed, some will have held superiorships in the past and some will still be in office. Likewise, few sisters are appointed to superiorships while in their twenties. Thus, age is related to status in the community. The importance of age, then, is some justification for the emphasis which we shall lay upon it in later discussions.

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<sup>1</sup>Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, The American Occupational Structure (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1967), p. 227.



## CHAPTER VII

### SISTERS' RESPONSE TO CERTAIN KEY QUESTIONS

The CMSW data, in the form in which it was made available for this study, gives sisters' reactions to seventy-two specific questions in all. From among these questions, certain ones have been chosen for close examination because they are related to our particular theme of social change in the form of the "detotalization" of what was a "total institution" and the Sisters' perception of this process. Thus far, we have seen something of how the background or independent variables are related to the three scales which are the intervening variables. Now, it is intended to present a series of cross-tabulators in which the influence of the Neal orientations and position on the Anomie and F Scales on the response to our key questions can be examined. Since it seems that "Age" is the most important of the background variables influencing sisters' orientations and location on the other two scales, we intend to supplement the cross-tabulations here and there by showing how the different age groups react to the particular question under discussion.

We shall take the questions in three sections: (1) deals with possible sources of formation or reinforcement of opinions.

What Catholic newspapers do the sisters read--the conservative ones or the liberal National Catholic Reporter? Their orientations and their position on the Anomie and F Scales may influence or be influenced by their preference. (2) deals with internal change in the community and with change in an important symbol of the religious life, namely, the religious garb or habit. (3) deals with the most radical reaction to change or non-change when perceived as excessive, namely, have sisters, in the past two years, ever thought seriously of leaving the congregation for secular life?

#### (1) Catholic Newspapers Which Sisters Read

The expectations are that very conservative newspapers like The Sunday Visitor, The Brooklyn Tablet, The Wanderer, and The National Register will be chiefly read by non-change oriented sisters and by high scorers on the Anomie and F Scales. On the other hand, one expects the National Catholic Reporter to be read by change-oriented sisters and by those who are low scorers on the Anomie and F Scales.

In dealing with sisters' reading habits we shall confine ourselves to the percentages who say that they never read a particular paper, because this is the most differentiating response. By implication, the rest do read it to a greater or lesser degree.

Clearly, reading newspapers like The Sunday Visitor and The National Register of Denver went more with non-change and

TABLE 21

PERCENTAGE OF NEAL SCALE GROUPS WHO NEVER READ  
CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS

	VC %	IC %	VNC %	INC %	Total %
Never Read	35	20	12	10	30
N = 2060	(1523)	(283)	(139)	(115)	

TABLE 22

PERCENTAGES OF LOW, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCORERS ON THE ANOMIE SCALE  
WHO NEVER READ CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Never Read	36	28	16	29
N = 2239	(1007)	(630)	(602)	

TABLE 23

PERCENTAGES OF LOW, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCORERS ON THE F SCALE  
WHO NEVER READ CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Never Read	41	20	9	29
N = 2239	(1131)	(663)	(445)	

interest orientations. Likewise, the group which was high on the Anomie Scale read them more than the middle or low scoring groups. The F Scale produced the sharpest differentiation; 41% of low scorers never read these papers, while only 9% of the high scorers never read these papers. Let us now see if our expectations concerning The National Catholic Reporter are fulfilled.

TABLE 24

PERCENTAGES OF THE NEAL SCALE GROUPS WHO NEVER READ  
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER

	VC %	IC %	VNC %	INC %	Total %
Never Read	10	19	21	37	14
N = 2060	(1523)	(283)	(139)	(115)	

TABLE 25

PERCENTAGES OF LOW, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCORERS ON THE ANOMIE SCALE  
WHO NEVER READ THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Never Read	.9	15	22	14
N = 2239	(1007)	(630)	(602)	

TABLE 26

PERCENTAGES OF LOW, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCORERS ON THE F SCALE  
WHO NEVER READ THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Never Read	8	18	26	14
N = 2239	(1131)	(663)	(445)	

The National Catholic Reporter is a liberal newspaper favorable to change. At the time of these surveys, it had a regular feature entitled "Sisters' Forum." The tables show that only 10% of VC sisters never read it, while 37% of INC sisters never did so. This agrees very well with Sister Neal's findings in her study of the Boston clergy which revealed a consistent relationship between the reading of Catholic publications and the orientation scores. She found that reading "journals that are open to change and critical of the status quo" was significantly related to the VC orientation, whereas not reading these journals was highly related to the INC position. This was only so for the Catholic papers, and not for the secular reading done by the clergy. Admittedly, this latter was very limited in scope, being largely confined to the more conservative business periodicals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sister Marie Augusta Neal, Values and Interests in Social Change, p. 68.

On the Anomie Scale, only 9% of the low scorers never read the NCR, while 22% of the high scorers never did so. Eight per cent of low F Scale scorers avoided it; 26% of the high scorers never read it. There is a clear association, then, between sisters' orientations and attitudes and the Catholic newspapers which they read. We cannot say, of course, whether the attitudes are formed by the reading, or whether sisters who have these dispositions seek out the reading material which is congenial to them.

The distribution of reading habits by age is interesting:

TABLE 27

## AGE &amp; READING CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC PAPERS

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Under 70 %
Never Read	56	40	26	13	9	6
N = 2239	(464)	(425)	(319)	(429)	(295)	(230)

TABLE 28

## AGE &amp; READING LIBERAL NCR

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Under 70 %
Never Read	7	9	13	17	18	30
N = 2239	(464)	(425)	(319)	(429)	(295)	(230)

In the matter of reading the conservative Catholic papers, age makes a very clear difference. The differentiation is less sharp in the case of the NCR, because at this particular time it included a section devoted to sisters and their problems which was almost required reading if one was to know what convent discussions were about. We need not be surprised that about 66% of the over 70 age group did some reading of the NCR, because it must always be borne in mind that 57% even of this group was change-oriented. It is conceivable that reading reinforces the orientation or even helps to develop it. Nevertheless, when asked how much the NCR contributed to their "personal sense of hope and enthusiasm of what it means to be a religious in the modern world," 9% of all sisters labelled the NCR an adverse influence--highest among the agencies so labelled. However, it may comfort the publishers of the NCR to know that, among "adverse influences," they were only marginally more dangerous than "bishops I have known" (7%), and "parish pastors I have known" (6%).<sup>1</sup>

## (2) Internal Change in the Congregation; Change in the Religious Habit

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Sisters were asked: "What is your impression of your local house in renewal?" The various categories of reply appear in Tables 29, 30, and 31. The key category, however, is of those who considered the changes too radical. The expectations

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, III, I, 12, 15, 16.

here are easily formulated, namely, that the higher the sister is on the non-change, Anomie and F Scales, the more likely she is to find the changes too radical. We are dealing here with changes in the sisters' own local convent. Experimentation and change were not entirely uniform in all convents. Hence we have two variables entering in, namely, the amount of change in the local house, and the varying reaction to these changes. A mere 6% of VNC sisters find the changes too radical; 18% of the IC; 27% of the VNC; and 28% of the INC sisters. The percentage of high Anomie scorers who find them too radical is four times as great as that of the low Anomie scorers who find it so. A similar pattern is found when high F Scale scorers are compared with low scorers. It is unlikely that the most radical changes were made in convents where sisters opposed to change were most numerous. The distribution by age group is also informative and is shown in Table 32.

It is quite clear from Table 32 that the different age groups perceive the rate of change very differently from each other. The young sisters are either happy with what is going on or would like a brisker pace; as the age group gets older, there is a tendency for more sisters to find the changes too radical.

Retaining the religious habit in traditional or modernized form or the discarding of it in favor of contemporary dress is an issue well calculated to produce sharp differences of opinion. Before we explore the reactions to this, it may be



TABLE 29

## NEAL SCALE AND OPINION OF LOCAL CONVENT RENEWAL

	VC %	IC %	VNC %	INC %	Total %
Improving rapidly	15	8	12	8	13
Improving slowly	32	22	15	15	29
Too radical; losing traditions	6	18	27	28	10
It is somewhat isolated from reality	14	8	11	9	12
Good pace; not too fast, not too slow	32	41	35	37	34
Silent	1	4	1	4	2
No. of Cases	(1523)	(283)	(139)	(115)	100%

N = 2060

chi square = 180.359 (Significant at 0.000 level)

TABLE 30

## ANOMIE SCALE AND OPINION OF LOCAL CONVENT RENEWAL

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Improving rapidly	14	14	11	13
Improving slowly	33	28	20	28
Too radical; losing traditions	5	10	22	11
It is somewhat isolated from reality	14	12	10	12
Good pace; not too fast, not too slow	34	35	36	34
Silent	1	2	2	2
No. of Cases	(1007)	(630)	(602)	100%
N = 2239 chi square = 134.812 (Significant at 0.000 level)				

TABLE 31

## F SCALE AND OPINION OF LOCAL CONVENT RENEWAL

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Improving rapidly	14	11	14	13
Improving slowly	34	24	17	28
Too radical; losing traditions	5	14	20	11
It is somewhat isolated from reality	16	8	7	12
Good pace; not too fast, not too slow	29	40	41	34
Silent	1	2	2	2
No. of Cases	(1131)	(663)	(445)	100%

N = 2239

chi square = 174.055 (Significant at 0.000 level)

TABLE 32

## AGE &amp; PERCEPTION OF PACE OF LOCAL CHANGE

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Over 70 %
Rapid Improvement	19	13	9	10	14	12
Slow Improvement	38	35	34	22	15	13
Too Radical	1	3	7	17	20	25
No. of Cases	(464)	(425)	(319)	(429)	(295)	(230)

N = 2239

well to say that two months later, at the time of the Self-Study survey (SRSQ), the situation in the matter of dress was as the following table reveals:

TABLE 33

TYPE OF DRESS NOW WORN AND PERSONAL PREFERENCE  
IF THE CHOICE WOULD NOT BIND OTHERS

Type of dress	Now Wearing %	Prefer for Self %
Traditional habit	23	12
Modified habit	66	52
Contemporary dress	10	33
N = 2177	100	100

Clearly, there was a large majority which wanted to discard the traditional habit, but the largest single group was for some sort of habit or distinctive dress. It is interesting to recall that community tradition tells that the foundress of this congregation did not herself wear a habit.

The CMSW survey asked sisters if they thought that "all sisters should be allowed to wear contemporary dress at all times." The results are shown in Tables 34, 35, and 36. The VC sisters were almost equally divided on this question, half in favor and half against. The other three Neal groups were overwhelmingly against contemporary dress on all occasions. Again,

low Anomie scorers were almost equally divided, while middle and high scorers were strongly against liberalization in dress. Finally, more low F Scale scorers were in favor of contemporary dress than were opposed to it; middle and high scorers had large majorities against it. Again, a breakdown of attitudes by age group is supplied in Table 37.

TABLE 34

## NEAL SCALE &amp; OPINION ON CONTEMPORARY DRESS AT ALL TIMES

	VC %	IC %	VNC %	INC %	Total %
Yes	39	16	9	11	32
No	40	62	75	81	47
Don't Know	17	18	12	4	16
Silent	5	3	4	4	5
No. of Cases	(1523)	(283)	(139)	(115)	100%

N = 2060

chi square = 181.809 (Significant at 0.000 level)

TABLE 35

## ANOMIE SCALE AND OPINION ON CONTEMPORARY DRESS AT ALL TIMES

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Yes	41	29	15	31
No	38	51	63	49
Don't Know	16	16	17	16
Silent	5	4	5	5
No. of Cases	(1004)	(630)	(602)	100%
N = 2239 chi square = 133.785 (Significant at 0.000 level)				

TABLE 36

## F SCALE AND OPINION ON CONTEMPORARY DRESS AT ALL TIMES

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Yes	45	19	11	31
No	33	60	71	49
Don't Know	17	17	12	16
Silent	4	4	6	5
No. of Cases	(1131)	(663)	(445)	100%
N = 2239 chi square = 294.805 (Significant at 0.000 level)				

TABLE 37

## AGE &amp; ATTITUDE TO WEARING CONTEMPORARY DRESS ON ALL OCCASIONS

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Over 70 %
Yes	59	42	31	16	10	5
No	19	36	45	64	75	79
No. of Cases	(464)	(425)	(319)	(429)	(295)	(230)

N = 2239

The youngest sisters alone have an absolute majority in favor of contemporary dress; the older the age group the more decisively is modern dress rejected. As a postscript to this discussion it may be said that although this question of dress was keenly debated in 1967, it is no longer an issue and received comparatively little attention at the General Chapter of 1968. Only the older sisters, chiefly those over seventy, now wear the traditional habit, more for reasons of convenience and custom than from any ideological reason, one suspects.

(3) The Thought of Leaving the Congregation

Sisters were asked by the CMSW questionnaire if they had, within the last two years, ever seriously thought of leaving the congregation for secular life. It is difficult to formulate expectations in this matter. One can visualize

certain change-oriented sisters entertaining doubts about the congregation's will to renew itself, and as a result toying with the idea of leaving the religious life. Low Anomie and F Scale scorers might feel the same way. It is hard to imagine interest and non-change oriented sisters even considering leaving in any considerable numbers. Likewise, high Anomie and F Scale scorers would be unlikely to see in leaving the congregation the answer to their problems.

Tables 38, 39, and 40 show that change orientation makes it more likely that a sister has considered leaving than non-change orientation; rather more value-oriented sisters thought about it than interest-oriented, but the latter gap between groups is much smaller than the former. Low Anomie scorers are more likely to have considered it than people who were high on the Anomie Scale. The F Scale distribution reveals quite a striking difference; low scorers are almost eight times more likely to have considered leaving the community than high scorers. It appears, then, that thoughts of quitting the religious life occurred more readily to idealists who are motivated by little self-interest but by what they hold to be right and good, to tolerant liberal-minded sisters who are not disoriented by change, but who are willing to examine their own situation and motivation with an open mind. On the other hand, it is conceivable that those who never permitted such a thought to enter their minds could be disinclined to embark on serious

TABLE 38

## NEAL SCALE AND THOUGHT OF LEAVING RELIGIOUS LIFE

	VC %	IC %	VNC %	INC %	Total %
Yes	26	13	5	9	22
No	67	81	86	85	72
Silent	6	6	9	6	6
No. of Cases	(1523)	(283)	(139)	(115)	100%

N = 2060

chi square = 64.933 (Significant at 0.000 level)

TABLE 39

## ANOMIE SCALE AND THOUGHT OF LEAVING RELIGIOUS LIFE

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Yes	25	21	15	22
No	68	71	79	72
Don't Know	6	8	6	7
No. of Cases	(1007)	(630)	(602)	100%

N = 2239

chi square = 25.344 (Significant at 0.000 level)



TABLE 40

## F SCALE AND THOUGHT OF LEAVING RELIGIOUS LIFE

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Yes	31	17	4	22
No	63	76	88	72
Don't Know	6	8	7	7
No. of Cases	(1131)	(663)	(445)	100%

N = 2239

chi square = 147.894 (Significant at 0.000 level)

examination of their own situation. This could be due to their concept of what loyalty to God and their commitment to this way of life by vow entails. This may be influenced by their personality structure which may need a tight framework of rules and clear directives by which to live. Though they may be uncomfortable in the face of change and may dislike it, yet, the change involved in leaving the safety of the congregation may seem to them to be more intolerable than enduring the internal changes which are bound up with remaining in it. Again, the distribution by age is supplied and appears in Table 41.

This table again demonstrates how important the "Age" variable is. It produces a sharper differentiation of attitudes than any of the scales. The longer a sister has been in the

TABLE 41  
AGE & THOUGHT OF LEAVING RELIGIOUS LIFE\*

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Over 70 %
Yes	52	31	16	7	3	2
No	43	63	77	86	88	94
No. of Cases	(464)	(425)	(319)	(429)	(295)	(230)

N = 2239

\* Those who were "silent" on this question are omitted from the table.

community the less likely she is to have given serious thought to leaving. More than half of the under thirty age group are sisters who have not yet made their perpetual profession. It is part of their duty to make up their minds whether they can make a lifelong commitment or not. That still leaves us with 31% of the 31-40 group and 16% of the 41-50 group who have considered leaving the community, perhaps for some of the reasons mentioned earlier.

There is another CMSW question which should be taken logically with the one we have just dealt with. It is: "If you could live your life over again and be at an age to make a choice in 1967 would you choose to enter religious life in your order?" Much depends again on how the situation in the

congregation was perceived at that date. The sisters had begun to experiment with modified dress and a less rigidly regulated horarium, but what changes lay in store for the congregation in the future remained very obscure. Change oriented sisters might be expected to be rather impatient with the pace of change and therefore be inclined to answer in the negative in greater numbers than the nonchange sisters. Sisters opposed to change and high scorers on the Anomie and F Scales would probably consider life without the continuities and traditions of even a changing religious community unthinkable, and would, therefore, be likely to want to enter in 1967.

Looking at Tables 42, 43, and 44, we notice at once that only 50% of the sisters are unambiguously in favor of entry in 1967, 16% wouldn't enter, and 34% don't know or remain silent. These figures in themselves are an indication of the bewilderment and doubt which many religious professionals have experienced in the post-Vatican II era. This is probably a very healthy facing up to the real issues. In the future, only those whose motivation and commitment are very pure and strong are likely to persevere in the religious life. The Neal Scale distribution of affirmative answers to this question shows a close correspondence with the percentages of those who were satisfied with the pace of renewal in their local house, i.e., adding together those who thought there was "a rapid improvement" and those who thought the pace was "good." The VNC group spoil

TABLE 42  
NEAL SCALE AND ENTRY TO ORDER IN 1967

	VC %	IC %	VNC %	INC %	Total %
Yes	49	50	60	44	50
No	16	18	14	14	16
Don't Know	28	23	18	24	26
Silent	7	9	8	18	8
No. of Cases	(1523)	(283)	(139)	(115)	100%

N = 2060

chi square = 28.666 (Significant at 0.001 level)

TABLE 43  
ANOMIE SCALE AND ENTRY TO ORDER IN 1967

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Yes	51	48	49	50
No	15	15	18	16
Don't Know	26	29	23	26
Silent	7	9	10	8
No. of Cases	(1007)	(630)	(602)	100%

N = 2239

chi square = 11.169 (Significant at 0.084 level)

TABLE 44  
F SCALE AND ENTRY TO ORDER IN 1967

	Low %	Middle %	High %	Total %
Yes	45	51	58	50
No	19	14	11	16
Don't Know	29	25	20	26
Silent	6	9	12	8
No. of Cases	(1131)	(663)	(445)	100%

N = 2239

chi square = 47.688 (Significant at 0.000 level)

this pattern to some extent; whereas 47% were pleased with the pace of renewal, 60% would enter in 1967. The Anomie Scale produces no very marked differentiation between the three categories of scorers, contrary to expectations. Slightly more of the low scoring group would be willing to enter in 1967. Again, the percentages are similar to those of the sisters who were satisfied with the pace of renewal. Of the low F Scale scorers, 45% would enter again, 51% of the middle group, and 58% of the high scorers. The corresponding figures for satisfaction with the pace of renewal are 42%, 51%, and 55%; this is a reasonably close agreement. It is suggested, then, that this question may well have been answered mainly in terms of how the

process of renewal was perceived. For completeness, the breakdown by "Age" is added:

TABLE 45  
AGE & WILLINGNESS TO ENTER IN 1967

	Under 30 %	31-40 %	41-50 %	51-60 %	61-70 %	Over 70 %
Yes	46	45	47	51	56	63
No	18	19	18	16	10	11
Don't Know	31	30	23	28	23	13
Silent	5	6	12	5	11	13
No. of Cases	(464)	(425)	(319)	(429)	(295)	(230)
N = 2239						

The rather high percentages of "no" answers in the 31-60 age range are worthy of note. The high numbers of "don't knows" and "silents" among the younger half of the sisterhood underlines how ambiguous they felt was their situation.

#### An Attempted Portrait of the "Conservative" and "Liberal" during Renewal

From our consideration of the background variables, the three scales, the responses to questionnaire items, and the information and impressions gained by unstructured interviews, a portrait of the "conservative" and "liberal" sister begins to be delineated and filled out in one's mind. We shall attempt to

depict the ideal-typical "conservative" and "liberal," bearing in mind that these have no existence in the real world but are mental constructs made up of characteristics shared in different combinations by many.

### The "Conservative" Sister

A conservative is often defined as a person who clings to the status quo, opposing all but inconsequential changes. There probably doesn't exist among the sisters of St. Raphael a conservative in this sense, that is to say, one who is consistently conservative in every phase of life. And as we have seen, this congregation has relatively few conservatives of any sort. In fact, the sisters whom we are labelling conservative in this portrait have accepted and implemented in their own lives changes which, very probably, they would have utterly rejected ten years ago. More important, they now like some of these changes. Yet, we must label them "conservative" in relation to most members of their own congregation.

The "conservative" sister has found the period of on-going change a very trying time. Her congregation is passing through a phase when its condition can best be described as a certain state of anomie, which is "the predicament of a group in the process of change and no longer certain of its norms."<sup>1</sup> To heighten the sense of de-regulation, the Church itself is having

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<sup>1</sup>Houtart, op. cit., p. 103.

the same experience. In the past, such a sister viewed both the Church and her community as non-changing institutions, and together with many others, she tended to absolutize all kinds of relative aspects of the life of these institutions. Accidental features like dress, hours of retiring to bed and rising, and forms of prayer came to be regarded as essentials. Hence, when the congregation began to change or de-emphasize them, it brought a real shock to many, and especially to "conservatives." To quote one sister: "It was a traumatic experience...it went so fast."<sup>1</sup> And again: "It has caused a great deal of suffering. Take, for example, the habit. The parents [of the girls] disapproved; the alumnae disapproved." It is quite clear that this congregation is passing through a non-violent revolution; it is not surprising that the accompanying turmoil and disorder should be painful to sisters who are "coming very rapidly out of a period of authoritarian organization and closed thinking," out of a "total institution" into a "detotalized" one.

As Lawrence points out, people do not normally resist the technical aspects of change, but rather its social aspects.<sup>2</sup> The conservative sister has come to accept change in certain externals like dress and details of the daily timetable. Even

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<sup>1</sup>Interview material.

<sup>2</sup>Paul R. Lawrence, "How to Deal with Resistance to Change," Human Elements of Administration, ed. Harry R. Knudson, Jr., (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), p. 324.



the regular handling of an allowance of money for expenses, a tiny one, incidentally, is seen as legitimate: "By handling your own budget, you can learn many things; it makes you keep your vow of poverty." Such a sister can see positive benefits in some changes: "In the old days, what with being taken care of, looked after--you didn't even know how to buy a railroad ticket--the house did everything."<sup>1</sup> She sees a constructive element in freedom of this kind, though she can't refrain from an adverse comment on "too much freedom for young sisters."

The changes which the "conservative" rejects are in the sphere of authority and government, ideology, and the specifically religious activities of the day. She finds it hard to accept, for example, collegial government at the local level. "I don't go along with no local superiors--this is one of the main weaknesses of the present experimental system." She feels that group decision making in the convent tends to overflow into the school and conflict with its bureaucratic pattern: "You can't have it. Everything is questioned nowadays...so much more red tape than you ever had before." By a curious transference of terminology this sister means by "red tape" the non-bureaucratic way of arriving at consensus by discussion, which is so much more time-consuming and "troublesome" than the simple giving of a command. She tends to deplore the experiments in apartment living being made by some change-oriented sisters,

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<sup>1</sup>Interview material.

viewing it as nothing but laxity and a preliminary stage to leaving the religious life altogether. Neither does she like a largely unregulated and unstructured way of life in the convent. She inclines to define all these developments as "anarchy"; they make her feel insecure; they lower the public esteem of the sisterhood. She has the distaste of the authoritarian personality for all this talk and discussion, all this democracy which makes the opinion of a young sister who has just made her final vows as valuable as that of the older sisters who have borne the labor of the day and the heats. The ordering of affairs in the pre-conciliar community was seen by her as "natural" and proper rather than problematical; she was, and is, very sensitive to "any suggestion of imperfections in the status quo."<sup>1</sup>

If our "conservative" sister is such because of her value internalization, then both in the Church at large, and in her own congregation, she will identify almost completely with the value system traditionally and officially defined. For her, those values are enshrined in traditional patterns of belief, ideology, norms, and means of achieving traditionally prescribed aims. The former rules, constitutions, and government of the congregation had become absolutes for her, ratified by quasi-divine approval, proved by the test of time and, therefore, not to be tampered with. Her personality structure has been

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<sup>1</sup>Talcott Parsons, The Social System, p. 357.

partially formed by them, and maintenance of the essentials of this pattern is of compelling importance to her.

There could also be elements of interest-orientation in the "conservative" sister. Whatever prestige, status, or acceptable self-image she has achieved, have come to her in and through the traditional system. Her former behavior in rule-observance was rewarded by a consciousness of doing the right thing and by the respect of her superiors and peers. Change, therefore, has laid the axe to the root of her self-esteem. In safeguarding it, she could be led into an unconscious disregard of Gospel values and the goals which they prescribe.<sup>1</sup> She does not perceive it in this way, of course. In her own mind, she is supporting a great religious tradition, blessed by the Church down through the ages. As Fallding suggests, there need not be a sharp distinction between people motivated by values and those motivated by interest. The latter can operate like the former. "If men's values are those ends they make self-sufficient and place first, a group's interests may sometimes become its values."<sup>2</sup> It follows that if a sister's peace of mind, contentment, security, and sense of rightness in her life were achieved under the rigid structures of pre-Vatican days, then she may feel that her values are being violated by change. She may well

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Marie Augusta Neal, Values and Interests in Social Change, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Harold Fallding, Review of Values and Interests in Social Change by Sister Neal, ASR, XXX (October, 1965), p. 142.

have a feeling of guilt and emptiness if she can find nothing and nobody to submit to. She is likely to be convinced that a tightly regulated life which gave her security is good for other sisters also. This will tend to make her incline to be harsh and judgmental in her assessment of those who welcome freedom and having the responsibility for regulating their own lives laid upon individuals. Parsons notes that the strains produced by change are related to such phenomena as scapegoating and the tendency to "witch-hunting" for "disloyal" elements.<sup>1</sup> To quote one sister: "Freedom is being misused by people who are not as mature as they might be."<sup>2</sup>

Another way of looking at the predicament of a "conservative" is to focus on the difficulty she has in teaching herself a whole set of new roles without anybody to learn from. Broom and Sleznick say that "few roles are learned in a wholly conscious or deliberate way."<sup>3</sup> Roles emerge from personal interaction, and people learn what is expected of them by taking cues from others. The older sisters were socialized into the religious life as dominated by the superior-subject role relationship and no other. When this is removed, what do they fall back on? There is almost nobody to supply the cues of which

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<sup>1</sup>Talcott Parsons, The Social System, p. 513.

<sup>2</sup>interview material.

<sup>3</sup>Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, Sociology (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 118.

these authors speak, because none of the sisters have experience of this new way of life. The younger sisters, who are no so far removed from pre-convent life and whose training was less rigid, should make the transition fairly well. It would go hard with the older sisters and the former superiors to take their cues from these younger sisters. Some roles, according to Broom and Selznick, are so important in the organization of behavior that they serve to integrate the personality; that they become part of the individual's self-concept, which is built around the behavior and attitudes that go with a role. Since entering the convent, sisters' personality has been built on the role of the good, quiet, obedient, self-effacing sister; this is what they were trained to be in the past. Now they are asked to be suddenly creative, self-directed, original, inventive, and outgoing; for this new role they have a Veblenian "trained incapacity." It is inevitable that many, and especially "conservatives," will suffer from conflict between personality and new role.

The "conservatives" in the congregation of St. Raphael would seem to be found among middle-aged or elderly sisters chiefly. They are likely to be less well educated than the average, perhaps engaged in the care of the sick or in household management, perhaps teaching in an elementary school, or employed in secretarial or administrative tasks. One must also include a group of former superiors, about forty in number out

of 360 in that category. It must be noted, however, that there are some "conservatives" in all possible classifications of sisters. We are speaking here of what might be called "ideological conservatives." Among them, one supposes, there must be a number of active, or even militant conservatives. If these include former superiors, one can suppose that they can still muster a considerable following, especially in the present fluid state of the congregation. They could be redoubtable opponents of change. Katz and Kahn comment on the influence which can be exerted by "a tough minority of people who dislike the changes and who will not accept their legitimacy."<sup>1</sup> Yet, the Neal Scale classified 81% of the congregation as change-oriented. "Conservative" sisters would do well to remember Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin: "If this design or work comes from men it will be destroyed, but if it comes from God you cannot destroy them--in order that you may not come to be regarded as men who contend against God."<sup>2</sup>

### The "Liberal" Sister

The typical "liberal" sister is open to change, that is to say, she doesn't regard the status quo as immutable; she is assessing it continually, and is quite ready to change it or see it changed, if such change is in accord with her ideals or

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>Acts of the Apostles, V: 38-39.

interests. If she is mainly value-oriented, she will desire that certain ends be achieved which are in conformity with her views of what the Gospel of Christ means; she will aim at universal goods which have meaning beyond the particular interests of the groups to which she belongs. She desires change inside her own congregation and in the larger society for deeply felt reasons of justice, charity, and community service. While she identifies with the ultimate values of Christianity, she will not feel tied to any proximate goals or norms which have been defined by the Church or by her community at any given point in history. For her, the important objective is that Christian values be communicated to and exemplified for the world at large. If traditional proximate goals or norms fail to do this, she will consider this to be a symptom of the inappropriateness of present structures of the religious congregation, and she will be in favor of replacing them with something more effective.<sup>1</sup> Rejecting the policy of withdrawal from the world, she wants the Church and her community to be an integral part of human society, bringing to it the healing of Christian teaching. As one sister put it: "Sisters don't want to be on a pedestal; they want to be ordinary persons." The "liberal" sister perceives the social structure as something which can be changed through new ideas, new division of labor, and a new ordering of role relations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Adorno et al., op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>2</sup>Neal, Values and Interests in Social Change, p. 101.

The "liberal" sister could also be motivated by interests, which, as we have seen, can masquerade as values. Her understanding of the Christian life will tend to be mediated by the groups to which she belongs--the Church, her congregation, and her own individual convent. If their proximate goals, as formulated by the official leadership, are being achieved, then she will be committed to keeping these social systems functioning well. She has invested so much of herself in the success of the congregation and her own school that her interests have become identified with theirs. But if the institutionalized means of procuring these interests are ineffective, she will be in favor of adopting different means.

The typical "liberal" welcomed change in practically all its forms: "I think we were very ready for the changes, and that's why the young people psychologically have been very much able to accept all the change, because we felt very restricted." Take, for example, the attitude toward change in dress: "The habit has definitely liberated us from all the stereotyped notions which people connected with that." One sister quoted how a ten year old girl who was accustomed to sisters in modern dress described what she meant by a sister: "A sister is someone who is kind and generous and beautiful. To me, that was a beautiful way to be described--instead of somebody in a long black dress, how most Catholics, or many Catholics in the past would have identified the sisters." Yet she is aware of the



problems involved in change: "I think it has been a great struggle; with many sisters it did not come easy, especially the older ones." She knows that the laity don't always accept what sisters are trying to achieve: "People don't like this kind of dress...they don't know what to make of us; they don't like us or trust us as much." Even for a "liberal," change was something of an upheaval: "It was a feeling as if the rug had been pulled out from under us, a kind of lost feeling. We all went through it."<sup>1</sup> The "liberal" sister is typically young or youngish--in her middle forties at the oldest. She tends to be high in educational attainment and is engaged in study or teaching. She is probably a third or fourth generation American citizen, has imbibed very fully the American democratic tradition, wants to express her opinion on all congregational matters, and probably deplores the excessive influence of men, that is to say, priests, over the framing of rules, constitutions, and policies for religious orders of women in the past. She will be person-oriented rather than congregation-oriented, and will want her community to give the fullest scope to each sister to develop her talents and express her personality and individuality without hindrance.

Just as we mentioned the "militant conservative," we must also introduce the "utopian liberal." She speaks and acts as if the millenium were just around the corner; all that is

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<sup>1</sup>All the quotations in this paragraph are from interview material.

necessary is to set people free to turn life into one great "love-in." There could be quite an amount of self-deception in the extreme liberal attitude. She tends to have little taste for providing for the future, for setting up governmental structures and procedures which will give permanence to the new model of the congregation. As one sister said, "There are those who want to move a lot faster and they feel they are being held back by others who don't want to move. The tendency is for those who really want to move faster, instead of putting up with meetings and putting up with things going slowly, they prefer to move out where they can move at their own pace."<sup>1</sup> This moving out into an apartment is, in a sense, a shirking of important issues. Michels comments on the distaste of rank and file members for what they define as "boring" meetings for "the discussion of tactical or theoretical questions, although these are of vital importance to the doctrine or to the organization."<sup>2</sup> To the extreme "liberal" the parousia seems too near to justify spending time on political processes. Her idealism is splendid, her spirit of sacrifice in living the life of fellowship, availability, and nearness to other human beings is impressive. She tends to be considerably younger than the "practical liberal"; in fact, there is a slight element of the cult of youth about her, and a looking askance at anybody over thirty.

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<sup>1</sup>Interview material.

<sup>2</sup>Michels, op. cit., p. 87.

"Some of the people who have been elected are old "idea" people; we need a lot more young "idea" people--younger people with ideas."<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's comment on the feelings inspired in him by the French Revolution express very well the attitude of the "utopian liberal" to the "detotalization" of her community: "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, and to be young was very heaven."

All of this suggests a reflection on the devaluation of age and experience. "The ancient Greeks said that white hairs were the first crowns which must decorate the leaders' foreheads." As Michels pointed out fifty years ago, this was, and is, no longer the case. Accumulated experience of life is not perceived to be necessary today. "Modern education puts at everyone's disposal efficient means of instruction so that even the youngest may speedily become thoroughly well instructed."<sup>2</sup> The "instant generation" can see that youth is on their side, that mere age has lost much of its value, and, consequently, the respect which it inspired and the influence which it wielded. Yet, the older "militant conservative" possesses certain great strengths, and, moreover, her "conduct is guided by a fineness of perception to which the young have not yet attained."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, all liberals are, in a sense,

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<sup>1</sup>Interview material.

<sup>2</sup>Michels, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

handicapped by their liberalism which causes them to shrink from a confrontation with opposing views.

In drawing these two portraits we have been speaking in terms of likelihoods; for example, we have said that a "liberal" sister is likely to have certain characteristics. The form in which the data was made available did not permit a more refined analysis nor the verification of the probability that the same sisters were possessed of a complex of qualities. We have laid some stress on the "age" variable. It does seem to be important, but it leaves much unexplained. All sisters who are over sixty are not "conservatives," nor are all those under thirty "liberals." What, then, causes one sixty year old to be "conservative," and another to be "liberal?" Though this is not a psychological study, a brief answer will be attempted for completeness.

Following Adorno and his colleagues, one can tentatively suggest that such orientations and attitudes are associated with the individual personality structure. Chinoy says that personality is very difficult to define, and that psychologists disagree among themselves "on what elements constitute the personality and on the mechanisms through which the whole psychological system functions."<sup>1</sup> Most would agree that the personality is a more or less enduring organization of forces within the individual. These persisting forces help to

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<sup>1</sup>Ely Chinoy, Society (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 50.

determine responses in various situations and they account for the consistency of behavior. The behavior is not the personality; "personality resides behind the behavior and within the individual."<sup>1</sup> The forces of personality are really readinesses for certain forms of behavior; they are needs, drives, wishes, and emotional impulses which vary from one person to another in quality, strength, mode of satisfaction, and triggering signal. "The structure of the personality as well as many of its components--habits, attitudes, values, beliefs--although built upon anatomical and physiological foundations, is derived largely from the culture, via social relationships."<sup>2</sup> The genetic equipment of human beings evolves under the impact of the social and physical environment, and the earlier these environmental influences exert their force the more effect they have. Hence, the earliest experiences of the child's rearing are crucial. The particular political, physical, economic and social conditions under which children are reared, to some extent, determine what kind of personality they will have. No two children, even in the same family, are reared exactly alike; the variables will be combined in a unique pattern for each child, though there may be enough similarity between these unique patterns to account for recognizable likenesses in personality structure in different human beings.

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<sup>1</sup>Adorno et al., op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Chinoy, op. cit., p. 50.

Thus a strict, traditional upbringing which emphasizes rules and regulations rather than freedom, passive obedience rather than active cooperation, conventional values rather than self-expression, security rather than ambitious innovation, and imitation rather than creativity will tend to produce a rather rigid conservative personality. If the social atmosphere of the home is reinforced by stringent economic conditions, the effect will be heightened still more. Not that this personality structure is ever fixed and static; the process of personality formation continues throughout life.<sup>1</sup> A sister who was brought up very rigidly at home would have her attitudes further strengthened by the old style "total" resocialization into the religious life. We are not to think, however, that the human personality is entirely determined by early environmental influences and later resocialization. The individual is always capable of spontaneous self-initiated action and is not simply an automaton actuated by forces outside the self. Yet, the original structure of needs, which is called personality, is very resistant to change and will incline to respond to stimuli related to these needs.<sup>2</sup> In the present situation of on-going change among the sisters of St. Raphael, change whose end cannot be foreseen, sisters whose personality structure is rooted in non-change and preservation of the status quo cannot avoid internal conflict and pain.

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>2</sup>Adorno et al., op. cit., pp. 6-7.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DEBUREAUCRATIZATION:

#### A PROCESS ANALOGOUS TO "DETOTALIZATION"

We have looked at the changes in this religious sisterhood as a process of "detotalization." Changing our point of view slightly, it is possible to see that the Sisterhood of St. Raphael was a complex organization or even a bureaucratic structure in the strict Weberian sense; the process of change would then be a "debureaucratization" of the congregation. Before the recent onset of change, the sisterhood of St. Raphael conformed substantially with the distinctive characteristics which Weber detected in bureaucracies and which are summarized by Blau and Scott.<sup>1</sup>

Michels sees bureaucracies as an environment of bondage, perhaps not quite as "total" as that which Goffman saw in religious institutions:

"Bureaucracy is the sworn enemy of individual liberty, and of all bold initiative in matters of internal policy.... The bureaucratic spirit corrupts character and engenders moral poverty. In every bureaucracy we may observe place hunting, a mania for promotion, and obsequiousness towards those on whom promotion depends;

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<sup>1</sup>Peter M. Blau and Richard Scott, Formal Organizations (San Francisco: Chandler, 1962), pp. 32-33.

there is arrogance toward inferiors and servility toward superiors.<sup>1</sup>

This is a savage denunciation which cannot be applied literally to the religious congregations. Yet, our next task is to show that the St. Raphael Congregation had some bureaucratic qualities.

1. "The tasks of the organization are distributed among the various positions as official duties." We find this division of labor among the Sisters of St. Raphael. Some were administrators, others were professors and teachers of various disciplines at various levels, others looked after domestic arrangements and the care of the sick. This allowed, or rather demanded, a high degree of training in specialized fields. Teachers at different levels of education require appropriate qualifications for their jobs, headmistresses of schools require courses in educational administration, those who care for the sick need training as nurses. This specialization develops expertness among the sisters. Appointments to particular tasks were made on the basis of the sisters' expertness, at least to the extent that a nurse would not be assigned to teach philosophy nor would a philosopher normally be assigned to nursing.

2. "The positions or offices are organized into a hierarchical authority structure." This was clearly true of the sisterhood. There was a pyramid of authority with the Superior

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<sup>1</sup>Michels, op. cit., p. 191.



General at the apex, provincial or regional superiors lower down; beneath them came the local superiors of individual convents, and at the lowest level the rank and file of the sisters. Each superior officer was responsible to the superior above her in the hierarchy for her own decisions and actions, and also for those of her subordinates. The extent of each superior officer's competence in giving commands and granting permissions was clearly defined by rule.

3. "A formally established system of rules and regulations governed official decisions and actions." As we have already seen, the constitutions and rules of the sisterhood regulated, or sought to regulate, not merely actions, but even the thoughts of the members. This achieved a high degree of uniformity in the sisters' behavior and made possible the coordination of their activities in achieving the congregation's goals. Its operations were also continuous and stable despite the transfer of sisters from convent house to house.

4. "Officials are expected to assume an impersonal orientation in their contacts with clients and other officials." There is some difficulty here; the immediate reaction of many members of a religious order would be to deny that was the case in their own congregation. Nevertheless, we have seen that the rule of this congregation obliged the sisters to shun carefully "all particular friendships" "as most hurtful to true charity."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Constitutions, #12.

They were also to strive to divest themselves "of every inordinate affection, especially as to places, employments, and persons."<sup>1</sup> No interpretation of these rules will be attempted here; it is enough to record that 40% were "very much or somewhat bothered" by "failure to be accepted by the group,"<sup>2</sup> only 27% of sisters considered "communication between age groups" to be good, only 20% thought "that openness to each other's opinions" was good, 52% considered good "the opportunity to establish genuine friendships with religious and lay persons," only 21% thought that the sisters' "honesty with each other" was good and 20% said that "sensitivity to the real needs of other sisters" was good. Further evidence on this point is supplied by a Community Life Questionnaire which was sent to 134 sisters who left the Congregation between January, 1955, and July, 1967. Of the fifty-five who responded, 60% had "experienced a lack of warm interpersonal relations in community."<sup>3</sup> This evidence suggests a degree of impersonality in the relationship between sisters. In bureaucracies such impersonality is thought to conduce to maintenance of discipline and observance of the rules. It is also characteristic of specialist relationships where "each person is concerned with somewhat less than all of the actual or

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., #13. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>2</sup>SRSQ, Section III, F8.

<sup>3</sup>Benz and Sage, Self-Study for Renewal, p. 61.

potential needs of the other." When specialists interact in a bureaucracy, their relationship tends to be partial and functional, to be "secondary" rather than "primary." For a different reason, namely the religious ideology of "detachment from all created things," relationships between the sisters had this bureaucratic character. As Victor A. Thompson points out,<sup>1</sup> such relationships are not necessarily "cold or painful." There can be some human warmth and mutual appreciation as is found between doctor and patient, householder and postman, but the relationship remains "secondary" in character.

5. "Employment by the organization constitutes a career for officials" so that typically an employee envisages a life-long career in the agency. This is very true of our sisterhood; in fact, the members are bound by vow to spend their whole lives in the service of the Congregation. In the past, relatively few perpetually professed sisters left the community; admittedly, conditions are somewhat different at present. As we have seen, since January, 1955, an average of 10 sisters left the Congregation each year.

Blau and Scott go on to declare that "those organizing principles maximize rational decision-making and administrative efficiency."<sup>2</sup> Granted the ideological premises upon which the

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<sup>1</sup>Victor A. Thompson, "The Concept of Bureaucracy," The Government of Associations, ed. Glaser and Sills (New Jersey: The Bedminster Press, 1966), p. 111.

<sup>2</sup>Blau and Scott, op.cit., p. 33.

whole concept of the religious life rests, it is probably accurate to say that the bureaucratic structures which we have identified in the make-up of this sisterhood contributed to the rational achievement of its goals and to efficiency in administration. As we have seen, of course, this did not make the congregation a utopia in which all the members were blissfully happy. In modern industrialized urban life in particular there is always a tension between the success of a complex organization as measured by its "productivity" and the possible dearth of job satisfaction and contentment which it inflicts upon its members.

Under the influence of the changes initiated by Vatican II, this sisterhood has tended to tone down, modify, or even lose some of the characteristics of a Weberian bureaucracy. We have called this process a "detotalization," as representing a movement away from the "total" organization to which Goffman addressed himself. Other authors like Katz, Eisenstadt, and Blau whose frame of reference was bureaucracies have called this a process of "debureaucratization."<sup>1</sup> From an analysis of case studies in which this phenomenon was noted, these authors came

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<sup>1</sup>Elihu Katz and S. N. Eisenstadt, "Some Sociological Observations on the Response of Israeli Organizations to New Immigrants," Admin. Sc. Quarterly, V (Spring, 1960), pp. 113-133. S. N. Eisenstadt, "Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization, and Debureaucratization," Complex Organizations, ed. Amitai Etzioni (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), pp. 268-277. Blau and Scott, op. cit., pp. 232-234.

to the conclusion that "the presence of physical danger, and the isolation of the unit from the larger organization" gave rise to tendencies to relax hierarchical authority. Such conditions of stress, they argue, "make superiors in some respects dependent on their subordinates," this dependence causes them to abandon authoritarian and coercive methods in dealing with the rank and file, and instead, to employ more personal, non-bureaucratic means for securing their cooperation.

Applying this insight to the Sisters of St. Raphael, one can see immediately that, since Vatican II, they have lived under conditions of stress. The danger, in their case, is not one of physical injury to the individual but a danger to the existence of the congregation as a corporate body. Vatican II's "Decree on the Renewal of the Religious Life" compelled them to look critically at themselves, to examine their raison d'etre, to ask themselves who and what they were. In my own congregation this has led to a kind of identity-crisis and has induced questionings about our function and usefulness in the Church. I have reason to believe that the Sisters of St. Raphael experienced this too. When one adds to these questionings a falling off in recruitment, a marked increase in the rate of those leaving the religious life and greater acceptance of this on the part of the people at large, one arrives at a situation in which the very existence of the congregation seems endangered. The CMSW Survey reveals that in April, 1964, 22% of the sisters

had thought "seriously about leaving their order for secular life" within the last two years, while 72% had not. It was mainly the younger sisters, the hope of the congregation's future, who had entertained these doubts. The figures for the age groups are as follows: under 30, 52%; 31-40, 30%; 41-50, 16%; 51-60, 7%; 61-70, 3%; over 70, 2%. The later SRSQ reveals that 62% of the respondents were "actually bothered or upset" by fear for the religious life, 18% being very much bothered, 19% somewhat bothered, and 25% a little bothered.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the same survey found 64% of the sisters upset by fear of a formal split in the Congregation.<sup>2</sup> In both cases, the number of those bothered by fear and the degree of fear expressed, increased with the age of the sisters concerned.

Was there also an element of isolation in the situation? It is not clear that there was. The Sisterhood remained part of the biggest single Catholic Church; the process of renewal was affecting all other religious congregations also; hence this congregation did not stand alone. Yet if one contrasts the post-Vatican II era, its self-scrutinies and its questionings with the reigns of Pius XI and Pius XII, so secure in their certitudes, one can imagine how the members of a religious sisterhood would feel insecure, unprotected, exposed in an age when everything seemed to be called into question. This is a

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<sup>1</sup>"SRSQ," Section III, F18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Section III, F17.

feeling analogous to that of isolation; it is generated by a realization that now each individual sister, as well as the collectivity, is being asked to take very important decisions which will affect their whole way of life. Superiors must have felt this very poignantly. Now, perhaps, for the first time and to an unprecedented degree, the opinion of each and every sister, however junior, was to count. When they voted on authority structure, they were really expressing assessments of their own superiors; their voices might cause superiority itself, as it was formerly known and practiced, to disappear; in short, they could achieve the equivalent of deposing their superiors, who were to that extent dependent on them. No doubt, subordinate sisters became conscious of their new importance, of what can almost be described as their new power in the community, as contrasted with their former complete subjection. Without subjects being in any way disobedient, it is conceivable that the changed situation disrupted the role performance of superiors as practiced up to the onset of change. In such a changed set of circumstances, it is altogether likely that superiors did not know how to act appropriately in the superior-subject relationship. All of the factors which have been discussed would lessen the degree of bureaucratization of the sisterhood.

In speaking of "detotalization" we mentioned the new interest in the individual and her personal development which

the congregation has displayed. Fitting the training to the various interests, aptitudes, and abilities of individuals, planning for their growth and maturation as persons, assigning them to missions in keeping with their wishes are all symptoms of debureaucratization. Bureaucracy, as we have seen, is impersonal, looking to the role rather than to the person who plays the role, and regarding individuals as interchangeable, provided they have had similar training in a specialized function.

A falling off in the recruitment of new members is also a significant factor. The congregation mainly attracted new entrants from the high schools and colleges which it conducted, and to a lesser extent, and indirectly, from the grammar schools. Recruitment depends to a large extent on the image projected by the sisters who work and teach in these schools. If they are happy, secure, and satisfied with their life and work, if they confidently believe that they have been adequately trained for and are engaged in a worthwhile apostolate for God and men, they will subtly convey this message to their pupils, often without direct words. Hence, the fact that sisters leave the community and that much fewer apply for entry cannot simply be explained away by saying that people nowadays have little spirit of self-sacrifice. Rather, it leads to a fundamental examination to find out why sisters lack conviction about the value of their lives and their work. Ultimately the suitability of the



training of entrants and of the life-style of individual convents will be called in question. They will seek to make these more attractive to young girls, aesthetically, spiritually and materially. In a sense, the sisterhood will be obliged "to offer more and more concessions to serve as inducements"<sup>1</sup> for postulants. Again, this makes the leaders of the organization more dependent on its members, or perhaps, its clientele. This will inevitably lead to the dropping of cast-iron bureaucratic procedures and rules, both in training and in day-to-day living. Again we have a trend towards debureaucratization, towards informality, personalism, and particularism in the conduct of life.

Eisenstadt focuses on another form of dependence which can affect an organization, namely, dependence on its clientele in terms of their being able to go to a competing agency. When an organization has a monopoly on certain goods and services, there is little chance of effective protest on the part of the client and no possibility of recourse to a competitor. Under such conditions, bureaucrats may permit themselves an attitude of detachment and ritualistic formalism vis-a-vis their clients. Conversely, an organization which is "aware that its clients have a choice between it and a competitor" ought to be less bureaucratic.<sup>2</sup> This, he says, forces the organization to

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<sup>1</sup>Blau and Scott, op.cit., p. 234.

<sup>2</sup>Eisenstadt, loc. cit., p. 254.

develop techniques of communication and additional services to retain its clientele;" it makes the organization more sensitive to the different types of demands by the clientele for services in spheres which are not directly relevant to its main goals. If one considers the various levels of grammar, high schools and colleges conducted by the St. Raphael sisters, one is aware that at all these levels they must compete with public and state schools. While the sisters take care of the finances of their own colleges, it is the pastors of the local parishes who manage the finances of their schools. And unfortunately, money is the key to many problems in conducting schools. Catholic schools and colleges with very limited funds, are badly handicapped in competing with public schools which, in theory, have virtually unlimited public moneys to draw upon.<sup>1</sup> The public schools can afford to pay teachers a higher salary and thus attract, in theory, the best teachers; they can provide more textbooks, better libraries, better facilities for teaching the physical sciences, in a word, better amenities of all kinds. Nowadays, the Church does not press quite so hard her disciplinary ideal that all Catholic children should attend Catholic schools. In accounting for the origin and growth of Catholic schools, Greeley and Rossi don't even mention this prescription of Canon Law; it seems unlikely, then, that it is perceived as

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew M. Greeley and Peter H. Rossi, The Education of Catholic Americans (New York: Anchor Books, 1968), p. viii.

an imperative by American Catholics. Furthermore, Greeley and Rossi hold that "there is no evidence that Catholic schools have been necessary for the survival of American Catholicism."<sup>1</sup> Family religious background and social class have more influence on religious behavior than religious education, the main effect of which is "to make the elite more elite," while its absence does not seem to lead to a notable decline in minimal allegiance.<sup>2</sup> Rising costs of education and the imperative of maintaining comparable standards to those of the public schools are causing tuition fees to be increased at all levels of Catholic education. A combination of all these factors which have been mentioned is impelling more and more Catholic parents to send their children to public institutions, at least for part of their formal education. This has made the Sisters more dependent on their clientele. Communication with parents of parochial school children, a willingness to listen to them, to exchange views with them, to be guided by them, is becoming ever more important for the Sisters. In short, a client-oriented professional attitude is replacing the bureaucratic attitude of treating all alike according to rules and regulations. In a bureaucratized religious community there is a tendency for rules and regulations to become ends in themselves, and this is a well-known dysfunction of bureaucratic organizations. Under

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 236.

the influence of the changes inspired by the ecumenical council, the rules and regulations are being de-emphasized; now, they are seen to be useful, in so far as they are a means for the personal development of the individual sister as a religious professional, or as a means for the better service of the clients, namely, the pupils and their parents. We shall have to come back briefly to the future prospects of parochial schools when we come to discuss the necessary conditions for a religious congregation to remain in existence; one of these conditions is that its services be needed and desired by its clientele; an organization must have an attainable goal or goals.

In his study of the navy disbursing officer during wartime, Turner indicated several factors which led these officers to depart from their bureaucratic orientation toward the strict observance of the rule book and to treat some of their clients as favored individuals. I wish to pick out two of these. (1) Many clients of the disbursing officer were his superiors in rank and consequently his superiors in other role relationships; (2) it was to his advantage to give special treatment to those from whom he could expect a return of favors. As Eisenstadt remarks, "the attempt to behave in the accepted bureaucratic manner, or even more, to be overbureaucratic--is what apparently leads to desertion (where one is able to leave) or to mutiny (where one cannot)."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>S. N. Eisenstadt, Essays on Comparative Institutions (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), p. 255.

It can and does happen in religious congregations that in certain areas of life the superior and subject find their roles reversed, that is, the subject becomes the dominant element in the relationship. The commonest case of this is when the subordinate's professional knowledge and skill in her area of specialization surpasses that of the superior. And this may be an area where the superior is least competent, though the task in hand demands the highest competence. If the task is to be done well, the superior needs the advice of her subordinate far beyond the call of prescribed duty. At times this can compel the superior to cultivate the goodwill of certain expert sisters from whom she needs special favors. One case of this is when the superior needs to "pick the brains" of her subordinate, and then use the ideas gained as if they were her own in dealing with people outside the religious community, thus safeguarding the Congregation's reputation for enlightened administration. To get help of this kind is to look for a special favor from her subordinate; it is morally impossible to persevere in an attitude of strict rule-observing formality under such circumstances; the superior will be inclined to make a return for the special service by granting such favors as are within her gift. All of this is a movement away from bureaucracy. This most commonly happens when a superior directs a community in which there are some highly qualified sisters who are experts in their own field. Contrary to the traditional

practice whereby the superior was obliged to behave as if she were the sole repository of all wisdom and knowledge, the superiors, aware of the complexity of the contemporary world, know that they need the help and advice of expert members of their community. This consideration is the link which now brings us to consider the growth of professionalism among sisters.

#### Professionalism: A Possible Modification of Bureaucracy

Harold Wilensky wonders if complex organizations of the bureaucratic type are compatible with professionalism. In terms of the Sisterhood of St. Raphael, this question resolves itself into the inquiry: can sisters with a high degree of specialized training retain the autonomy characteristic of a professional within the framework of a rule-bound hierarchical religious community? Let us put together a profile of the ideal-typical professional person, and then, at a later stage, see to what extent our data support the hypothesis, that, if we abstract from the sister's salient role, we shall still find that there is a considerable amount of professional attitude among the sisters.

Fichter quotes Justice Brandeis defining a profession as "an occupation for which the special preliminary training is intellectual in character, involving knowledge and to some extent learning, as distinguished from mere skill; which is pursued largely for others and not merely for one's own self; and in which the financial return is not the accepted measure

of success."<sup>1</sup> In relation to the Sisters of St. Raphael, it may now be asked if, abstracting from their professional status as college lecturers or teachers, they are professionals in their key role of consecrated persons? The Vatican Council seems to think not. Speaking of the training of religious personnel it had this to say: "Throughout their lives religious should labor earnestly to perfect their spiritual, doctrinal and professional development."<sup>2</sup> This seems to distinguish clearly between the religious and professional sides of a sister's life. As Fichter points out, many of the activities of a teaching nun in her key role of religious person are routinized and repetitive and don't call for the use of much highly sophisticated knowledge, skills, or techniques. Furthermore, the idea of direct service of humanity is absent from these activities--and this is a quality which is generally found in a profession, especially one of the older professions like those of medicine and the law. It is true, of course, that in Church teaching, a close link is seen between the service of God and the service of man, the latter being, as it were, an overflow or an expression in action of the former.

I shall take as my starting point in drawing a profile of the ideal-typical professional the definition which pinpoints

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Fichter, Religion as an Occupation (University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 164.

<sup>2</sup>Abbott, op. cit., p. 479.

a professional as a person whose occupation consists in the pursuit of science or liberal learning or in the practice of sophisticated skills based on a theoretical system in such fields as medicine, technology, law, and teaching. The typical professional is an expert in some branch of learning; he has a fund of deep theoretical knowledge acquired by means of formal education in an academic setting. Part of that formal education may have to do with practical skills which will be typically acquired by some sort of internship or practical work done under the supervision of his teachers. If skill is important in his work, it will not be mere manual dexterity or facility in routinized mechanical action, but it will be founded on a theoretical base. He is no jack-of-all-trades, but a highly trained performer in his chosen field of specialization. There is a strong element of rationality in his make-up; typically he will have an inquiring, probing, questioning attitude which disinclines him to be content with accepted, rule-of-thumb solutions to the problems which arise in his work. He will measure success by the approval and recognition which he wins from his professional colleagues; as a corollary, he will have great regard for their skill and knowledge. Hence, he will value greatly the fellowship which he experiences from them which is based on their shared interests and ideals. This solidarity is fostered by attendance at professional congresses, by reading specialist journals, and by his urge to keep abreast



of developments in his field. His knowledge, constantly added to, permits him to speak with some authority on matters within his competence, and enhances his clients' trust in him.

A professional's work calls for a considerable amount of initiative, creativity, and personal responsibility. He will not allow his work to become routinized or standardized; each client is unique to him, each consultation different and requiring the concentration of his entire knowledge and skill for the client's benefit. This idea of service outweighs any motive of self-interest or financial gain; his work is primarily expressive and only secondarily instrumental, and he is totally involved in, and dedicated to it. If his situation lends itself to it, he will be interested in research and in extending the boundaries of knowledge. His commitment to his profession causes him to honor its ethical code which regulates his relationships with colleagues and clients. Central to this code, of course, is the ideal of service to the human race which inspires such confidence in people that they put their affairs in his hands with something like complete trust. Such service is very important to society, which awards the professional with high esteem and recognition of the achieved status which is his.

How does this profile of the professional fit the Sisters of St. Raphael? Our data will not cover all the professional characteristics which I have touched upon, but

enough may emerge to show roughly where they stand. As a preliminary, it is well to say that one expects a person to be professionalized in his key role. This seems not to be the case with the sisters whose key role is that of nun; indeed, it is questionable if the occupation of a "nun" comes under the definition of a profession. It follows that it is in their quality as teachers that we must look for the professional character. Fichter points out that the two commonest secondary roles of nuns, namely nursing and teaching, have moved toward professional status "through the efforts of people who are quite outside the religious vocation."<sup>1</sup> Both nuns and teaching priests and brothers have been swept along toward professional status by a wave of professionalism among their lay colleagues. The pioneering first members of the St. Raphael Congregation did not have university training; they simply started to teach and learned on the job. Their successors, if they wished to keep abreast of lay teachers in state schools, had to be their equals in academic qualifications. As Wilensky shows, one step in the drive toward professionalism is to demand proper training for practitioners, if possible to arrange that this training is given in a university, and then demand that it be made obligatory for all entrants to the occupation. This pressure for academic qualifications as a requirement for accreditation of schools has had its effect on the Sisters of St. Raphael. As we

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<sup>1</sup>Fichter, op. cit., p. 104.

have seen, they were among the first to enroll as students at the Catholic University of America. In 1964, the data show that they were a very well educated Congregation: 33% had graduate school training, 47% had college education, 15% post high school education. As regards the practical side of teaching, it is arguable that sister teachers are much better off than their lay colleagues. Not merely do they take the college courses in education and the customary teaching practice just like non-religious teachers, but they have as support a teaching tradition and accumulated wisdom of over one hundred years which they can draw upon. Their religious life socializes them into the art of teaching; advice is always close at hand; they don't necessarily have to learn by their own mistakes as individual lay teachers are obliged to do. It is possible that their being the inheritors of a long tradition could cause them to be old-fashioned and unprogressive in their methods, yet I feel sure that their university courses in education are an adequate corrective, if this danger should arise. From the point of view of learning, it seems to me that the sisters satisfy professional requirements; at the college level many of the sisters who teach have Ph.D. degrees; at the high school and grade school level, all have an A.B. degree or a Master's degree. Nevertheless, 18% are "very much bothered" and 20% "somewhat bothered" by their own inadequate academic preparation for their work.

In a very real sense, the sisters' positions as college, high school or grade school teachers are achieved statuses, since virtually all of them have the qualifications, academic and other, which are the minimum requirements for holding these posts. Yet, where the college or high school is administered by Church authorities, they do not necessarily gain their appointment by open competition with all applicants. If the college or school is to have "religious atmosphere," it may be felt that certain positions must be held by sisters. Hence, sisters may be appointed in preference to equally well or better qualified lay people. Whenever this is the case, the positions held by the sisters have quite an element of "ascribed," as distinct from "achieved" status. They are preceived to be professionals by the vast majority of their clients as the following table will show. The figures are from a survey on attitudes toward religious sisters carried out in 1967. Respondents were asked to express their attitude to the statement "Sisters are professional women and competent in their fields of work." Among the students, those who have least immediate experience of sister teachers tend to rate them lowest. The adults tend to rate them highest. Was the teaching better when they were at school or college, or are they viewing their lost youth through rose-tinted spectacles? Who knows? Undergraduate college women are inclined to lower their rating of sisters as professionals as they move into their senior year.

College women rate them lower than high school girls do. But the overall picture is a very favorable one, granted the limited number of naturally gifted teachers in any sample of the profession. Sisters generally perceive themselves to be just as competent and expert in their field as lay teachers; only 9% of respondents to the SRSQ considered themselves less adequate than lay colleagues.<sup>1</sup>

When sisters were asked what they thought of most frequently as their apostolate, 76%, the highest for any option, thought often about "serving others through the cause of education."<sup>2</sup> So the idea of professional service is strongly present. Furthermore, 75% thought that "working with an individual student with a special difficulty or problem" was "very important to her overall vocation."<sup>3</sup> But sisters, it seems, are not satisfied that they meet the individual differences of all their clients adequately. There are many indications that they would like to be more skilled in counselling and guidance in order to help pupils who have problems. One example must suffice. Asked to what degree did they regard as desirable an "increase in sisters trained in counselling and guidance," 77% marked it very desirable and 14% somewhat desirable.<sup>4</sup> 24% found attendance at professional

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, Section III, E3.

<sup>2</sup>SRSQ, Section I, A2.

<sup>3</sup>SRSQ, Section I, C7.

<sup>4</sup>SRSQ, I, D3.

TABLE 46

PERCENTAGE OF VARIOUS "CLIENT" GROUPS WHO CONSIDER  
SISTERS TO BE PROFESSIONAL AND COMPETENT<sup>a</sup>

Group Sampled	Strongly Agree & Agree	Don't Know	Disagree & Strongly Disagree	No. of Cases
College Women, Seniors	73	13	11	102
College Women, Freshmen	79	12	5	256
College Women, Undergrads., All years	65	18	14	240
College Men, Sophomores	61	21	14	304
College Men, Juniors and Seniors	57	16	24	43
High School Girls	75	13	9	685
High School Students, (Male & Female), Coed.	66	18	12	M=203 F=281
Mothers of High School Girls	88	5	4	84
Parents in Innercity	79	6	10	M= 70 F=105

<sup>a</sup>Questionnaire on Attitudes to Religious Sisters  
carried out by a sister of St. Raphael in 1967.

conventions very satisfying to them personally, 30% found it somewhat satisfying.<sup>1</sup> We must remember here that 21% of the sisters felt "less themselves" at a professional education meeting than when at home in the convent<sup>2</sup> and this may explain why more of them do not find such meetings satisfying. Eighty-one per cent considered reading theoretical books and articles pertaining to their field important, and a comparable figure, 75%, found it satisfying.<sup>3</sup> Quite a large percentage (41%) thought it desirable that sisters should have adequate professional allowances to enable them to buy books and journals.<sup>4</sup> From these data it seems clear that professional interest in their field of knowledge is present to a considerable degree. This is also shown by their interest in summer schools, seminars, workshops, and other academic activities. For example, 63% thought desirable "opportunity for employment by government, universities, or foundations in special projects," though only 28% would like it for themselves.<sup>5</sup>

The Sisters of St. Raphael show very distinct signs of judging events by the standards of the professional educator rather than by those of the nun. They aspire to complete

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, I, C11.

<sup>2</sup>SRSQ, III, B4.

<sup>3</sup>SRSQ, I, C4.

<sup>4</sup>SRSQ, I, D21.

<sup>5</sup>SRSQ, III, W10.

academic freedom; 34% found very burdensome, and 16% found somewhat burdensome, "the censorship of articles and writings produced by sisters."<sup>1</sup> They want autonomy to do a professional job as they see fit; 38% confess to having been bothered by the interference of the principal in their work and 41% by interference on the part of the pastor.<sup>2</sup> Yet, asked to assess the likelihood of their "following the suggestions of the superior in planning classes even against their own better judgment," 15% said it would definitely happen that way, 29% said it was possible, while 36% weren't sure.<sup>3</sup> I suggest that here we may have a case of role conflict, the "obedient sister" role winning some mastery over the "professional teacher" role. An opposite trend is now appearing. Present experiments of collegial government in the convent are having the effects on the school. Sisters are inclined to import democratic methods from the convent into the school and want to discuss and debate school procedures.<sup>4</sup> Large schools which are run on bureaucratic lines with all commands emanating from the top are not accustomed to this sort of thing. It is a strange reversal of the former pattern when the school had a more free atmosphere than the

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, III, D8.

<sup>2</sup>SRSQ, I, F3 and 4.

<sup>3</sup>SRSQ, III, G7.

<sup>4</sup>Interview material.



"total" convent. Now the freedom of the convent threatens the tight bureaucratic procedures of the school!

The sisters show great eagerness to have the schools they teach administered by skilled professionals; 81% voted for mandatory professional training for principals, 71% wanted very much the establishment of procedures for the removal of an incompetent principal. Again there is a strong flavor of professionalism in the 52% who favored very much the principal of the school making the final decision on staffing the school and not the provincial.<sup>1</sup> Clearly educational considerations led to this expression of preference. This is confirmed by the 37% who are or were very much bothered and the 24% who are or were somewhat bothered by the assignment of teachers to schools on non-educational grounds, namely, the needs of the Province.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it is quite interesting to note whose advice the sisters think valuable in matters of school administration. The highest vote, 75%, goes to professional colleagues, especially members of their own Congregation. Contrast this with 21% for pastors and 38% for the bishop and the diocesan education director; I suggest this shows no lack of respect for these officials but simply an indication that they are not professional educators. I find it harder to explain a meager 46% who would listen to "professors-researchers in graduate

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, IV, 10, 13, 14.

<sup>2</sup>SRSQ, I, F20.

schools of education," except perhaps, that these might be considered doctrinaire theorists who are out of touch with the realities of the school situation--an allegation against university departments of education which is neither uncommon nor always unjustified.

Relevant here also is the attitude of sisters towards titles given to leaders at various levels in the Congregation. We have seen that they overwhelmingly reject titles which imply a superordinate-subordinate relationship. Much of this rejection can be explained with reference to the sisters' key role as nuns. Yet one cannot exclude as an explanation a yearning for peer relationships with the school principal who, in the past, was almost invariably religious superior also. It seems to me that the sisters regard themselves as professional educators who should enjoy colleague relationships with school principals and other administrators.

It can be held, then, that there is some evidence of professional attitudes among the Sisters of St. Raphael in their capacity of teachers. I'm not sure that they were fully aware of this themselves in 1967. When asked which goals for the religious life were important for them in 1967, only 11% included among the three or four most important "to become a competent member of the teaching profession." It may be that the wording of the question suggested a dichotomy between the religious life and one's teaching life; at any rate, the

highest votes went to "following a vocation I felt called to" (84%) and other spiritual ideals. It seems to me that there is much more of the professional teacher qualities in the sisters than this response would lead one to suspect; anyhow it cannot be taken in isolation but must be interpreted in the light of all the data.

By examining the available data, we have discovered that there is some evidence of professional characteristics among the sisters of St. Raphael. The data in their present form don't allow us to differentiate, for example, between highly educated sisters and those less highly educated. It is conceivable that sisters who hold doctorates and, perhaps, master's degrees, and who teach at college level, show professional traits much more clearly than those less well educated who teach at lower levels. This might be expected to happen in the case of sisters who are individual-oriented rather than collectivity-oriented, that is to say, those whose primary motivation is one of self-fulfillment rather than one of service to the religious organization.<sup>1</sup> It would require further research to verify this hypothesis; anyhow, it is not central to our theme. Our concern is with debureaucratization; we may, however, ask ourselves if the growth of professionalism is a symptom of the debureaucratization of the congregation.

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<sup>1</sup>Sister Roseanne Murphy, "Organizational Change and the Individual: A Case of the Religious Community," Sociological Analysis, XXV (Summer, 1964), pp. 93-94.

Wilensky devotes some attention to the problem of a possible threat to professional orientation by the circumstance of professionals being employed by a bureaucratic organization. In such a case, does the professional lose some of his autonomy, as compared with a self-employed professional, since his bureaucratic superiors can countermand or veto his suggestions? He has come to believe that it depends first, on the degree to which "the organization itself is infused with professionalism" ... and whether the services of the professionals involved are scarce."<sup>1</sup> In the case of the sisters, I learned from interviews that professionalism is growing amongst them especially at the higher levels of education. Moreover, though there may be a plentiful supply of professional teachers, there is a great and increasing shortage of sister-professionals. This makes it likely that sister-professionals will enjoy more and more autonomy and academic freedom in the future, particularly in the context of a congregation which is determined to be less "total" and less bureaucratic. Besides, it is not at all clear to Wilensky that the self-employed have necessarily more autonomy than those employed by complex organizations. He recalls that bureaucratically organized clergy in Germany resisted the Nazis more consistently than fee-taking physicians who often worked for the Nazis. Besides, in talking about the

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Wilensky, "The Professionalization of Everyone?" AJS, LXX (September, 1964), p. 147.

degree of autonomy enjoyed by a professional who is employed by a complex organization, it is useful to distinguish between an autonomous and heteronomous professional organization.<sup>1</sup> In the former type, the work of the professional is subject to his own rather than administrative jurisdiction, whereas in a heteronomous professional organization, the professional employees are subjected to an externally derived system. An example of the latter would be a school where the system is controlled by a school board which tries to impose a considerable degree of uniformity on all schools. In such a setting the level of autonomy is likely to be less than in a college where the controls are internal to the college. This is a further reason why we should find more professionalism among sisters who teach in the congregation's two colleges.

Richard Hall observes that professional workers "impart standards into the organization to which the organization must adjust." This could be a serious source of conflict if the professional and organizational standards do not coincide. His opinion is that "autonomy, as an important professional attribute is most strongly inversely related to bureaucratization,"<sup>2</sup> but that conflict between the two is not unavoidable. Indeed, in some cases an equilibrium may exist between the two

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<sup>1</sup>Richard H. Hall, "Professionalization and Bureaucratization," ASR, XXXIII (February, 1968), p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

in the sense that bureaucratic organization may actually ease the work of professionals by serving coordination and communication functions, by defining operational areas in a way that the profession has not succeeded in doing, and by maintaining enough control to see that this delimitation of areas is respected. He would say, then, that "an assumption of inherent conflict between the professional....and the employing organization appears to be unwarranted."<sup>1</sup> In the case which concerns us, the transition is much less violent than in the case of an organization which in a short time "imports" a number of fully fledged professionals. In our case, the sisters are already members of the congregation and gradually become professionals under its aegis. It is a gradual development, not a startling change.

A sister, in a sense, has to cope with bureaucratic trends from two sources: first, from her congregation, and we have seen that this is diminishing, second, from the college or school where she works, and bureaucratic trends from this do not seem to be declining. Wilensky sees danger to the professional's ideal of service to the client from such large organizations as hospitals. These are often operated for profit; many of their procedures are to facilitate teaching and research, perhaps even the convenience of their personnel, rather than the welfare of the client. This is much less likely in a college or school.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

As Hall remarks, "on belief in service to the public and sense-of-calling-to-the-field attributes, both of which are related to a sense of dedication to the profession, teachers .... emerge as strongly professionalized." He adds a remark which is true a fortiori of teaching sisters, namely that this may be related to the relatively low financial compensation which they receive, "since dedication seems necessary if one is to continue in the field."<sup>1</sup>

It is idle to pretend that a sister's position as religious person and professional teacher, as a member of two bureaucratic organizations and as a professional educator do not involve some dilemmas. These dilemmas were probably greater before Vatican Council II when the demands of the religious organization were so all-pervasive as to be a constant curb to professional development. Now that the sisterhood of St. Raphael has become less "total" in its domination of the individual, there is a distinct possibility that professionalism may encroach upon the religious character of the sister; the key role may become less important to the individual sister than the professional educator's role. As the congregation sends an increasing number of sisters to gain doctorates and stresses the development of each sister's individuality, one can predict more role conflict in this area. As Fichter points out, the bureaucratic form of organization is oriented towards procedure,

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<sup>1</sup>Hall, op. cit., p. 97.

the prescribed established way in which things are done, while professional ideology is oriented to the function, that is, to the best possible way of doing a thing. This conflict, of course, need never arise if the bureaucratic religious organization were to accept the professional thinking as to mode of operation. And, in a very real sense, the emphasis upon improved education on the part of the St. Raphael congregation is a tacit acceptance of this. Bernard Häring, in an address to the sisters, warned them against narrow traditionalism: "the founders and foundresses of communities ... tried to do what was necessary at their times and if we continue to do only what they told us to do 200 years ago, we are not of their race. We are then buried with their bodies but are not living with their spirit."<sup>1</sup> They have taken this advice to heart. This underlines one of the reasons for the changes in the congregation. It is now seen as an instrument to achieve certain purposes, not as an end in itself. The instrument is now being made to serve the purpose. An attempt is being made to bring about convergence between regulations for the performance of the key religious role and the regulations for performing the professional teacher's role. This is a delicate operation. The professional role suffered in the past; it is conceivable that the religious role may suffer in the future. Fichter holds that

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard Häring, quoted in Proceedings of the Institute on Problems that Unite Us, p. 108.



in great modern organizations, professionals are able "to maintain without inconsistency a double loyalty: to their professional specialization and to their position within the bureaucracy."<sup>1</sup> Religious sisters will be attempting to achieve all this under circumstances of special difficulty. They have three roles to perform: that of the religious person, that of the professional teacher, and that of a member of a domestic, familial communal group. In theatrical terms, they have to play all three roles involving different sets of relationships with virtually the same cast before virtually the same audience. A physician doesn't have to attempt this; his domestic role is played in a different place with different people in contrast to his professional role. The debureaucratization of the Congregation of St. Raphael eases the task considerably for the professional-teacher-sister, but it would be over-optimistic to say that most of the problems are solved.

Having now seen "detotalization" and debureaucratization at work, helped by the growth of professionalism among the sisters, we must now ask ourselves if the Congregation of St. Raphael retains the elements essential to a formal organization.

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<sup>1</sup>Fichter, op. cit., p. 230.

## CHAPTER IX

### IMPERATIVES FOR THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE CONGREGATION

An organization is a social unit, or a human grouping, deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals.<sup>1</sup> From its very beginning, the Sisterhood of St. Raphael has fulfilled, and still fulfills the terms of this definition. We have been concentrating on recent changes in this organization; we have seen them as a process of "detotalization," debureaucratization, and to some extent professionalization. This framework of inquiry leads ultimately to the question: how far can the process of change go, and still leave the Sisterhood within the category of formal organizations? Is there a limit to change beyond which lies the chaos of complete disintegration? In concrete terms, these questions mean: what are the essential features of an organization which must be retained if it is to remain a formal organization? We shall try to set these down; then we shall try to decide whether the Sisterhood of St. Raphael embodies these features now that it is involved in experimentation. And finally, we shall indulge in a little speculation by attempting to assess the future of the Sisterhood.

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<sup>1</sup>Amitai Etzioni, Modern Organizations (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 3.

A formal organization, viewed as a cooperative system, is made up of a number of individuals who interact with each other both formally and informally within the coordinating framework provided by the formal structure.

This is particularly true of a religious congregation whose whole life is encompassed by the organization; sisters who belong to such a congregation interact with each other as "wholes," not simply as the performers of certain roles prescribed by the organization. The religious congregation itself is also a whole, a totality which reacts and adapts to forces in its external environment. This means that a formal organization has certain internal and external needs which must be met, if it is to continue to exist and achieve its goals. Philip Selznick says that structural-functional analysis is "peculiarly helpful"<sup>1</sup> in the analysis of an adaptive structure such as we have postulated. He defines "structure" as both the relationships within the system (i.e., both formal and informal patterns of organization) and the set of needs and modes of satisfaction which characterize the given type of empirical system. In analyzing a formal organization, then, the aim will be to relate the behavior of its members, individual and collective, to a presumed stable system of needs and mechanisms. There is a supposition that a formal organization has a basic

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<sup>1</sup>Philip Selznick, "Foundations of the Theory of Organization," Complex Organizations, ed. A. Etzioni (New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston, 1961), pp. 18-32.

set of needs which are related to its self-preservation. The on-going activities of the organization are then interpreted in terms of the function which they perform for the maintenance of the system and for its defense. This is not a completely static view of an organization, because it takes into account the varying ways in which the organization reacts and adapts to stresses within itself and pressures from the environment. These forces cause the organization to change and transform itself, often in patterned repeated ways if the pressures which must be met happen to be the same.

Underlying this whole approach is the assumption that the fundamental need of all organizations is its own perpetuation and conservation as a functioning whole. By imaginative deduction one can derive from this fundamental principle a set of imperatives for the continued existence of an organization. This is exactly what we want if we are to answer the question which we raised earlier: what are the essential features of an organization which the Sisterhood of St. Raphael must retain if it is to continue in existence? Philip Selznick, in the paper which has been cited, goes on to specify five imperatives which are essential to the maintenance of an organization. We shall take them one by one and comment on them in the context of the changes in the Sisterhood of St. Raphael.

The First Imperative is: "The Security of the Organization as a Whole in Relation to Social Forces in Its Environment," From

his defensive frame of reference Selznick goes on to explain that this means "continuous attention to the possibilities of encroachment and to the forestalling of threatened aggressions or deleterious (though perhaps unintended) consequences from the actions of others."<sup>1</sup> All sisterhoods are faced with the normal competition from parallel religious organizations in the recruitment of new aspirants. There is nothing new in this, though undoubtedly the competition is becoming much keener as fewer girls are now offering themselves for the religious life. Traditionally the Sisters of St. Raphael recruited the vast majority of their aspirants from among the pupils of their grammar schools, high schools, and colleges. They still retain this social base where their influence is stronger than that of any competing sisterhood. We shall see, however, that their policy in recruitment is being re-examined. To some extent, also, the environment encroaches on the sisterhood by enticing increasing numbers of sisters to leave the religious life and by eliminating the social stigma which discouraged leaving in the past. But for a teaching congregation such as the St. Raphael nuns, the biggest danger is that some other organization will provide a similar or better service at a lower cost to their clients. This means, in practice, danger of encroachment by state-run educational establishments at all levels.

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<sup>1</sup>Selznick, loc. cit., p. 26.

It is beyond the scope of this work to trace the history and background of these two coexisting educational systems, the public school system and the parochial school system, and the philosophies which underlie them. Their existence side by side in the U. S. has always been an uneasy peace even when neither entertained any hostile intention against the other. The Sisters of St. Raphael are heavily committed to the denominational sector in education. Of their total personnel, 75% are engaged in some form of teaching, 57% at grammar and high school level, 6% at college level.<sup>1</sup> Their future seems therefore, to be largely bound up with that of the Catholic schools. We have already mentioned the financial difficulties which are the accompaniment of conducting a privately-resourced school system. But, at present, these difficulties have escalated into a crisis. The official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago, The New World, said in its issue of February 21, 1969, "Roman Catholic primary and secondary school education in the United States faces the most severe crisis in its history." The causes of the crisis were said to be: acute financial problems, a shortage of religious teachers, especially nuns, and a general indifference on the part of the public towards its plight. Reports from many dioceses throughout the U. S. show that the crisis is widespread. The cost of education is rising every year, even on the assumption that no improvements

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<sup>1</sup>CMSW data.

in facilities be attempted. Rising costs have led to the raising of tuition fees in many dioceses, and this, of course, has led to a drop in enrollments, as parents find the tuition fees too burdensome and send their children to public schools. "In many places, tuition is already as high as the population can bear,"<sup>1</sup> and further increases will force many parents out. Smaller enrollments negate the effect of increased tuition fees. In the past, tuition fees were kept at an artificially low level by the fact that most of the teachers, especially in grammar schools, were nuns who contributed their services free of charge, accepting little beyond the running expenses of the convent. Nowadays, diocese after diocese reports that school sisters are dwindling in numbers; there are fewer aspirants to the religious life, many nuns have been released from teaching for full-time attendance at college to complete their formal education; others wish to devote themselves to social apostolates among the poor, other than teaching; and many nuns are leaving the religious life.<sup>2</sup> The congregations of teaching sisters are beginning to ask for more realistic remuneration. Staff shortages in the parochial schools have to be met by the employment of lay teachers. Even though many of these accept lower salaries than those which public schools pay, they cost

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<sup>1</sup>The New World, February 21, 1969, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>The Chicago Tribune, May 8, 1969, quotes the Catholic Directory, 1969, as saying that in the current year, there are 5,887 fewer teaching nuns than in 1968.

vastly more than the nuns whom they succeed. These are some of the causes of the financial crisis. Apart from tuition increases which Catholic school boards are anxious to avoid, other methods of responding to the crisis include: consolidation of schools, the closing of some primary grades, replacing elementary schools in some places with religious education centers, shared-time and dual enrollment programs with public schools, and, of course, seeking state aid for parochial schools.

Yet Catholic school officials "seem fully convinced that a demand for Catholic education is still there, strong as ever,"<sup>1</sup> and Greeley and Rossi predicted that this would be so.<sup>2</sup> But they complain about the apathy of a number of Catholics "who either don't believe a Catholic school crisis exists, or who simply don't care."<sup>3</sup>

If this phasing out of Catholic schools were to continue and to accelerate, would the Sisters of St. Raphael perish with them? This is very unlikely. As David L. Sills points out, "dissolution is not the only course of action open to an organization when its purposes are either achieved or become irrelevant because of changes in the social environment; in fact, it is equally easy to find examples of organizations which have remained intact for the purpose of working toward

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<sup>1</sup>The New World, February 21, 1969, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Greeley and Rossi, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>3</sup>The New World, February 21, 1969, p. 1.



new or sharply modified objectives."<sup>1</sup> This is what Blau has called "the succession of goals." There are also cases of organizations which found their goals unattainable and substituted others for them; this is known as "displacement of goals."<sup>2</sup> There are many ways in which the adaptive mechanisms of the congregation can find work, which is broadly speaking educational, in the event of the disappearance of the parochial schools; they could specialize in teaching religious doctrine outside of public school hours within the framework of the CCD or outside it; or they could become staff members of public schools and exert their good influence on children without teaching formal religion lessons; indeed, quite a number of sisters of various congregations are doing this. It is likely, then, that the larger social structure will always provide the support and legitimation of the congregation's activities which are needed for their continuance.<sup>3</sup> Even before the recent aggravation of the problems of the parochial school system, i.e., in April, 1967, the sisters were questioning its existing posture. The CMSW Survey asked them: "Would you like to see basic changes in the parochial school system?" In all, 61% answered "yes"; 18% "no", with the remainder undecided. Here is a tabulation of the answers broken down to reveal the current occupation of the sisters answering.

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<sup>1</sup>David L. Sills, "The Succession of Goals," Complex Organization, ed. Etzioni, p. 149.

<sup>2</sup>Blau and Scott, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>3</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 82.

TABLE 47

ATTITUDES TO CHANGE IN PAROCHIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM  
BY SISTER'S OCCUPATION

	Elem. %	High School %	College %	Superior Administrator %	Health %	Student Sister %
Yes	62	58	64	48	27	90
No	18	21	10	29	27	4
Don't Know	15	16	22	17	39	4
No. of Cases	651	769	108	42	33	98

N = 1701

Particularly significant is the overwhelming 90% of undergraduate sisters who want basic changes; they are the future personnel of these schools. Further, a very high percentage of sisters actually engaged in teaching also desire fundamental changes. Superiors and administrators are less keen on radical change, 48% wishing it.

The SRSQ throws further light on what the Sisters think important in relation to the parochial schools: 45% consider it very desirable that more research be carried out "comparing the effects of church-related schooling versus public schooling to ascertain crucial subject areas and/or grade levels for church concentration;" 17% think this is somewhat desirable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, ID, 31.

The idea of "training sisters for employment in urban public schools with teacher shortages" appeared very desirable to 35%; somewhat desirable to 18%. "Participation in dual school enrollment and shared time programs with public schools" was thought very desirable by 45%; somewhat desirable by 25%. "Concentration on teaching religion or theology" was very desirable to 30%, somewhat desirable to 30%. Joint regional inter-parish schools was very desirable to 25%, somewhat so to 21%.<sup>1</sup> All of these figures go to show that the St. Raphael Sisters are not unalterably committed to the parochial school system as it is constituted at present. They are educational specialists, and education remains their chief interest; but if experience and research makes it plain that they cannot serve the public adequately within the parochial school system, the above figures suggest that enough of them are willing and able to find a teaching apostolate outside of it. To that extent the Sisterhood enjoys security from threats of encroachment in their environment, as also from the unintended consequences of the public schools being compelled to shoulder the entire burden of educational provision throughout the country. It seems likely that the public school system which is already overburdened, especially in inner city areas, would not at all welcome the disappearance of parochial schools.

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, ID, 6, 24, 26.

While we have noted that the sisters are of the opinion that education is their specialism and that they should continue with it, it is clear that not all are happy with the actual clientele whom they now serve. They know that, although it is not written into their constitution, they were founded to teach children who would otherwise have received little or no education, yet, in the 1960's, comparatively few of them are actually serving the under-privileged. The CMSW questionnaire revealed that 53% of the Sisters have never, or scarcely ever, worked with the really poor; a further 33% did work among the poor at one time, but do so no longer.<sup>1</sup> That means that 86% of the sisters are not now working with the really poor. At the time of the survey only 8% were engaged in inner city teaching, while 4% were teaching other poor citizens. The CMSW survey also asked them: "Do you feel your religious order is sufficiently engaged in work for the poor?"<sup>2</sup> The overall figures show that 52% answered affirmatively, 27% in the negative, while a large 17% "didn't know." In short, there is a small majority who seem sure that enough is being done for the poor by the congregation. Yet when they are asked: should they embark on a work which is obviously for the poor, namely, conducting "inner city community centers for remaking

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<sup>1</sup>CMSW Survey, Q. 236.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Q. 504.

community," 59% say yes!; 17% say no! and 25% either don't know or are silent.<sup>1</sup> There is an ambivalence of attitude revealed by this answering which must be a worry to policy makers. Nevertheless, enough has been said to show that the social environment contains plenty of work for the sisters which is broadly educational in character and therefore, suited to their special competence. They are never likely to be encroached upon so much as to leave them without an abundance of educational work to do.

The Second Imperative is: "Stability of the lines of Authority and Communication." This means simply that leadership among the Sisters should continue to have the capacity to control and to have access to the personnel or ranks. In the immediate Pre-Vatican period, the Sisters of St. Raphael had a highly centralized authority system, though the structure itself was very simple. As we have seen, this congregation started as a small group which clustered around the charismatic leadership of the five young ladies from Ireland. In those days, quite obviously, the pioneering members of the Sisterhood formed a real community in the sociological sense, what Toennies would call Gemeinschaft. Their way of life was intimate, private, exclusive--very much like a family.<sup>2</sup> They were totally

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., Q. 567.

<sup>2</sup>C. Wendell King, "Career Patterns of Social Movements," The Government of Associations, ed. Wm. A. Glaser and David L. Sills (New Jersey: The Bedminster Press, 1966), p. 13.

involved as complete persons in their common life where they could satisfy all their purposes. Their work and the rest of their life formed a unity. They enjoyed a high degree of cohesion based on shared attitudes and aims which was further reinforced by the warm sentiments characteristic of primary relationships. Their commitment to the nascent community was virtually unlimited; it was their family and from it they derived their personal identity. But as Weber shows, charisma is a transient thing and if the work which it sets on foot is to endure, succession must be provided for, and a structure of government to administer the organization which results from the routinization of charisma. This process was quite explicitly influenced by the Jesuits, in the case of the St. Raphael nuns, as we have seen. In fact, the constitution of the congregation borrowed so much from the Jesuits that "it reflected the form of authority (modern absolutism) present in secular society when the Jesuit Constitutions were written."<sup>1</sup> As E. K. Francis remarks,<sup>2</sup> "the numerous other organizations which have come into existence in modern times are usually patterned after the Jesuits." There may be some minor modifications of the Jesuit model, but no new congregation "seems to have added anything fundamentally novel to the basic pattern."

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<sup>1</sup>Benz and Sage, Dynamics of Renewal, pp. 62-63.

<sup>2</sup>E. K. Francis, "Toward a Typology of Religious Orders," Religion and Culture, ed. Louis Schneider (New York: John Wiley, 1964).

We are not surprised, then, to find that the congregation as a whole, had a bureaucratic hierarchical authority structure with decided emphasis on rational organization at the local level, the hierarchial officers had almost absolute power over subordinates to achieve its goals. Complete devotion to their common enterprise and unconditional discipline were the ideals set before the members. These ideals were to find expression in close fidelity to a detailed code of work and administration which was centrally controlled. While it is true that convent bureaucracies are sui generis, yet they do conform in most respects, to the ideal type of bureaucracy constructed by Max Weber; this was certainly true of the Sisters of St. Raphael. One finds in their constitutions and practices such bureaucratic elements as specialization, division of labor, definition of roles, routinization of action demanded by sheer size, hierarchical authority structure, formal offices, arbitrary power wielded by administrators without participative decision making or consultation of the rank and file, policy from the "top," selectivity of communication downwards, exchangeability of inferiors, written and detailed rules, close supervision, use of sanctions, impersonal relationships, job assignment by qualifications, promotion based on conformity to ideology and the details of rule, efficiency as a foremost consideration for administrators and so on.

There is much evidence from the two surveys to show that there was serious dissatisfaction with all this. For example, among a series of questions on contemporary conditions in the community the CMSW questionnaire asked sisters, "Does adaptation to contemporary life call for a new structure of religious life?"<sup>1</sup> Among the replies, 67% were "yes," only 9% said "no," while 24% expressed a "don't know" answer or were silent. Similarly, 50% considered provincial administration "too centralized" as opposed to 31% who thought the opposite; 36% thought that the administration of the local house in which they lived was too centralized, while 53% were satisfied with it, and 10% didn't commit themselves.<sup>2</sup>

This amounts to saying that there was serious dissatisfaction with governmental structures and that a large majority wanted change, and that change should be in the direction of democratization, giving the rank and file much more say and participation in government at all levels. This has now been done on an experimental basis, and the highest levels of government seem well designed to preserve the authority essential to a formal organization while ensuring that it remains sensitive and responsive to the needs of the rank and file. Provincial units are smaller and the role of the Regional Director is explicitly defined as being sister-oriented. The

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<sup>1</sup>CMSW Survey, Q. 461.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Q. 470, 476.



experiment in collegial authority at the local level involving group decision-making is, a priori, less convincing. Sisters are noncommittal in answering questions about it; they tend to emphasize the fact that it is purely experimental. At the moment, the amount of control exerted at the local level must be quite small. For one thing, some sisters don't live in the convent at all, but in apartments somewhere in the neighborhood of the school. Even in the convent, there is no superior; authority is vested in the group. Speaking of rule observance, a sister spoke as follows: "I really don't know of any Rules. I feel that as long as I'm responsible in what I'm doing, I don't feel I'm being disobedient to anybody.... If I were to fail to meet what is required of me, to be negligent in preparing lessons, or in mistreating girls.... I don't know of any rule I think I'm following. I'm not aware of any rules."<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, this is an experimental period, the success or failure of which will be assessed by the Senate in August, 1969.

It is doubtful if control can continue to be as loose as is implied by the quotation set forth above. One doubts if the minimum of predictable behavior can be achieved under such circumstances. One of the greatest dangers in a fluid situation such as the present one among the St. Raphael nuns is that sisters may be inclined to act on their own idiosyncratic

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<sup>1</sup>Interview material.

beliefs in the conviction that these are shared by many others. If this trend were to develop in an extreme form, it would result in chaos, as each would play the game according to her own set of rules, and the minimum control and uniformity required for a viable complex organization would be lost.<sup>1</sup>

Selznick also mentioned "stability of the lines of communication" as part of his second imperative. He means that communication should be open and free, and that it should be kept so. Communication among the Sisters of St. Raphael was inadequate at the time of the two surveys in 1967. What they needed was not a keeping open of channels but rather the opening up of channels. A few examples must suffice from the abundant evidence of faulty communication. Asked to evaluate "communication with superior"<sup>2</sup> in the light of their knowledge of their local community, 22% considered it "poor," and 39% considered it "so-so." "Method of communication with provincial government"<sup>3</sup> was rated "poor" by 19% and "so-so" by 40%. This is confirmed by the SRSQ Survey. The most surprising revelation made by the SRSQ items on communication<sup>4</sup> was the high percentage of "don't know" answers given to questions where the individual sister was not personally involved; e.g., 22% didn't know how

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>CMSW, Q. 428.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., Q. 436.

<sup>4</sup>SRSQ, IV, M1-19.

adequate was communication between local Superior and the provincial, 33% didn't know about their superior's link with the Superior General, 29% didn't know how effective was communication between her fellow sisters and the provincial.

This list could be extended; its message is clear, namely that these sisters didn't seem to know what was going on. And yet the old religious ideal was a familial atmosphere. We have seen that sisters were trained not to want to know what was going on and that passage of information was one of the weapons of "total" control. Add to all that the lack of warm and friendly relationships which we have noted. Downs says that "the vast majority of all communications in large organizations are subformal"<sup>1</sup>; but that "vast majority" might not amount to very much, if close peer relationships are not maintained. Sister Audrey Kopp speaks of the "chilliness, aloofness, curtness, mask-wearing, and withdrawal from the full joy of community sharing"<sup>2</sup> which was too often the legacy of old-style socialization into the religious life. Downs must have left religious orders out of the reckoning when he wrote that "the more stringently restricted the formal channels, the richer will be the flowering of subformal ones."<sup>3</sup> In the case of some religious orders, of course, he is quite right.

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<sup>1</sup>Downs, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>Sister M. Audrey Kopp, The New Nuns: Collegial Christians (Chicago: Argus Communications Co., 1968), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Downs, op. cit., p. 114.

One need not be altogether surprised that communication was unsatisfactory in the past and experience of warm friendship inadequate. As Bernard P. Indik shows, these two phenomena are linked in large organizations. The potential amount of communication activity which any one person is capable of is limited, whereas, in larger organizations, the number of possible communication links is very large. Since attraction, and consequently, warm friendship, is contingent upon communication, lower average communication rates per member will have the effect of reducing mutual attraction. He suggests also, that rates of participation in the work of an organization will be negatively associated with the degree of inter-member attraction.<sup>1</sup>

We must not omit to mention one formal channel of communication which has worked well in the sisterhood especially since Vatican II. It is the internal Newsletter, circulated by the Congregation's Communications Center, which, by its almost day to day commentary on the transactions at the General Chapter of 1968 kept sisters in all parts of the United States in touch with what was happening and with the thought underlying it. Admittedly, in Summer 1967, only 56% were prepared to admit that the Newsletter contributed at least somewhat "to their

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard P. Indik, "Some Effects of Organization Size on Member Attitudes and Behavior," Human Relations, XIV, 1963, p. 379.

personal sense of hope and enthusiasm of what it means to be a religious in modern times."<sup>1</sup>

The errors of the past are explicitly recognized in the "Final Report" of the subcommittee on "Communications." This document is a most enlightened survey of past practice and deficiencies together with concrete proposals for very full internal and external dialogue for the future. It also gives a rational basis for the worth of better communication. A congregation which now knows that "communication is a socializing and integrating principle" and that "there can be no building up of society, no shared understanding or consensus without communication" should not easily relapse into an "attitude of secrecy which is part and parcel of the authoritarian and paternalistic type of government traditionally characteristic of the Church and of religious congregations."<sup>2</sup> This entire report should be read and acted upon by superiors and members of all congregations. If the execution of the proposals proves to be as meritorious as the proposals themselves, Selznick's requirements of "stability of lines of communication" will be met. The communication channels have been established; the harder part remains to be achieved, namely, that sisters should learn to use them, overcoming the deeply rooted ways of their past. However, one note of warning

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, III, I 24.

<sup>2</sup>Benz and Sage, Self-Study for Renewal, pp. 192-193.

may be sounded. Maximum communication is not necessarily the most desirable state of affairs. What is most effective is optimum communication; it is possible to clog up the channels with much noise so that people are confused by an overdose of communication and finally cease to listen. Silence can be appropriate on occasion.<sup>1</sup>

The Third Imperative is: "The stability of informal relations within the organization." That is, assuming that the existing informal relationships are in a healthy and flourishing state. This cannot be taken for granted in the case of the Congregation of St. Raphael in the past. The very fact that it was a "total institution" and a bureaucratic organization as well implies artificiality in social relationships and the manipulation of human beings. All bureaucratic organizations, according to Weber, regard as the ideal official the one who acts "in a spirit of formalistic impersonality," sine ira et studio, without hatred or passion, and hence without affection or enthusiasm. The dominant norms are concepts of straightforward duty without regard to personal considerations."<sup>2</sup> But since the

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<sup>1</sup>Chris Argyris, "Human Relations: A Look into the Future," Human Elements of Administration, ed. Harry R. Knudson, Jr. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 366.

<sup>2</sup>Max Weber, "The Essentials of Bureaucratic Organization," Reader in Bureaucracy, ed. Morton et. al. (New York: Free Press, 1952), p. 27.

Hawthorne studies of the nineteen twenties,<sup>1</sup> the importance of the informal structure of warm primary relationships in work groups for the functioning of the total system has been realized. In short, the formality built into the rules of the formal structure is largely ignored. But in religious congregations the formal rules have the sanction of divine approval attached to them by the prevailing culture, which results in their being taken far more seriously and literally than in any secular organization. We have seen that, in a somewhat Jansenistic spirit, warm friendships were formerly discouraged and that the Sisterhood of St. Raphael has not yet shaken off completely the residues of such attitudes.

There is ample evidence in the two surveys of 1967 to prove that unsatisfactory personal relationships and insufficiency of close friendships was the social climate of those days. This is entirely consistent with the evidence of inadequate communications which we have just reviewed. These two phenomena go hand in hand. A few examples of how sisters perceived their informal relationships must suffice. Only 28% could honestly say that their congregation valued "very much" deep friendship as an essential need in the development of sisters as persons, while 40% said it was valued "somewhat;" 21% said it was valued "a little" and 7% that it was not valued

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Psychology (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 27-30.

at all!<sup>1</sup> Reacting against this attitude of the past, 52% of sisters considered having a few close friendships "absolutely essential," and 35% "very much essential" to their continuing development as persons. One sister recalled that she had been rebuked by a superior for writing letters to former colleagues with whom she had been friendly but who had been transferred to another convent.<sup>2</sup> This is a tiny incident but it is illustrative of a whole climate of attitudes which permitted it to happen without its being considered outrageous. The table on page 238, Table 48, shows how unfavorably other elements of informal relationships were rated by sisters; the categories "Good" and "Silent" are omitted from the table.

The emergent picture is of a social climate that can be greatly improved now that an undesirable state of affairs has been acknowledged. The final reports of the Sisters' Self-Study Commissions stress the need for friendly informal relationships. The real concern felt about this matter is emphasized by a procedure which the sisters have instituted in relation to those who leave the congregation. In such cases the sister who leaves is asked to fill in a "Withdrawal Data Sheet," and all the sisters of the convent from which she left are required to complete a "Withdrawal Analysis Sheet." These printed forms include such questions as: "Did you experience warm

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, III, J 1.

<sup>2</sup>Interview material.



TABLE 48

## ASSESSMENT OF LIFE IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Aspect of Life <sup>1</sup>	Rating	
	Quite Poor %	So-So %
Openness to each others' opinions	30	44
Opportunity to establish friendships with lay persons and religious	11	31
Honesty with each other	24	49
Genuine and manifest appreciation of fellow sisters' achievements	22	41
Sensitivity to the real needs of other sisters	27	48

<sup>1</sup>CMSW Survey, Items 423-427.

inter-personal relationships in the community?"; "Was the sister who is leaving accepted by the other sisters?"; "Does an attitude of joy prevail among the sisters?"; "Is the atmosphere warm and friendly?" Whatever one thinks of this idea of a "postmortem" on everybody who leaves, at least none will deny the honesty and sincerity which motivated it.

There is overwhelming evidence, then, that the Congregation of St. Raphael is planning for interpersonal ties which will cement friendly relationships and thus support the formal structure of authority in procuring smooth day-to-day operation and in keeping the lines of communication open. All of this

might be dismissed as pious hope if it were not accompanied by structural change. As Katz and Kahn point out, it is quite wrong to assume that by changing the attitudes of single individuals one can produce an organizational change. The typical psychological approach with its emphasis on individual training programs and the group dynamics approach will not achieve much unless the organizational system or structure is also changed. The sisters have had the courage to do this. They have manipulated organizational variables to ensure that the chilly relationships of the past disappear.

We have spoken of the informal system failing by defect. Selznick warns that they can also be the source of friction, dilemma, doubt, and ruin. This might be called failure through excess. Groups or cliques can form which are hostile to each other in an organization. There is a distinct danger of this in the Sisterhood of St. Raphael in view of the strongly held conservative and progressive views which exist among sisters. Muzafer Sherif points out that groups develop a set of values, standards, or norms peculiar to themselves which regulate their behavior. They can produce their own particular brand of ethnocentrism. Group members come to attribute certain qualities to other groups and their members. "If the goals of the groups conflict, if one can be gained only at the expense of the other, members within the groups form unfriendly

attitudes and unfavorable stereotypes of the other group."<sup>1</sup>

There is no concrete evidence that this is going on among the sisters, but it is not a wild flight of the imagination to say that it could happen. Groups of like-thinking progressive sisters who opt to live in apartments could become remote in thought and emotion as well as physically remote from those who stay in the convent. A similar crystallization of groups could occur in a large convent of forty or fifty sisters. Admittedly, as Sherif says, the superordinate goals which all sisters share and which cannot be achieved by any single group alone will operate to keep the community together in cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, the danger of fission at the local level remains.

The Fourth Imperative is: "The continuity of policy and of the sources of its determination." The main faults which he envisages here are "arbitrary or unpredictable changes in policy which undermine the attention to day-to-day action by injecting a note of capriciousness."<sup>3</sup> Arbitrary rule and capricious changes of policy are characteristic of one-man traditional or personal rule. While the ruler's power is limited by the tradition which legitimates it, yet this restriction is not

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<sup>1</sup>Muzafer Sherif, "Experiments in Group Conflict and Cooperation," Readings in Managerial Psychology, ed. Harold J. Leavitt and Louis R. Pondy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 409-12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 410.

<sup>3</sup>Selznick, loc. cit., p. 27.

severe, since "a certain amount of arbitrariness on the part of the ruler is often part of the tradition."<sup>1</sup> From my own experience of religious communities, I would say that this arbitrary rule was too often encountered in the past, not so much at provincial level, as at the level of the local religious community. It is much less likely to be a problem under a system of participative decision-making where policy is hammered out, debated, and decided upon logically and rationally. And such democratic decision-making is the goal of the St. Raphael Sisters' reorganization.

The only source of serious wavering and unpredictability is likely to be the choice of goals. As we have already observed, some sisters envisage an apostolate other than teaching. The Committee on the "Apostolate" seems convinced of "the need for our Congregation to serve the world in a variety of ways and in a variety of places." They feel that the world should be allowed to define the agenda of service. Against the backdrop of the U. S. Society in the 1960's, the sisters can see that "the world needs of peace, poverty, and racial justice demand a response." They envisage sisters working "individually or corporately, with private institutions or public institutions." Though they are convinced that "education in many aspects remains a major need in the world," yet they are aware that they must project their vision "to see the needs of

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<sup>1</sup>Blau and Scott, op. cit., p. 22.

those outside our classroom walls and to direct our service to those whom we can help."

In the past, the Congregation of St. Raphael may have been too exclusively devoted to education. Even under the assumption that almost all of their aspirants have desired to teach and chose to join a teaching congregation for that reason, it does not follow that all had an aptitude for teaching. Some teachers are "born teachers," many more can be trained to teach adequately, but there is a remnant who lack the basic skills of communication or the commanding "presence" to obtain the minimum of order among students which is necessary for learning activity to take place. Some cannot be taught these things. Consequently they are unhappy and miserable as teachers. I have asked in several interviews what the congregation provided as an apostolate for them. My informants didn't seem to know. Works alternative to teaching could provide a valuable outlet for such sisters and likewise broaden a congregation's appeal to entrants. The other extreme of too many types of apostolate which spreads community effort too thinly over a wide front, is, of course, another danger which must be avoided.

This broadening of their view of the apostolate necessitates plans and programs to give direction and cohesion to what is done. Just to give one example: If sisters are to engage in community-building in the inner city, their training and experience as teachers will not suffice; they will have to

release individual sisters from the schools and give them a specialist education for this type of work. One can see that this might be a major area of difficulty. The congregation has professed itself willing to allow each sister to choose work suited to her own taste or charisma. There is a possibility of excessive fragmentation here; uncontrolled play of centrifugal force could dissipate the sister's efforts over wide areas of social work. Community spirit and mutual support and reinforcement could be lost with melancholy results. Yet the sisters have set up machinery for discussion and debate at all levels from the local house to the supreme level of the President's Advisory Board. With good sense and an awareness that the congregation merits the loyal cooperation of all, this very real danger of dissipating community effort over too wide an area can be overcome.

The Fifth Imperative is: "A Homogeneity of Outlook with Respect to the Meaning and Role of the Organization." Katz and Kahn provide a comment:

The units of a social structure are not linked physically but psychologically. Since the organization consists of the patterned and motivated acts of human beings, it will continue to exist only so long as the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, habits and expectations of human beings evoke the required motivation and behavior. Organizations remain intact only so long as the psychological cement holds.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 172.

This raises the whole question of ideological conflict in an organization; in the context of a congregation of nuns one is less concerned with physical combat than with conflict in thought, belief, or opinion on important issues. Even though the founder of Christianity is rightly called the Prince of Peace, it is well to remember that He said: He came "not to bring peace but the sword," and that one's enemies were those of one's own household. Selznick says that in an organization "the minimization of disaffection requires a unity derived from a common understanding of what the character of the organization is meant to be." If internal conflict over fundamental issues breaks down this common understanding, then "the continued existence of the organization is endangered."<sup>1</sup> I have already briefly alluded to contrasting opinions among the Sisters of St. Raphael when I dealt with the possibility of deviant beliefs isolating certain sisters, inhibiting communication with their colleagues, and so predisposing them to the development of anomic tendencies. It will be remembered that 18% were very much bothered by growing diversity of opinion among their colleagues, 20% were somewhat bothered, 23% a little bothered, and 37% not at all bothered. The danger of the development of informal groups hostile to each other was also mentioned briefly. It seems necessary in this present context to inquire if disagreement over fundamental issues exists to a dangerous degree.

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<sup>1</sup>Selznick, op. cit., p. 27.

While the sisters agree substantially about the nature of their apostolate, e.g., the majority would describe it as "serving others through the cause of education" (4% disagreeing), or "spreading the knowledge and love of Christ through all aspects of living" (7% disagreeing),<sup>1</sup> there is some dissensus on what activities are included in the apostolate. Involvement of sisters in civil rights protests is deemed not at all or only a little desirable by 46%; involvement in protest against the war in Vietnam is not at all or only a little desirable to 64%; and involvement in community organization projects to assist minorities to exercise political or economic power is deemed not at all or only a little desirable by 43%.<sup>2</sup>

Opinion is divided also on certain innovations in school organization or educational practice such as interparish regional schools, employment of sisters in urban public schools, concentration on teaching religion. There is also a split on the extension of the congregation's South American Mission, 47% for, 32% against. So much for the nature of the apostolate. Sisters have, in the past, committed themselves to it by vows which were always considered to be sacred, irrevocable pledges made directly to God. In 1967, 34% agreed somewhat or very much with the proposition that "there is no such thing as an unconditional lifelong commitment that cannot be changed with

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, IA, 2, 16.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., ID, 7-9.



changing circumstances," while 18% were undecided.<sup>1</sup> "The vows are essential to the religious life" was disagreed with very much by 6%, somewhat by 9%, and it left 10% undecided.<sup>2</sup> It seems that at least a quarter of the congregation and possibly up to a third have very ambivalent views about the nature of the commitment to the religious life. This is quite a serious divergence of view with respect to the necessity of a homogeneous outlook on the nature of the congregation's religious life.

In this present chapter, we are concerned with necessary conditions for the congregation's continued existence in the future. It would be futile to explore areas of disagreement among sisters which loomed very large in 1967 and which are seen to be practically meaningless in 1969. For example, SRSQ embodied 51 items about sisters' dress and the religious habit. This issue is not important today, and the General Chapter of 1968 spent very little time on it. The over 70 age group still wear the traditional habit; all others wear contemporary dress, the middle-aged confining themselves to dark suits, and perhaps wearing a tiny veil outdoors, the young sisters being more venturesome with colors, one hopes, in good taste. We can forget, then, what one sister has called "those sacred minutiae, the width of a collar or the drape of a veil."<sup>3</sup> Even

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<sup>1</sup>SRSQ, VK, 9.

<sup>2</sup>SRSQ, VK, 1.

<sup>3</sup>Sister M. Wilma, "Attitudes of Religious Women Toward Change," Review for Religious, XXIII (March, 1964), p. 186.

sisters who were bitterly opposed to change of dress have come to accept it gradually, and are even becoming a little clothes-conscious. As one sister put it, "We are women, first of all. I don't think that we were free to be women<sup>1</sup> [in the past]."

From talking to sisters, one gets the impression that the most serious lack of homogeneity of outlook is concerned with life-style at the local level. There is little common ground on this question between those who choose to live in a poor apartment in a decaying neighborhood, free to come and go as they please, with little formal "religious" structure in their lives, and those who continue to live in the comparative elegance of the convent where a modified order of day is still observed. Then there is the question of authority in the local convent. Some consider collegial government virtually unworkable, needing as they do, to live inside a tight framework. Others are quite happy with it, feeling quite capable of governing themselves and leading their own lives within the convent walls. All of this will have to be thrashed out by the Senate in August, 1969. There has been only one year of experimentation thus far. Rome envisages twelve years of experimentation before any new rules are submitted for approval.<sup>2</sup> If the sisters can realize the ideal expressed by their sub-committee on "communications," namely, "learning to disagree

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<sup>1</sup>Interview material.

<sup>2</sup>Benz and Sage, Self-Study for Renewal, p. 7.

intellectually without being alienated inter-personally,"<sup>1</sup> they should be able, over a period of some years, to work out solutions to their outstanding ideological problems by a certain amount of give-and-take on both sides. Good sense and their loyalty to a great organization which can do so much for mankind should prevail.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

## CHAPTER X

### FUTURE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE CONGREGATION

#### NOW THAT CHANGE HAS BEGUN

One can envisage basically three possibilities in the congregation's future:

1. The new system of government works satisfactorily in spite of difficulties at the central or higher level and at the local or lower level which I shall mention.
2. Chaos results which external or internal agencies seek to remedy.
3. The new system works poorly, but not badly enough to involve the backlash mentioned under 2 above. The result would be a long, lingering death agony of the congregation.

The new governmental model was designed to be democratic and sensitive to the needs and views of the individual. It could work very well, but it is an elaborate piece of machinery which nobody is really trained to operate. There is a distinct possibility that the central or higher level of government might "succumb to the cumbrousness of its own machinery." The various bodies catering for legislative, executive, and judiciary functions and the twelve national commissions remind

one of Michels's warnings about the growth of committees' power which in the long run makes them omnipotent and results in oligarchy.

Michels considers oligarchy to be an inherent danger in democracy which cannot be eliminated. And so it could come about that by voting, sisters are "at the same time exercising their sovereignty and renouncing it." We have noted the prominent role played by learned sisters in the move toward renewal. Their role, or that of an elite of administrators, could become even more important in trying to run an elaborate governmental structure such as has now been designed. "The more extended and the more ramified the official apparatus of the organization. . . the less efficient becomes the direct control exercised by the rank and file, and the more is this control replaced by the increasing power of committees."<sup>1</sup> Elites generally begin with superior intellectual equipment; their formal instruction to a high level makes them still more superior to the rank and file, and finally their specialization and experience on committees and in administration makes them virtually indispensable. Hence they will tend to be elected over and over again to high office; where, then, is the perpetuum mobile democraticum, the rotation in office which prevents the development of a ruling caste?<sup>2</sup> Of course, we

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<sup>1</sup>Michels, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

must remember that the Sisters of St. Raphael never aimed at anything like pure democracy, and anyhow, "though it grumbles occasionally, the majority is really delighted to find persons who will take the trouble to look after its affairs."<sup>1</sup>

So much for the higher level of government. At the lower, local level we have the experiment in collegial rule. Convents of teaching sisters should be a good field for democratic collaboration. "They consist of homogeneous elements," belonging largely to the same stratum of middle class society, of persons following the same profession, accustomed to the same manner of life. "All possess the same professional competence, and all can lend a hand as advisers and coadjutors." Yet Michels is dubious about the viability of such cooperative societies, at least when they are productive enterprises. They are always faced with this dilemma: "either they succumb rapidly owing to discord and powerlessness resulting from the fact that too many individuals have the right to interfere in their administration; or else they end by submitting to the will of one or of a few persons, and thus lose their truly cooperative character."<sup>2</sup> The imperative of getting things done is always a pressure towards the second horn of Michels' dilemma; it is a notorious fact that "democracy is utterly incompatible with strategic promptness."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>3</sup>Michels, op. cit., p. 79.

Nevertheless, one feels that collegial rule could work in small local communities and perhaps among those who are living outside the convent in apartments, provided parliamentary skills and committee procedures develop among sisters who have not been accustomed to them within the framework of the religious life. Good leadership, if not charisma, will be needed to make it work. Katz and Kahn speak of two types of leadership: socio-emotional, supportive of group maintenance, and task leadership oriented towards getting the work done.<sup>1</sup> They think that an individual is rarely strong in both types. Each convent of the Sisters of St. Raphael needs both types to make a success of collegial government. The presence of a few active and intransigent conservatives could sabotage the whole system. The result could be interminable meetings poorly "chaired" with little consensus achieved; hence, unclear decisions, imprecise directives, silly discussion of trivialities, vague delimitation of the duties of individual sisters, poor coordination, gaps in performance, overlapping and duplication of duties--in a word, organizational chaos. Leadership of quality and charisma are rare; have the sisters enough for all their convents?

The second possibility is chaos. We have just indicated how it could come about at the central and local levels. The attempt to produce order out of chaos could be made by

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 33.

internal or external agencies. Chaos is the state of an organization where the variability and instability of human behavior goes beyond the maximum which the organization can endure and still survive. It is true, as Katz and Kahn point out, that there are control pressures in every social system which seek to reduce human behavior to the uniform and dependable patterns required for the healthy life of the system.<sup>1</sup> One of these is the discipline implicit in the system's tasks. For the sisters, this means that the school must be run efficiently, the convent must be maintained and operated as the sisters' dwelling place, and the spiritual life of the individual and the community must be sustained. All of this implies a division of labor, coordination of activities, a considerable degree of order, give-and-take in the assignment of duties and the acceptance of responsibility of each for certain tasks. A second force tending to produce a minimum of uniformity is the shared values and expectations of the group. The sisters of a particular convent have goals in common and assumptions about how each sister must behave to attain these goals. This constitutes a very real pressure on each to act in accordance with what the group expects in view of their shared values. A third force reducing the variability of human action is the framing and enforcement of rules. This brings us to the question of an internal agency seeking to restore order.

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 36.



This, of course, would be in keeping with the notion of equilibrium, i.e., that changes in certain elements of a social system set in motion other changes that tend to restore the original condition of the system.<sup>1</sup> As we have seen, the General Chapter of 1968 has eliminated legalism and detailed rules regulating almost every action of the day in favor of the formulation, in the future, of inspirational rules expressing Christian ideals in non-specific terms. A recourse to detailed rule-making and enforcement would constitute a swing to the right and a return to a more authoritarian form of government. This cannot be ruled out as a possibility, because there may be many pressures in that direction. If it were to happen, the zealots for a liberal regime and the "utopian liberals" would probably leave the religious life, and the congregation would lose some of its most creative and learned members. We have already seen the departure from their communities of such "idea" people as Corita Kent, Sister Charles Borromeo Muckenhirn, and Jacqueline Grennan, either because of reversion to old structures or a seeming impossibility of achieving the reforms they desire.

A second response to a return to authoritarian rule might be a split in the Congregation of St. Raphael, resulting in two congregations where there was one. Questioned about

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<sup>1</sup>George Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1950), p. 449.

this, a sister replied, "I don't think it'll happen....though there would be enough to start another congregation."<sup>1</sup> She was inclined to think that a split was more likely in 1967 but not now. Yet one is forced to consider it a possibility. The division might be by type of apostolate or type of government or on both principles. We know from our data that there is a group of sisters who are committed to helping to solve the social problems of the day by the education of Negroes or other minority groups and by creating pride and a sense of community among them. In general, the Sisters of St. Raphael are anxious for internal structural change rather than for change at the deepest level of fundamental purposes.<sup>2</sup> Generally speaking, they are satisfied with their educational aim and with the middle class social stratum at which this is achieved since their original clientele has arrived, by upward mobility, at middle class status. A split on type of government could only occur if the active liberal wing became convinced that progress toward the life style they favor is impossible; this would result in a new congregation and a new form of the religious life resembling a "secular institute." We may remark in passing that the success of the "detotalized" congregation would be very unlikely to lead to a break-away congregation committed to a conservative "primitive" observance. The reason is that

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<sup>1</sup>Interview material.

<sup>2</sup>Downs, op. cit., p. 168.

the extreme militant conservative group is composed chiefly of older less charismatic sisters who lack the initiative and drive to branch out on their own. The progressive, professional liberal elite, on the other hand, would have just the qualities necessary for such a breakaway and they could pull abundant support with them.

Anthony Downs, speaking of the genesis of bureaus, enumerates different ways in which they can come into being, among which is: "a new bureau can split off from an existing bureau."<sup>1</sup> This generally happens, he says, through the zealotry of a few members of an existing bureau. Zealots, for him, are people "who have a specific idea they want to put into practice on a large scale."<sup>2</sup> They may make a clean break with their formal organization or they may initially set up a separate department within the existing organization within which their idea may become operational. In my view, the small groups who are experimenting in apartment living constitute "a separate department" in Downs' sense. Conflict between the new department and the parent bureau together with the zealots' increasing pursuit of autonomy and expansion in order to implement their idea more freely can ultimately lead to a break with the original organization. The key factor here, as Downs sees it, would be the ability of the new congregation to

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<sup>1</sup>Downs, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

establish "a strong clientele or power base beyond the control of their immediate superiors."<sup>1</sup> This key factor would be a difficulty for a break-away congregation in the present situation of Catholic education and in view of lay and clerical conservatism. A split in the Congregation of St. Raphael both on grounds of type of apostolate and of type of government is conceivable, though one suspects that different elements are the leading zealots for these two different principles.

We have yet to consider an attempt to deal with possible chaos by an external agency. By this, of course, one means the bishops. Certain bishops may be ideologically opposed to the sisters' new system of government. They are the supreme pastors of their dioceses, a fact which makes the sisters "sheep of their flock." Further, they control the parochial schools in which many sisters teach and consider themselves justified in controlling at least some aspects of the sisters' lives, even though the congregation may be of "pontifical right" and thus subject to Rome directly. We have seen one instance of this in Los Angeles. Admittedly, the sisters of St. Raphael have handled their liaison with the hierarchy very skillfully and their charisma is less flamboyant than that of Corita Kent and therefore more tolerable to the bishops! Besides they are a very large congregation which is looked up to by most; they conduct extremely good schools and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

have a blameless past--in short, they are less easy "to push around." Yet, interference by a bishop or bishops is a possibility. And bishops may well be receiving from pastors criticism of the new model of the congregation. Pastors dislike the new policy in the allocation of personnel to schools, which aims at giving each sister the appointment she desires. This policy is slow in operation and involves much protracted haggling and bargaining. Pastors are left in doubt for a long time about the number of teaching sisters they can count on for the next year. They find this inconvenient; the resulting discontent is communicated to the bishop and the stage is set for episcopal interference. They may not give the congregation enough time to eliminate the snags of an experimental system. A rash bishop could attempt to enforce a return to the old hierarchical bureaucratic system. We have already dealt with the possible consequences of such a turning back of the clock.

The third basic possibility which we envisaged was that the new system of government should perform poorly but not badly enough to generate the kinds of "backlash" which we have just considered. The outcome would then probably be a long lingering death agony for the congregation.

Downs remarks that bureaus rarely disappear once they have passed a certain minimal size and age level which he

calls "the bureau's initial survival threshold."<sup>1</sup> He means by this that the organization must be large enough to provide a valuable service to society and old enough to have achieved routinized relationships with its customers. Yet, very few have survived for hundreds of years, though he points to Church and university bureaus as the hardiest species. Organizations normally die because "they fail to perform social functions of enough importance to make their members or clientele willing to sacrifice the resources necessary to maintain those functions."<sup>2</sup> We have already given reasons why abandonment by the clientele should never happen to the Sisters of St. Raphael. But will the sisters themselves be always willing to make the sacrifice of their personal resources?

This raises the question of availability of sisters which can be affected (1) by sisters leaving the religious life, and (2) failure to recruit new members in sufficient numbers to replace the wastage caused by death, old age, and voluntary withdrawal. These two problems are, in a sense, really one--Can the congregation motivate its existing members to remain with it and new members to join? If it cannot induce a substantial majority of its best members to remain in it, then it has little hope of attracting new members. No sane person wishes to board a sinking ship which the crew are

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<sup>1</sup>Downs, op. cit., pp. 9, 22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

abandoning. The survival of the congregation depends upon recruitment, which, in turn, depends upon its ability to retain its most valuable members.

These are various ways of looking at this problem of motivation. We shall see it mainly from the member's point of view. Schein talks about the "psychological contract" entered into by the individual and the organization. This implies that the individual has a variety of expectations of the organization which, in turn, has expectations of the individual. Briefly, the individual's expectations cover the type and conditions of work, the whole pattern of rights, privileges, and obligations between member and organization. Significantly, Schein includes the member's "perception that he can influence the organization or his own immediate situation sufficiently to ensure that he won't be taken advantage of." These expectations are not written into any formal contract, yet, "they operate powerfully as determinants of behavior." If they are not met, the members leave the organization which gets a poor reputation with the result that recruiting becomes harder. Sisters leave the religious life for similar reasons and this makes it difficult to attract aspirants.

Katz and Kahn expound the von Bertalanffy theory of an "open system" in terms of an energetic input-output turnover and

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Psychology (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 11.

apply it to social organizations. Such organizations, they say, import energy from other institutions, or people, or the material environment; they transform it in some way and export some product into the environment which enables them to acquire new input or sources of energy for the repetition of the cycle.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of the sisterhood, the nuns are stimulated by the external environment, their personalities convert these stimuli into sensory qualities or thought patterns; their output consists of member activities and accomplishments which are rewarding in themselves and tend, therefore, to be continued, thus re-energizing the system. Looked at in this way, the spiritual life of the sisters, their experience of Christian community, and their teaching activities must be rewarding in themselves and must be directly expressive of the needs and values of the sisters if sisters are to continue to be sisters. Turning now to recruitment, we know that the sisters receive an input of girls into their schools and colleges. By teaching and educating them, they transform this in-put into educated young ladies with high-minded Christian value systems. Some of that human output enters the religious life and re-energizes the system. In either way of looking at it, the job-satisfaction entailed in the sisters' expressive activity in the convent and in the class-room is essential to their own contentment with their way of life, which, in turn, is subtly transmitted to

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<sup>1</sup>Katz and Kahn, op. cit., p. 18.



their students thus attracting them to join the congregation and ensure its continuance.

The Barnard-Simon theory of motivation in an organization includes the following two postulates:

- 1) Each participant and each group of participants receives from the organization inducements in return for which he makes to the organization contributions.
- 2) Each participant will continue his participation in an organization only so long as the inducements offered him are as great or greater (measured in terms of his values and in terms of the alternatives open to him) than the contributions he is asked to make.<sup>1</sup>

Let us apply these to the Sisters of St. Raphael. Obviously "inducements" and "contributions" are not to be taken in the sense of money. The sisters contribute their labor, their thought and creativity, their comradeship, their self-discipline, their love, loyalty, and devotion to their congregation, and through it, to God. The inducements they receive are: the necessities of a life of moderate comfort, education to varying levels, an opportunity to exercise their apostolate, a sense of belonging to a Christian community, and the

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<sup>1</sup>James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, "The Theory of Organizational Equilibrium," Complex Organizations, ed. Etzioni, pp. 61-62.

imponderable rewards of a devout life. The greater the excess of the inducements over the contributions, the greater is the satisfaction of the individual sister. Nevertheless, in sizing up her satisfaction, the sister will do so with reference to possible alternatives. This point is crucial in today's situation. Before Vatican II there were really no alternatives, especially for the perpetually professed and older nuns. The ex-nun was regarded, even by herself, as a defector, a failure, or at the very least, a strange curiosity. This explains the great and almost morbid interest in such books as Monica Baldwin's I Leap Over the Wall; it was not entirely due to its literary merits but more to its unusualness and strangeness. Transfer to another congregation was virtually impossible. Conditions are utterly changed today.

Young women of the nineteen sixties make no difficulty about leaving the convent and adapting to life outside as they demonstrated so freely; social norms have come to accept this both inside the Roman Catholic community and outside it. Sisters are nowadays college graduates and are well qualified to earn their living if they leave. It follows that many alternatives to life as a nun are open to them. Hence the level of aspiration of nuns is higher than ever before, and the zero point of the satisfaction scale of which March and Simon speak is closely related to that level of aspiration. That is to say, dissatisfaction begins today at levels where

satisfaction would have been experienced in the past. Dissatisfaction is the cue for search behavior to find alternatives. Unless today's young lady finds a clearly rewarding outlet for her apostolic zeal and is convinced that she is doing a worthwhile job which only a sister such as she could do; unless her experience of community life is self-fulfilling, unless it is warmly human as well as spiritually uplifting, she will not stay in the convent through sheer conservatism or conventionalism as perhaps too many sisters were morally compelled to do in the past. And unless conditions in the congregation are such as to retain these idealistic, sincere, and thinking young women, then recruitment is a vain hope.

There was a serious falling off in vocations to the Sisterhood of St. Raphael from about 1957 onwards. Up till then, an average of over one hundred girls entered the congregation each year; then there was a falling off--down to eighty, to sixty-five, and then a further large drop when the debate about the deepest values of the congregation started in 1965, and especially about the future policy on vocations.<sup>1</sup> There was strong support for the suggestion that entrants should not be accepted until they had completed their college course so that they would be more mature and know their own minds better when taking such an important step. Furthermore, it was felt that the congregation should thoroughly examine and

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<sup>1</sup>Interview material.

review its own goals and character and thus know its future orientation, policies, and life-style before any more young girls should be accepted for training. Hence the low number of entrants at the time of writing is due largely to congregational policy as well as to the general decrease in vocations which is affecting all forms of religious professional organizations.

The new system devised by the Sisters of St. Raphael to attract young girls to their way of life and smoothe their entry into it has been named the "Associate Program."<sup>1</sup> It is designed to meet the needs of girls who are contemplating entering the Sisterhood but who have not yet completed college work or professional job preparation. Such girls are first brought into a friendly informal relationship with a sister of their own choice. If a girl so wishes, she can maintain this informal communication with her "contact-sister" right through her high school and college days. Then she applies for admission to the "Associate Program" which will place her in a formal association with the community. This involves meeting her new Sister Contact about three times a month during the one to four year period of her Associate-ship. These meetings will be used for personal or academic counselling, discussion of various aspects of the Christian life, and even involvement in apostolic projects. There is no obligation on the girls' part

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<sup>1</sup>The Associate Program (privately circulated)

to enter the congregation, or on the congregation's part to accept her. Up till her last year in the Associate Program, a girl is encouraged to live a normal social life including dating. Only in the last year, if she perseveres, is she not allowed to date; during this last year she may also be invited to live at the local convent as an active member of the community and thus gain practical experience of the religious life. This program of gradual acclimation to the religious life together with psychological testing and the growing friendship between Sister-Contact and aspirant should make it much more likely that only those who are well suited to it will finally enter the Congregation. It seems an admirable plan which will undoubtedly be further improved by its built-in evaluation procedures which encourage both aspirants and sisters to suggest modifications.

One awaits the implementation of the "Associate Program" with much interest and much hope for its success, because it is so much more imaginative and practical than any previous method of recruitment. This plan has much that is constructive to offer even those girls who ultimately decide not to become sisters, and this is its great appeal. A great deal depends on the morale and personal resources of the "Sister-Contacts," which in turn are related to the quality of life and work inside the Congregation.

But, in the last analysis, the sets of problems of this sisterhood are the two which O'Dea pinpoints for the Church at large: "the inner conflict between conservatives and advocates of aggiornamento, and the evolving of its new positions without loss of the intensity and reality of the faith. A prime requisite for its success is the preservation of its unity, the development of true inner dialog."<sup>1</sup>

Let us round off this chapter on possibilities by asking two purely speculative questions: the first is: what is the polar opposite of a "totalized" member of a rigidly "total institution"?; and the second: what is the polar opposite of such a rigid "total institution"? To answer the first question, we are looking for a person whose life is as completely unregulated by external agency as one can conceive, who is completely immersed in the world of men to the degree where he has no escape from it. The nearest of meeting these specifications would be, perhaps, a world-renowned "pop" singer like a "Beatle" or Mick Jagger, or perhaps a politician. When one approaches the limit of "untotal," of course, an element of regulation creeps back into life. "Pop" singers, cinema stars, and politicians often have to lead a secluded life and have to employ body guards to protect them from the public. Further, the preservation of their "image" imposes certain imperatives upon them in the matter of public conduct,

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas F. O'Dea, The Catholic Crisis, p. 147.

though these imperatives seem to be getting fewer. It is conceivable that a member of an enclosed religious order should leave and achieve world fame as an entertainer. It would constitute a change of life-styles which would interest a sociologist.

The second question is harder to answer in terms of a concrete example. We are seeking the loosest possible sort of voluntary organization, open to all, with no conditions of membership, no socialization process of induction, which makes no attempt to control the behavior of members either in public or in private, with no underlying ideology beyond that of not having an ideology, and which one can leave at will without forfeit or penalty. Some sort of social club is the only thing which comes to mind. Again, as one approaches the limit, this social club would cease to have the character of an organization or would be forced to formulate some rules which, of course, would involve a retreat from the limit situation.

These two questions have been pure speculation. They are not being applied here to the Congregation of St. Raphael or to any of its members.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

It is now time to draw the threads together and summarize what emerges from the present study. Social change has generally in the past been a slow process, often imperceptible to many of those involved in it. A sociologist is always interested in social change and is, hopefully, more aware of what is happening than those who lack sociological training. He considers himself particularly fortunate when he encounters an instance of very rapid social change which he can study without having to wait for decades to elapse before trends are clearly revealed. Change among religious communities since 1965 is an example of a very rapid process which allows a sociologist scope for study within a short compass of years. The Sisters of St. Raphael have embraced the policy of renewal more purposefully and positively than any other congregation known to me; this makes their aggiornamento into a sequence of remarkable scientific and human interest.

This study took as its starting point Goffman's citation of convents as examples of what he called "total institutions." One wondered if an examination of the way of



life of the Sisters of St. Raphael would support or reject Goffman's assertion that convents were to be included with prisons, army barracks, and sanitarium in the "total" category. Our examination of the rules and constitutions of this sisterhood together with the light thrown on them by the comments of sisters during interviews led us to acknowledge that there was a great deal of foundation for Goffman's assertion. The convents of the Congregation of St. Raphael did seem to encompass and control almost every phase of a sister's life and thought. Yet, there are important differences between a convent and the other types of "total institutions." Goffman was aware, to some extent, of these, but, in my opinion, did not stress their importance enough. In the first place, sisters were not constrained to remain in their convents in the same way as convicts are forcibly confined to prisons, or as soldiers and sailors are compelled to remain with their units. Sisters were free to leave the convent at any time up to the taking of perpetual vows. In their preparation for final profession, great stress was laid upon the complete voluntariness of this act. Vows were deemed invalid if any element of compulsion was involved in the making of them. Even after final profession, a sister who was unhappy in the religious life could be released from her vows without any great difficulty. It follows that sisters who led a "total" life in convents in the past did so by their own free will and in virtue of an ongoing choice on

their part. This sets convents on a different plane from the other "total" institutions. In the second place, the ideology of Christian perfection and Christian chastity, however imperfectly practiced, which dominated convent life sharply distinguished it from the criminal subculture of a penitentiary or the "inmate" mentality of a mental hospital. This emerged very plainly in the almost complete absence of "secondary adjustments" to defeat the system among the sisters of St. Raphael as contrasted with the prevalence of these subterfuges in other "total" institutions. We would suggest, then, that, while the external apparatus and practices of "total institutions" are worth examining, it is also important to study the attitudes and ideology of those who live in them. It is a commonplace that mystics of various religions have found joy in what would have inflicted acute pain on other people.

While Goffman analyzed with great insight the induction of an inmate to a "total" institution, his resocialization into its culture, and his adjustment to the outside world on his release, he never attempted to deal with the case where the whole institution instead of a single individual experiences a loosening of controls or is given its freedom. He constructs a fine ideal type of the "total institution," but he never attempts to conceptualize its polar opposite, the "detotalized institution," nor does he give any instance of an entire institution losing its "total" character. It is of importance

to sociological theory that a continuum be conceptualized with "total institutions" at one end and "detotalized" or "untotal institutions" at the other. This would make it possible to locate any institution at some point on the continuum and thus define its character in relation to other institutions. Some attempt has been made to achieve this in the present study.

We have taken one religious congregation, the Sisters of St. Raphael, and examined it in its "total" phase. Advancing beyond Goffman's work, we have watched it relaxing its "total" grasp on its members and planning to institutionalize by legislation a system which exerts the minimum control consistent with retaining the character of a formal organization. We speculated about the ideal-typical polar opposite of a "total institution," though it is unlikely that the Congregation of St. Raphael should ever approach such a limit situation. It might be conceived as the inchoate, confused state of a social involvement at its beginning when the congealing process, which will later solidify into organizational structure, is actually taking place. A similar state might be reached by a dying organization before its actual extinction. Such states are, by definition, transient. We were looking for a more permanent condition of minimal regulation and control; perhaps it can be found in some very loosely structured voluntary organizations, as we noted. We applied the word "detotalization" to the movement towards freedom and responsibility for the individual

sister which we detected in this congregation. We isolated the indicators of "detotalization" and showed that they were present in the process of renewal of this sisterhood.

We found other ways of looking at these changes.

Starting with the notion of bureaucracy, we showed that the sisterhood was a bureaucratic organization which conducted schools and colleges on bureaucratic lines; the process of change was then viewed as a "debureaucratization" of the organization. There, we also had to advent to the growth of professionalism among sisters in their capacity of teachers. It is a moot point whether bureaucracy and professionalism are compatible or incompatible; it is certain that they interact upon each other and modify each other. It is likely that professionalism had begun to appear among the Sisters of St. Raphael long before the Vatican Council's call for renewal. The demand for better qualified sisters, the consequent improvement in the quality and level of their education, and their involvement in education at college level--all these trends pushed them in the direction of professional awareness and away from some of the tighter bureaucratic controls. Adverting to the hierarchical authority structure of bureaucratic organizations, we pointed out that this congregation did have such a power structure where all control was located at the summit and all orders came from the top down the various steps of the hierarchical ladder. Pursuing this line of thought, one of the

main strands of change was seen to be the democratization of the sisterhood and the introduction of the principle of "subsidiarity." The main thrust of these two trends was to enable the individual sister to influence the policies of her own congregation, and through her consciousness of her own sharing in authority processes, to develop greater commitment to and responsibility for its various religious and educational goals. These various ways of looking at change in the Congregation of St. Raphael may, perhaps, coalesce into viewing it as a movement towards resemblance to a voluntary association. In theory, every religious congregation has always been a voluntary association inasmuch as its members entered it and remained in it of their own free will. Nevertheless, the attitudes towards leaving the religious life which were consciously or unconsciously fostered both inside and outside these congregations amounted to a moral constraint against leaving. These appear to have almost disappeared today; there is virtually complete freedom to enter or to leave; there are many viable occupations open to those who leave; the internal rigidity of the organization as expressed in rules and constitutions has been greatly relaxed--in a word, the Congregation of St. Raphael is now voluntary in fact as well as in principle. Apart from celibacy, one wonders, does membership involve much more self-renunciation than that associated with, say, membership of an athletic club which imposes strict training, regular hours of

sleep, and abstention from things like alcohol and smoking. Admittedly, the ideology of the religious life, while formally prescribing a certain limited number of observances, really sets no upper limit to the demands it may make on the labor, devotion, and self-denial of those who give themselves seriously to it.

In this one case, then, we have seen "detotalization," debureaucratization, democratization, and the growth of professionalism going hand in hand. Further research is needed to find out if change is taking the same direction in other religious communities, if it involves these same processes. The Congregation of St. Raphael has great unity of purpose; its apostolate is almost exclusively teaching. Would "detotalization" be the same in a congregation whose specialty is nursing or social work, or in a congregation which is engaged in various apostolates? Are all religious congregations moving towards resemblance to a voluntary association? These are questions which need to be explored by research.

By a secondary analysis of existing data this thesis also tried to gain some idea of the reactions of sisters to an on-going process of change. The conceptual scheme was explained in Chapter IV. Background characteristics of sisters were taken as independent variables which influence the sisters' responses to questions about current and intended changes in the religious life. Between these independent variables and

the responses came, as intervening variables, the various orientations and attitudes measured by the three scales. We shall briefly indicate our findings.

"Age" proved to be the most important independent variable. It dominated the other independent variables so much that they appeared to be functions of "age." For example, take "age" and "sister's educational attainment." Since improvements in the education of sisters are of recent date, the older the sister the less likely she is to be highly educated and vice versa. Age also seems to dominate the distribution of sisters on the intervening variables. The younger the sister the more likely she is to be change-oriented and value-oriented. The younger the sister the more likely she is to be a low scorer on the Anomie Scale and low also on the Authoritarian Personality (F) Scale. The older the sister the more likely she is to have the opposite characteristics of the younger sister. The overall picture of the congregation shows that a mere 11% are non-change oriented; the vast majority favor change, chiefly for value-related reasons. Though the congregation has less high scores on the Anomie Scale than the national average for sisters, yet, having 27% of high scorers must be a reason for some concern. Rather surprisingly for a community which was quite rigid in the past, only 20% were high scorers on the Authoritarian Personality Scale--much less than the national average for sisters.

The data also revealed that sisters' attitudes and orientations were associated with certain types of response to certain important questions. A favorable attitude to change, low Anomie score, and low scoring on Authoritarian Personality are linked to the reading of the liberal change-oriented National Catholic Reporter and to avoidance of the conservative Catholic press. These same attitudes are also linked to being happy with the pace of change in the local community or even to finding the pace too slow. They are also associated with being more favorable to the suggestion that sisters should be permitted to wear modern dress on all occasions. It was found also that change-oriented sisters, and those low on the Anomie and F Scales were more likely to have considered leaving the congregation; a comparison of the percentages suggest that this may have been because they considered the pace of renewal to be unsatisfactorily slow. Furthermore, a mere 50% of all sisters were quite convinced that if they could make their choice in 1967, they would join their congregation again; 16% would not, and 26% didn't know.

It is clear from the data and the interviews that younger sisters who are likely to be low in anomic and authoritarian tendencies took change in their stride, welcomed it, and seemed to regret only its slow pace. Older sisters, especially those high in anomic and authoritarian characteristics, have had much to suffer from on-going change. It has



bewildered and disoriented quite a few of them, cast doubt on the value of their religious life, and placed them in a very ambiguous situation. One is led to suspect that there exists small groups of extremist advocates and adversaries of change whose positions are so polarized as to make some conflict unavoidable.

Such are the findings in summary form. Further research is needed to discover why certain young sisters continue to be adamantly opposed to change, whereas certain older sisters, contrary to expectations, are in favor of change. We have tentatively suggested that one reason may be related to the personality structure of the individual which is largely shaped by early upbringing. To test this one would need to introduce many variables involved in the sisters' social, economic, and physical environments during their earliest years. One would also like to know whether lay women differ from sisters in their perception of change, whether the tradition and spirit of a community exerts any influence on the reaction to change by groups of sisters from various orders who have been matched on as many other variables as possible.

There are many other research problems which the present study suggests. Is renewal among religious congregations of men similar in pattern to that among congregations of women? Looking at congregations of men alone, is there any difference in pattern of renewal among religious orders of priests and

those of brothers who are not priests? Religious orders are often divided into "contemplative" and "active." Is it the "active" orders only which are moving away from Goffman's model of the "total institution"? Can one find a polar opposite of the "total institution" emerging clearly in any congregation? If so, what model fits this new development most closely? Is it that of the voluntary association, as we have surmised? We might also ask ourselves which religious orders are concerning themselves primarily with internal reform and which with external reform, that is, with changes in their apostolate. Does concern with one type of reform lead to concern with the other? How do reform movements in religious congregations compare with similar reform movements in universities, in the armed forces, and in other social groups? The possibilities for research related to the present study are very numerous. One only has to conclude that any worthwhile research exercise poses as many new problems as it has answered old ones.

## APPENDIX I

For convenience, the complete text of the three scales is given here:

### I. THE NEAL SCALE

#### Item

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 116 (Interest)   | No matter how wonderful the ideas you are trying to get across may be, you cannot do a thing unless you have the powers-that-be on your side.  |
| 119 (Change)     | The current situation in the Church calls for change. We must respond at once.   |
| 122 (Value)      | I would rather be called an idealist than a practical person.  |
| 125 (Non-change) | The future is in God's hands. I will await what He sends and accept what comes as His will for me.   |
| 128 (Interest)   | In the last analysis, it's having the power that makes the difference.   |
| 131 (Change)     | Liberalism is a good thing because it represents a spirit of reform. It is an optimistic outlook expecting meaningful advance. It may not always represent justice, light, and wisdom, but it always tries to do so. |
| 134 (Value)      | When I think of social reform, I think of things I believe in so deeply I could dedicate all my efforts to them.   |
| 137 (Non-change) | By continuing its traditional approach to its teaching role, the Church will better accomplish its mission than by experimenting with new methods.   |

Item

- 140 (Interest) When you come right down to it, it's human nature never to do anything without an eye to one's own profit.
- 143 (Change) Every great step in world history has been accomplished through the inspiration of reformers and creative men.
- 146 (Value) A pastor can hardly call himself a shepherd if he is not as deeply involved in the social welfare of people as he is in giving spiritual service to his parishoners.
- 149 (Non-change) In the final analysis, the strongest basis for planning for the future is to trust to the experience of the past and base the decision-making on the facts, the historical facts.
- 152 (Interest) No matter how good a cause sounds, and no matter how moral the principle on which it is based, still an administrator should follow a wait-and-see policy so he will not get involved in any embarrassing situations from which he will have difficulty withdrawing afterward.
- 155 (Change) Any organizational structure becomes a deadening weight in time and needs to be revitalized.
- 158 (Value) When I am dealing with the problems of my own job, I find myself constantly trying to make decisions that will help solve the bigger issues of justice, etc. for all mankind. The world's problems are very much my problems.
- 161 (Non-change) I like conservatism because it represents a stand to preserve our glorious heritage.
- 164 (Interest) The best way to improve world conditions is for each man to take care of his own corner of the vineyard.

Item

- 167 (Change)      Would that the middle-aged and elder citizen retained that enthusiasm for initiating change that frequently characterizes the rebellious youth.
- 170 (Value)      When I hear of people who are deprived of freedom and just treatment, I really get involved; I find myself planning how I can help them.
- 173 (Non-change)      From my experience, I have learned to believe that there is nothing new under the sun.

II. THE ANOMIE SCALEItem

- 118      With everything so uncertain these days it almost seems as though anything could happen.
- 121      What is lacking in the world today is the old kind of friendship that lasted for a life time.
- 124      With everything in such a state of disorder, it is hard for a person to know where he stands from one day to the next.
- 127      Everything changes so quickly these days that I often have trouble deciding what are the right rules to follow.
- 130      I often feel that many things our parents stood for are just going to ruin before our very eyes.
- 133      The trouble with the world today is that most people really don't believe in anything.
- 136      I often feel awkward and out of place.
- 139      People were better off in the old days when everyone knew just how he was expected to act.
- 142      It seems to me that other people find it easier to decide what is right than I do.

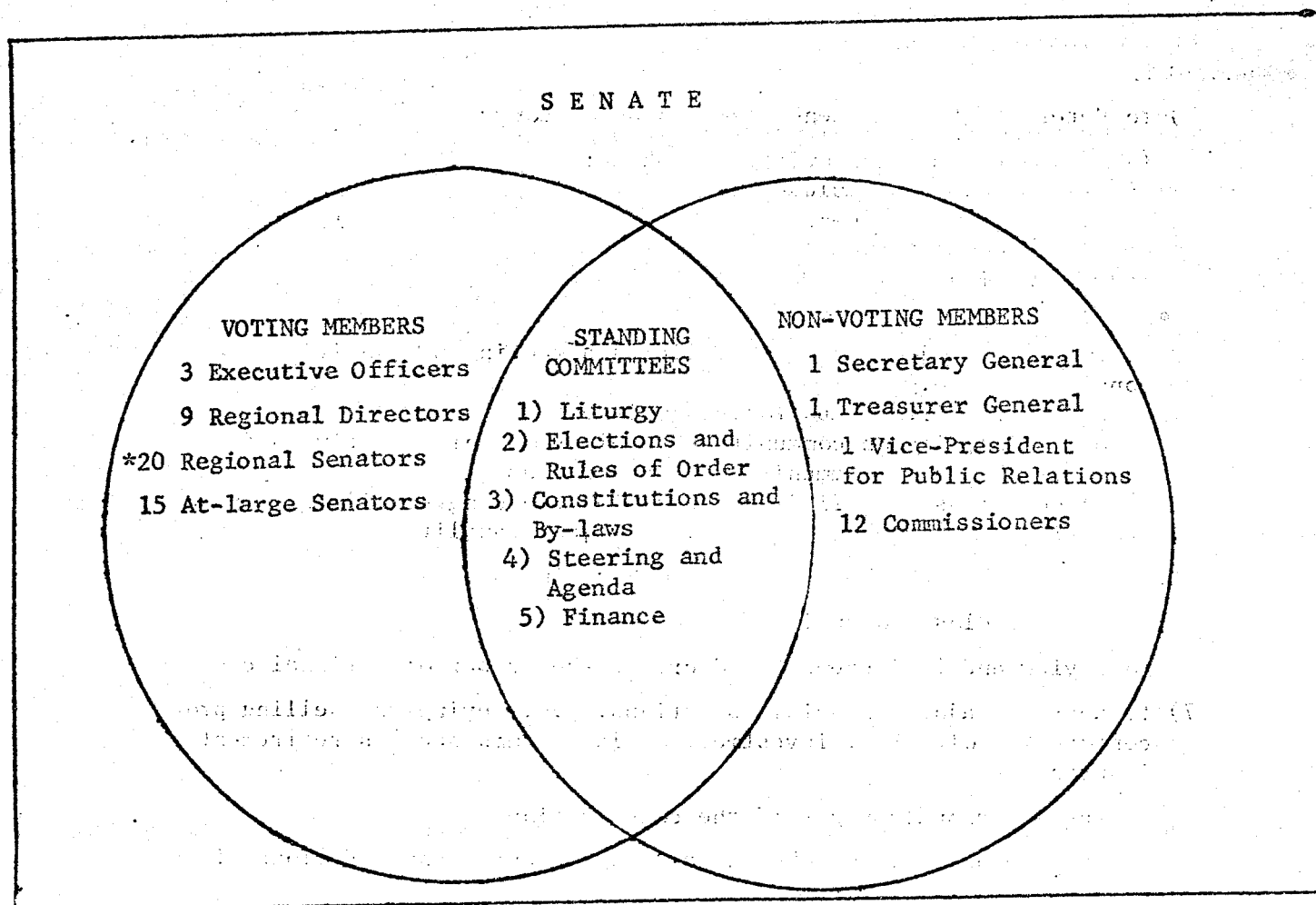
### III. THE F SCALE

#### Item

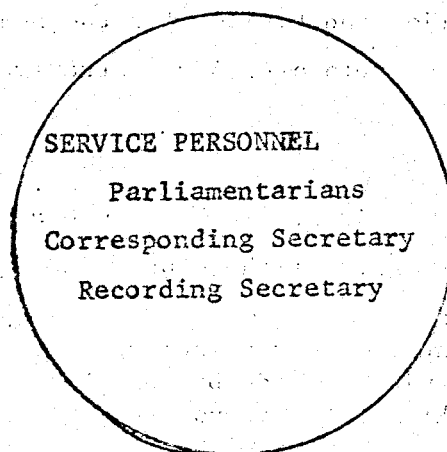
- 145 What youth needs most is strict discipline, rugged determination, and the will to work and fight for family and country.
- 148 Nowadays when so many different kinds of people mix together so much, a person has to protect himself carefully against catching an infection or disease from them.
- 151 Young people sometimes get rebellious ideas, but as they grow up they ought to get over them and settle down.
- 154 Sex crimes, such as rape and attack on children, deserve more than mere imprisonment; such criminals ought to be publicly whipped or worse.
- 157 People can be divided into two classes: the weak and the strong.
- 160 Science has its place, but there are many important things that must always be beyond human understanding.
- 163 Most of our social problems would be solved if we could somehow get rid of the immoral, crooked, and feeble-minded people.
- 166 If people would talk less and work more, everybody would be better off.
- 169 The best teacher or boss is the one who tells us just exactly what is to be done and how to go about it.
- 172 No sane, normal, decent person would ever think of hurting a close friend or relative.
- 175 When a person has a problem or a worry, it is best for him not to think about it but to keep busy with more cheerful things.
- 178 More than anything else, it is good hard work that makes life worthwhile.

## **APPENDIX II**

# LEGISLATIVE LEVEL



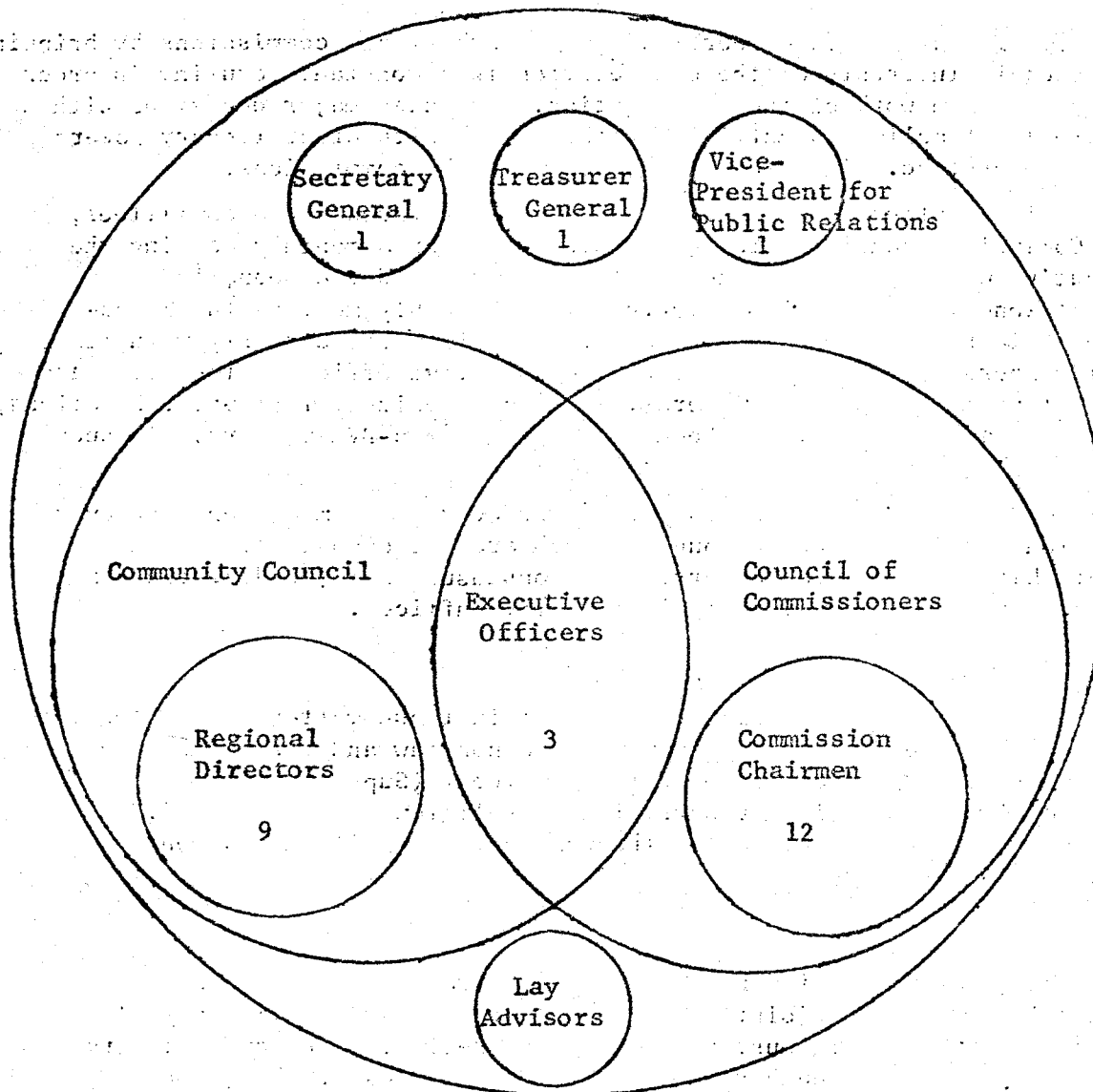
\*Regional Senators: Two senators from each of nine regions; one senator per seventy-five sisters over 200 in a region. (Currently these regions are region 3 and region 6.)



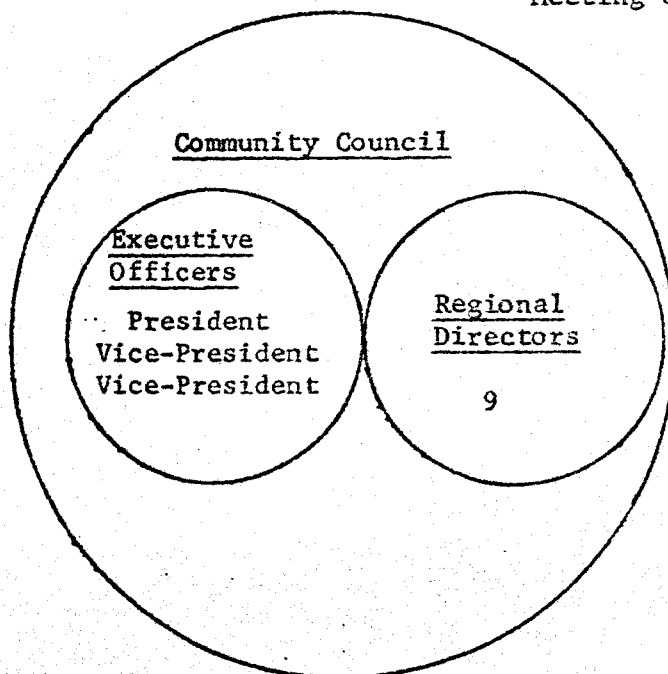
These three diagrams are reproduced from "Design for a New Government," a paper privately circulated among the Sisters of St. Raphael.



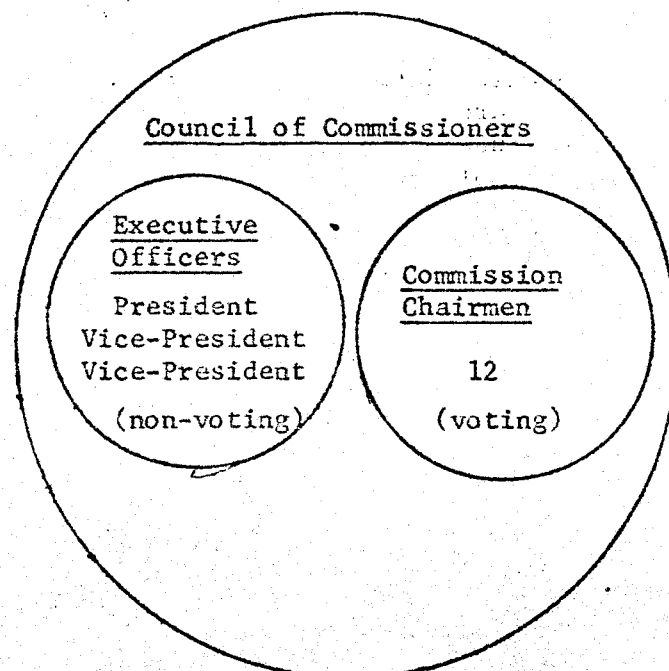
# THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD



Meeting Quarterly

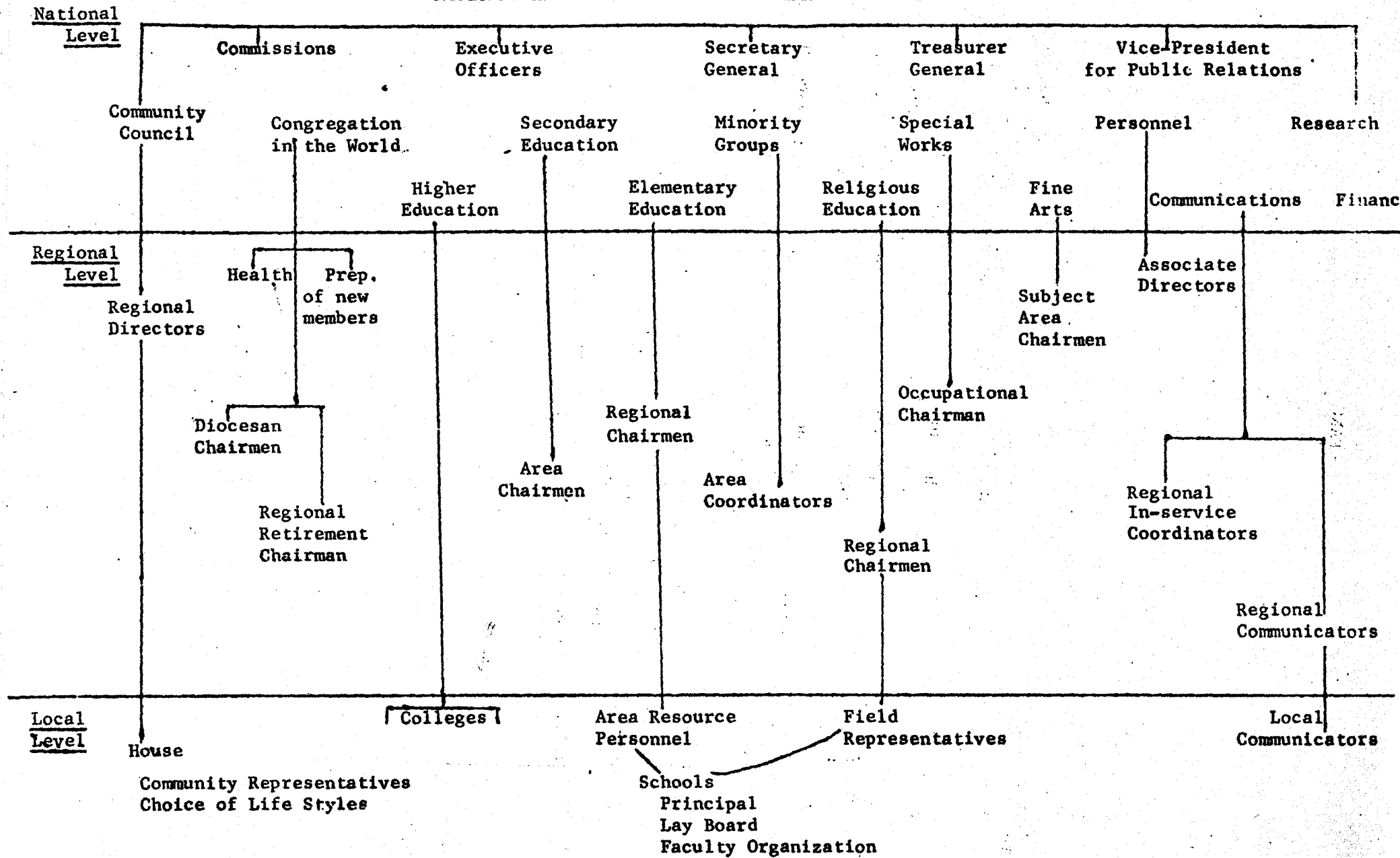


Meeting Monthly



Meeting Monthly

## REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL



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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Brendan O'Dowd has been read and approved by members of the Department of Sociology.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

9-9-69

Date

Ross P. Cherry

Signature of Advisor