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## CHAPTER 4

## THE CAREER CONTEXT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

It often makes a great deal of difference if you're a man or a woman! Many organisations are dominated by gender-related values that bias organisational life in favour of one sex over another. (Morgan, 1997, p.191)

This chapter examines an important layer of the Catholic education organisation that helps constitute the career context defined within the case study. This layer focuses on structures and processes that support the career context and is permeated by particular discourses that inform understandings of career and give it a Catholic point of reference. Through the analysis of this layer, I demonstrate how career in the organisation, which is the subject of the case study, is dynamic, contingent and contextual, situated in unique organisational arrangements, within which each woman must negotiate her career. Career is seen as a cultural artefact of the organisation, producing and promoting particular meanings and practices specific to the organisation. These meanings and practices have their genesis in organisational discourses that reflect an industrial and secular focus or a religious and vocational focus.

The career context shapes the individual's view of career outlook in the particular organisation and is influenced by one's ability to impact on the organisation. The agency of the organisational members, therefore, is central to the construction of 'organisation' as lived practice (Halford, Savage & Witz, 1996). As an integral element of this lived reality of organisation, cultural patterns are created and sustained but often in competing and contradictory ways. Within the organisation, gender is a powerful cultural force associated with the portrayal of feminine and masculine meanings in its ideas and symbols. Culture is the process that establishes careers as contingent because culture is a representation of the organisation's beliefs and values.

At the macro-organisational level, the religious ideology of the Catholic Church is the dominant influence on the culture of the Catholic education organisation. Religious ideology informs the Catholic culture of the organisation, providing a filter for the secular culture that is informed by the political and economic issues of the day and dominated by the market economy. Although Catholicism has no unique claim to relevance when set within the market economy, it does provide an alternative set of cultural norms upon which organisational goals, structures and social relations are formulated for Catholic education. The emergence of co-existing organisational cultures “form fine-tuned nets of meaning that subtly inform and encourage people to play out gender in certain ways and discourage them from doing so in ways that are not socially sanctioned” (Alvesson & Billing, 1997, p.107).

Organisational discourses in Catholic education become established on the basis of the requirements of the religious tradition of the Catholic Church and the discursive influences which are operating in the wider educational environment. Such discursive influences are shaped by issues such as the restructuring of industries including the education industry, the promotion by governments, business and increasingly by schools, of a competitive, marketised education environment and public policy intervention. Most recently, public policy has created the process of enterprise bargaining as the means of negotiating industrial agreements and has led to the establishment of legislation to counter sex discrimination. Within the education industry itself, the commercial culture of the free market economy with its emphasis on instrumental rationality has accelerated the restructuring and marketisation of education. Education in general, has increasingly become an economic imperative with the main aim of providing individuals with the means to make a living. Most educators, however, prefer to see education as the vehicle through which a student is given the

means to make a life worth living which entails far more than instrumental and economic outcomes. Catholic education, in particular, exists “to make present the vision and praxis of Jesus Christ and to advocate that a Catholic faith-life is relevant and meaningful to everyday life” (Hoekstra, 1995, p.8).

The changing political, social and economic context across Australian society has influenced the organisational culture of Catholic education and, consequently, the career outlook for its women employees. The competing religious and market discourses in Catholic education can collide at times presenting Catholic education authorities with the potential of an identity crisis:

With this link, the problem lies in the fact that there has occurred the secularisation of our society, where the norms, values and ways of interpreting reality are based on natural causation assumptions and the world is seen as being interpreted and shaped through physical agencies, human institutions and empirical logic. Hence in a society that minimises its dependence on supernatural agencies or influences, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Catholic organisation to promote its own values and approach to life. (Duncan, 1998, p.54)

Against the background outlined above, an analysis of the organisational career context focuses on providing an appreciation of the macro-level which, my thesis argues, is a strong influence on the gender sub-text of organisational processes and practices. Organisational norms and values can be determined through an examination of policies and structures and other discursive arrangements. In addition to these specific forms of gendered complexity, there is also the need to reveal the latent, subtle and indirect processes associated with the gender sub-text of the organisation. The analysis also acknowledges the micro-level of gendered relations within the organisation keeping in mind that “what happens to teachers is not simply a collection of individual plans and decisions” (Acker, 1996). Structure and agency therefore, are addressed from a stance that sees women-as-agents positioning themselves within the



organisational context, but also being positioned and constrained by this context.

In the process of examining the structures and processes which shape the career context, it is necessary to explain the historical development of the organisation focusing on those influences which have strongly influenced the contemporary career context in Catholic education. As an explanatory framework, this chapter addresses the following question: How does the Catholic education organisation address the issue of career and what influences shape the organisational response? This question is answered through an exploration of historical developments in the organisation, the established career structures and the discursive foundation for the organisational approach that emanates from both secular and sacred arenas. The major signifiers of the organisational response to career are mission and market. These signifiers bring particular needs to the fore and provoke particular responses within the organisation.

Firstly, there is a need to attract and maintain a qualified and motivated teaching workforce in order to sustain the viability and continued growth of Catholic education. Secondly, the organisation wishes to inspire teachers to see their careers in Catholic education as a way of engaging in the mission of the Catholic Church. The subsequent analysis of this organisational response reveals the competing cultures that are sponsored through the contradictory ideologies of religious mission and secular market forces. These ideologies affect how a Catholic education organisation interprets and implements particular policies and practices associated with teachers' careers. Organisational policies and practices relevant to the career context are designed to bring into fruition a vision of the work of the teacher and the administrator in Catholic education within a framework of religious ministry and also as professional educators. Within this ideological mix gender is both visible and invisible.

The exploration of this layer of the organisation reveals the disembodiment that

permeates the structures and discourses associated with career. Searching this organisational terrain provides instances that constrain and facilitate women's career choices and chances.

#### The Development of the Teaching Career in Catholic Education

The contemporary career context in Catholic education has emerged out of changes in Australian society, changes in education and changes in the Catholic Church. New organisational arrangements in Catholic education have evolved. It must be acknowledged that within this changing environment, there have been tensions for Catholic education. Issues such as the need to adhere to both State and Commonwealth Government policies and funding requirements on the one hand and, on the other, to ensure the distinctiveness of Catholic education as an alternative to other education systems, is an example of the tension.

The teachers who staff Catholic schools have become an increasingly diverse group of people. The levels of professional preparation and qualifications they require are more rigorous than for any other previous group of teachers in Catholic schools (Ryan, Brennan & Wilmet, 1997). In dealing with the many tensions that have arisen, the Catholic education organisation has constantly been required to articulate how the teachings of the Church are operationalised within Catholic schools. Along with elements of Catholic education such as the curriculum offered in its schools, teaching as a career in Catholic education has been subject to such deliberations. There is the potential for inconsistencies to emerge between the espoused mission of Catholic education and the exigencies of practice in living in, and with, the cultural milieu in which Catholic schools exist. Within the evolving cultural mosaic of the Catholic education organisation the gendering of the organisation is shaped and re-shaped by historical, social and ideological influences.

### A Sacred and Secular context

The gendered complexity of Catholic education is examined through analysis of both the sacred and secular cultural fields of meaning within which the organisation operates. In the first instance, this complexity is a consequence of an organisational arrangement which is centred on the authority of the Catholic Church and its structures and teachings. The Church represents a superstructure overarching the Catholic education organisation. The role and authority vested in the Catholic education organisation is delegated through the Australian Catholic Bishops to the individual Directors of Catholic Education who are located in the various diocese.

Cultural beliefs expressed through patriarchal patterns both in society and especially in the Catholic Church about what is appropriate work for males and females provide a backdrop for the careers of teachers in Catholic education. The leadership authority structure of Catholic education includes lay persons who are predominantly male and clerical persons who are all male. They are charged with the responsibility of maintaining the viability and the distinctiveness of Catholic education. This responsibility, in recent times, has necessitated the giving of special attention to the religious dimension of Catholic education as a result of increasing laicisation of staff in Catholic schools.

The Catholic education organisation is also firmly located within the broad secular educational environment. Women have made considerable progress in secular society in identifying sexism and other oppressive regimes that have prevented women from accessing the full range of roles in society. This has not been the case for women's position in the Catholic Church. For some women, this lack of progress in the Church contributes to feelings of anger and frustration. As employees in Catholic schools, women are not encouraged to speak out on issues within the Church for which they may

hold contrary views. Other issues which have also contributed to feelings of anger, hurt and embarrassment for many who work for the Catholic Church are recent revelations of sexual abuse by some priests and brothers often associated with students in Catholic schools.

The Catholic Church faces many challenges including dwindling congregations. It is plain, however, that for a range of reasons, some of which pertain to religious sensibilities, families continue to send their children to Catholic schools in significant numbers. The Catholic Church therefore, is faced with maintaining and possibly growing its educational ministry whilst accepting the reality that for many children and families involved in Catholic schools, this may be their only experience of the Catholic Church. In accepting public funding for Catholic education, Catholic Church authorities are also subject to the authority of the Commonwealth and State governments and the legislative requirements of the Australian legal system. Within this amalgam of sacred and secular perspectives, the subtleties of micro-organisational life coupled with the macro-organisational level associated with ideological, political and economic issues provides a rich and sometimes perverse cultural mosaic. The organisational career is shaped and re-shaped within this amalgam.

### Historical Transitions

Catholic education in Australia has moved substantially from being an organisation largely staffed and administered by men and women who were members of religious orders or were priests of the Catholic Church, to a lay-staffed system. From early in the nineteenth century, Catholic schools were gradually established in the various dioceses throughout Australia. From the latter part of the nineteenth century and continuing for over a hundred years, Catholic schools were maintained through the presence of religious orders. There were strong links made throughout Australian Catholic schools

the religious orders who had personnel working in these different dioceses. The diocese referred to as an element of this case study experienced the same historical change process. Throughout this chapter, references made to Catholic education refer to this diocese which is one organisational arena of the case study. Where it is considered necessary, facts that are specific to a different arena of the case study organisation will be made explicit.

The establishment of the current career context within Catholic education can be traced back to the late 1960's and early 1970's. During this period, significant changes occurred in Australian society, in Commonwealth Government policy on funding of non-government schools and in new decisions about the nature and scope of the work of the Catholic Church. Significant change was heralded for the Catholic Church with the announcement on January 25, 1959 of the Second Vatican Council which was eventually held in Rome covering the period from October 1962 to December 1965. These combined changes led to a re-conceptualisation of Catholic education for Australian Catholic schools in general.

Post-World War II immigration to Australia resulted in greatly increased enrolment in Catholic schools because large numbers of new arrivals were from predominantly Catholic European countries. The staffing of Catholic schools which, for the first half of the twentieth century, had been achieved through the presence of religious congregations, began the transition to staffing by lay men and women. Changes in governmental policy on funding non-government schools in Australia took place in the 1960's and 1970's and allowed Catholic education authorities to employ lay teachers and to pay them salaries which eventually were comparable to Government school teachers. These policy shifts occurred as a result of Commonwealth Government intervention that weakened the control of the State governments over education (Dudley

& Vidovich, 1995). This process had its origins in the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972 that saw the establishment of the Commonwealth Schools' Commission in 1973. Many reforms were achieved in Australian education through the Schools' Commission which, until 1987, was responsible for providing funds according to need to both government and non-government schools.

It was fortuitous for Catholic schools that at a time when religious orders were redefining their 'charisms' or special responses to mission as a consequence of Vatican II decrees, that they could continue to exist and expand as a result of public funding which now provides up to eighty percent of the total funds for Catholic education. Religious orders diversified their work, moving out of teaching into other occupations and, at the same time, experienced decreasing vocations to religious life. During the 1970's Catholic education throughout Australia was significantly restructured to become a four-tiered organisational structure embracing the individual school, the diocesan system of schools, the State and the Commonwealth Commissions. The diocese in the case study followed suit, appointing a priest as the first Director of Catholic Education in 1969. Prior to this new arrangement, Catholic schooling had been achieved through a tripartite organisational structure consisting of the diocesan Bishop, the parish priests and religious congregations (Praetz, 1974).

As the new Catholic system of schools, funded by the client schools accessing government grants emerged, many order-owned schools conducted by religious congregations continued to operate independently of the diocesan systemic schools. These schools established links to the new systemic organisational structures on a negotiated basis. In the early 1970's, Catholic Education Offices, which were themselves in an embryonic stage, began the process of employing large numbers of lay Catholic teachers and, when 'absolutely necessary', non-Catholic teachers. Whilst there

were still many religious personnel working in Catholic education, the concept of the teaching career in Catholic schools began to take shape as more lay men and women sought employment in such schools.

In the early 1970's, career structures were limited to classroom teaching positions as the majority of Catholic schools still had a principal who belonged to a religious order. A religious order would nominate a person from its congregation as principal. In the process of transition to predominantly lay-staffed schools, career structures were introduced under the influence of both industrial agreements and the concerns of the Australian Bishops to ensure teachers in Catholic schools were adequately trained in the Catholic religious tradition.

The influence of both sacred and secular authorities on the careers of teachers in Catholic schools has been a continuing hallmark of the organisation. Christie and Smith (1989) suggest that in the early 1970's, two separate perceptions of what is meant by career were accommodated within the Catholic education organisation. Both the secular notion of career as movement out of classroom positions into promoted positions which attracted monetary and status rewards and, the alternative concept of career as "the fulfilment of a vocational aspiration predicated on deeply felt personal, professional and spiritual values" (p.219) coexisted. This accommodation remains notable in Catholic education.

The close association of Catholic schools with religious orders for much of the twentieth century is perhaps responsible for the continuing strength of the 'career as vocation' perception which emphasised the intrinsic rather extrinsic rewards an individual received in their service to the Catholic Church. Consequently, teachers in Catholic schools in the diocese were remunerated at seventy percent of the remuneration level of government schoolteachers until 1975 when comparability of



salary was achieved. The concept of being rewarded for a life of Christian service with 'eternal life' was strongly promoted in the Catholic Church. Perhaps this was the motivation which, for much of the twentieth century, saw various religious congregations successfully support the expansion of Catholic schools throughout Australia, operating with little financial support, and certainly no salary conditions for those who staffed the schools. For lay women in Catholic schools, the selfless example of women religious has proven to be both a hindrance and an inspiration.

#### Career Pathways and Changing Leadership Profiles

The establishment of a career pathway based on movement out of the classroom, which was the basis of the initial organisational career response, has continued up to the present. The rise of unionism in Catholic schools in the 1980's, largely contributed to the establishment of an approach to teacher's careers which was very similar to career path models in other Australian schooling systems. In Catholic secondary schools, for example, positions of added responsibility which included subject co-ordinators and pastoral care co-ordinators were established, very much like the Heads of Department and Year Co-ordinators in government schools. Such positions in Catholic schools created a career path of sorts for teachers, leading to the possibility of access to senior management roles of principal, deputy principal or assistant to the principal with special responsibility for religious education. Catholic primary schools maintained a limited hierarchical career structure of principal and assistant to the principal in religious education. The latter position was developed in response to the Bishop's concerns about the relationship between the religious identity of the Catholic school and the laicisation of Catholic schools.

A significant difference in the career positions of Catholic schools can be found in the credentials required for positions of senior administration in Catholic schools and

diocesan Catholic education offices. Whilst it is expected that a candidate for a senior administration position has the requisite skills and knowledge to fulfil an administrative and leadership role, it is also a requirement that specific faith criteria are met as well. Teachers taking on these particular roles are expected to have studied in an accredited course of theology and/or religious studies. Women are currently meeting these organisational requirements in significant numbers. In the case study diocese all women in such senior organisational leadership roles have either acquired or are currently studying in a requisite post-graduate course. In addition, twenty-two women out of three hundred and thirty-five in classroom teaching positions are completing the same accredited courses. Study is an added burden for many women who must juggle several roles.

There are various career positions that may be considered as constituting a 'quasi-career pathway' across the various arenas of Catholic education. These consist of teaching and administrative positions in Catholic schools, diocesan offices and positions in the State Commission or the National Commission. Accessing such positions is not based on promotion, but rather on merit as defined through particular experiences and qualifications considered essential for the position. For such positions to constitute a genuine career pathway, it would be necessary for those working in a diocesan system to have knowledge of the total organisation and to envision a career route which traverses each of the organisation's arenas. A career pathway in this case study organisation, however, is generally limited to the particular diocese with the possibility of accessing positions in another diocese or in a Catholic Commission being accessed on the basis of merit. The responses provided by the participants in the case study research indicated that very few understood the organisation beyond the diocesan arena. Even those in principal positions had only a vague idea of the total organisational

arrangement of Catholic education and the 'modus operandi' of the various sectors.

One significant issue in evaluating the total organisation, as a place for a career for women is that the Catholic education organisation throughout Australia is underrepresented by women in the most senior positions of each of the organisational sectors described. Women currently hold 27% of senior positions in diocesan offices and commissions (MacDonald et al., 1999). In principalship positions, the gender imbalance has not been arrested. Whilst Catholic education prides itself on employment based on merit within these roles, a Bishop still has the right to make an appointment to a position without the advertising and interviewing that is required in most secular organisations. There is no grievance procedure for a person who wants to challenge his or her non-appointment to a role.

As a concept that is meant to assist women to achieve career progress, 'merit' remains a contested principle from a feminist perspective. Burton (1991) demonstrated the mobilisation of masculine bias through the assumption that merit is a neutral and unambiguous term rather than an unstable cultural construction based upon a particular set of social relationships tending to favour those already in power, which overwhelmingly is the male gender. Merit, however, is seen as fairer to women than the seniority model of promotion, which until recently, was the hallmark of career progression in government schools. The question of merit is vexed within Catholic education because women have been so stereotyped within narrow gender roles defined within Church teaching and structures.

Ironically, Catholic schools throughout Australia in the past differed significantly from government schools in that the presence of women in leadership positions was relatively high. Women religious from different religious congregations administered and staffed Catholic schools in significant numbers for over one hundred years. They

generally taught both boys and girls in primary schools and girls in secondary schools as the boys generally would move to a school run and staffed by men religious such as the Christian Brothers. In many small country towns, however, boys whose families could not afford to send them away to a Catholic boy's boarding school were in many cases still taught by the sisters.

Women religious took responsibility for establishing Catholic schools throughout Australia, often in very remote places. Like their lay counterparts, the pedagogical training these teachers had experienced was varied. It became more common for women religious to seek similar qualifications to lay teachers from the 1960's onwards. With the changes from religiously staffed to lay staffed schools beginning in the late 1960's, what is notable, is the similarly gender-segregated career progression of men relative to women in the Catholic organisation compared with the government school sector. In a study by McDonald (1992), concerned with women and the principalship in Australian Catholic schools, the organisational profile had changed significantly as women religious moved out of leadership roles in Catholic education to be replaced more often than not by lay men as principals of Catholic schools.

This changing profile raises a significant issue when considering career outlook for women. The emergent organisational culture resulting from a radically changed organisational landscape has closely followed the leadership patterns of government school systems, with men filling the majority of senior positions. It is interesting to note, however, that this profile has been challenged, although with limited success, through the leadership of particular women religious in drawing attention to the gendered reality of leadership in Catholic education (McDonald, 1992). At a workshop conducted at the National Catholic Education Commission Conference in 1996, a group of women presented the following list of reasons for the low participation of women in

senior administrative roles:

- The historical tradition of a male dominated Church and organisation.
- Women lack the confidence to imagine themselves in the roles and so don't even apply.
- Church culture in which women are treated as different and unequal to men.
- The strength of male networking which provides an informal sponsorship role underpinning the formal recruitment and appointment processes.
- A lack of role models for women.
- Male bias in interview panels and the lack of training in Equal Opportunity principles for panel members.
- No acknowledgement in role requirements of family responsibilities.
- The traditional hierarchical, management structure is antithetical to how many women relate to others (seeing the Principal role as first among equals).
- Many women ask the question "Is it worth it?" and answer with a resounding "No".

With declining numbers of men to choose from, the Catholic education organisation will face a leadership crisis if the issues raised above are not addressed through leadership succession planning. Leadership succession, however, is not part of the organisational career context at present.

#### The Changing Nature of the Teaching Career

In recent years, the concept of classroom careers has been placed under scrutiny in Catholic education, as it has in government school organisations. Such a response has been considered imperative by governments, educational authorities and unions in an attempt to create a career structure that provides a real alternative to the 'career ladder' model. A new model of career was called for that would confirm and strengthen the

recognition of teaching as a profession and more importantly, keep competent teachers working in classrooms. In the early 1990's, Catholic schools joined other school systems in beginning the process of establishing a career path for teachers within a classroom context. The issues raised in developing new models for teacher's careers acknowledged that teaching is an occupation that has been characterised by stratification based on gender (Australian Schools' Council, 1990).

In terms of career pathways, classroom teaching is defined as pedagogy of the feminine and is thus positioned as 'other' to educational administration. Theobald (1996) argues that administration is a technology of the masculine, producing its own truth claims, discourses and practices. The feminisation of the occupation has led to a devaluing of classroom teaching as a long-term career option. Occupations in this sense are subject to a gendered hierarchy with those occupations which are more masculinised such as engineering, being more valued than teaching. Within the teaching occupation, roles are subject to a gendered hierarchy with administration being viewed as a hard masculine role and predominantly inhabited by men whilst teaching is still considered 'women's work'. Sexism influences the relative status of the teaching occupation.

The notion of teaching being a feminised occupation is notable when considering the staffing profile of the diocese in the case study. Diocesan statistics indicate that the total number of women employed in Catholic education as at April 2000 was 1076 whilst the total number of men was 319. Women fill the majority of teaching positions (80% of primary positions and 58% of secondary positions) in schools and it is felt that the diocese is well-represented by women in management positions compared to other diocese and systems with women holding 52% of these positions. This representation, however, is still disproportionate in such a highly feminised workforce. In addition, women are not applying for senior positions at the same rate that men apply. The

reasons for this gender divide are many and complex and go beyond the scope of this case study. Having been a principal myself for twelve years, I am aware that the issue of women's access to the principalship and other senior positions has been considered in the case study diocese. Some provisions have been made to address important aspects of the women and the principalship dilemma, such as ensuring advertisements are gender sensitive and there is gender balance on interviewing panels. The question of why so few women apply for senior positions, however, remains unexamined.

### Careers in Classrooms

Women in teaching across the various Australian education organisations have pressed for greater acknowledgement of classroom teaching as a career choice as well as acceptance of family-first orientations so that women's careers are not derailed. Women who participated in my case study acknowledged that there had been a genuine attempt to establish 'careers in classrooms' with the introduction of classifications such as Advanced Skills Teacher and Leading Teacher in the diocese. Reservations were expressed in the way teachers can access such roles. Without rigour in the assessment of applications for such positions, it is considered as 'just another pay increment'. Such a perspective raises the notion of status associated with particular designated career positions and the need for credibility in determining the requirements for access to such positions.

The establishment of the Advanced Skills Teacher classification was considered important as an element of award restructuring for all teachers in Australia in a context of improved careers for teachers. The original model, however, lost impetus as a result of protracted disagreement between unions and employers regarding further levels beyond level 1 of the classification. The Advanced Skills Teacher classification in Catholic education became a victim of the enterprise bargaining process and was



abandoned in 1999, to be replaced with what was to be a new and single classification titled Leading Teacher. Teachers have indicated that they want further levels negotiated within this classification, having placed the issue on subsequent enterprise bargaining agendas.

#### The Influence of Public Policy on the Teaching Career

The influence of public policy directions has led to changes in organisational conditions which have the potential to enable women to better manage their careers and lives and thereby achieve their career potential. The possibility of significant change in the way teacher's careers are viewed and enacted has also occurred in recent times. One issue creating this potential relates to government policy on the funding of university positions. This change relates to the number of teacher graduates but this varies from state to state. Australian education is moving into a time of teacher shortage resulting from decisions to limit the numbers of teacher graduates in particular years. The situation of teacher shortage is exacerbated by an ageing teacher workforce, which will see more teachers retiring with fewer graduates to employ. The possibility of more women accessing leadership roles in Catholic education appears likely as a consequence.

The continuing role of equal employment opportunity policy encouraging changes in working patterns and practices in society through the advent of family-friendly work practices is another initiative to impact on how women perceive their chances of achieving genuine career progress. The shifting balance in families due to women's inroads into the paid workforce has seen the need for a re-negotiation of relationships between men and women to accommodate change (Lewis & Lewis, 1996). The issue of women carrying the burden of the double and triple shift is therefore out in the open. There is also an increasing understanding that careers can and will, in more instances,

consist of short-term contracts, retraining and periods of unemployment and under-employment for some people. Other people will continue to work sixty and seventy hour weeks. Changes such as these influence people's career attitudes.

School teaching has been considered 'a good job for a woman' in the past because it allowed women to be home with the children. The development of policies such as family-friendly work practices may therefore be seen as unnecessary. The conditions of teaching in the current moment, however, require professional commitment to a range of activities and to ongoing study. Developing family-friendly workplace policies for schools has the impact of legitimising the importance of balance in life and acknowledges the 'whole-of-life' issues which employees bring to their workplaces. Such policies have begun to emerge in Catholic education with the development of family leave, paid maternity leave and leave without pay for extended periods. Much of the impetus for such changes has emanated within secular authorities such as the unions and government in the form of legislated changes to address gender equity issues in the workforce. The impact of such reforms has been uneven, however, and the gendering of educational work is maintained through the continuation of the "politics of male privilege" (Blackmore, 1999, p.23). Educational organisations in general remain male dominated systems that are proving difficult to dislodge.

Within the case study diocese, the need to address gender equity issues in terms of career structures and processes has been given strong impetus. This is a direct result of the leadership given by the previous diocesan Director, who was a woman and a member of a religious congregation. Under her leadership, from 1985 until 1994, gender equity was prominent on the organisation's agenda with a particular focus on two issues, women and the principalship in Catholic schools, and the implementation of the National Policy on the Education of Girls. The current male Director has continued

to support these gender equity initiatives but with little personal involvement. Rather, support is given through the ongoing resourcing of a Gender Equity Reference Group, consisting of various representatives from the schools and the Catholic Education Office. In addition, with the encouragement of several women principals, myself included, the Director has supported the establishment of an Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workforce Committee as a Standing Committee to support the proper administration of Catholic education in the diocese. Within this organisational structure, women's agency has impacted at a formal level through the policy process.

#### The emerging 'Cyber-Career.'

Of all the contemporary forces capable of re-shaping the teaching career, information and communication technology holds extraordinary potential. The information economy has spawned the 'dot.com community' which continues to create new opportunities for working differently. It has created professional communities across the globe. A teaching career can already be configured within an electronic community, extending the career beyond the boundaries of the school and the organisation and potentially across occupations. Technology is considered a pervasive, integrating force that can engender new communication systems and is capable of changing power relationships because it has the potential to eliminate traditional lines of vertical and horizontal demarcation and organisational boundaries (Limerick et al., 1998). The emerging cyber-career context has significant implications for organisations in the management of resource issues and in the operational design and total identity of the organisation. Teachers will be among employees who can exploit the cyber-career context.

They will view themselves as located in contexts of multi-employers (ranging across off-shore, commonwealth, state and local educational authorities), as catering to multi-sectors (employment, community welfare, post-compulsory

institutions, to name a few), and as part of the global economy. (Limerick et al., 1998, p.219)

In her address to the Australian National Press Club on International Women's Day in March 2000, prominent Australian academic and feminist, Dale Spender, presented a vision of the cyber-career for teachers. Teachers, according to Spender, if they are not already doing so, will establish portfolio careers consisting of a variety of roles including facilitating learning, research, professional writing, production of learning materials in a range of mediums, all managed and networked through technology. Whilst the case study organisation has taken significant steps in the development of technology as an organisational resource, the notion of a 'cyber-career context' has not been imagined, let alone addressed. There is a commitment to skilling teachers in technology that is attuned to the competency movement of human resource development. Accredited training courses have been developed at two levels within the organisation, with teachers being trained during term time. Women and men, selected on merit from within the organisation, are involved as trainers. In terms of the existing career context, there are several individuals within the organisation who are already well advanced in developing their own version of the cyber-career. As an example, they have designed and marketed software for a variety of educational projects and one teacher has established an internet tutoring process. Whilst women form part of this small group, information and communications technology in general, is seen as a masculine enterprise (Webster, 1996).

With the exception of the career positions associated with the implementation of the religious education requirements of Catholic schools, the career structures that have been created are not dissimilar to those in other systems of education in Australia. This gives some comfort to teachers in Catholic schools because they have a benchmark

against which judgements can be made on issues such as the provision of career opportunities and remuneration. The need for such career benchmarking can be understood when considered in the light of teachers in Catholic schools in the United States who do not enjoy salary comparability with public school teachers (Lacey, 1996).

### New Hurdles for Women

Catholic schools are currently part of a competitive Australian environment for schooling systems with a strong client focus emerging. This has not necessarily improved the position of women in career terms. Currently, with the privileging of the market and efficiency discourses in education in general, the establishment of new and different gender regimes within the organisation spawning multiple and new masculinities is apparent. Along with the clericalism of the Catholic priesthood, these new masculinities support those organisational versions of masculinities identified by Hearn and Collinson (1996) as authoritarianism, paternalism, entrepreneurialism, careerism and informalism (men building networks on the basis of shared masculine interests and excluding women). Blackmore (1999) indicates that strategic and competitive masculinities continue to become manifest within the focus on success promoted in educational organisations. She describes the emerging competitive educational environment as one in which “the new performativities of ‘post-modern’ organisations exploit the pleasure of the win and getting the job done, as well as the intimacy of social relations to achieve organisational goals” (p.37).

Shifting organisational arrangements have seen the continued negotiation of Catholic ideals within the cultural politics notable in the Australian education industry in an effort to create a shared system of meaning for those within Catholic education. The organisational and administrative arrangements, which have recently evolved in Catholic education, have created a challenging set of circumstances for the Australian

Bishops. This is a direct result of intervention of government in Catholic education through funding and accountability arrangements and the emergence of bureaucratic structures and processes within Catholic education. In addition, Catholic education is aligned with the general view of education as a significant national enterprise. Catholic schools are no longer part of the fortress Catholicism of the past that promoted separation from a secular and profane world. There are many people associated with Catholic education, however, who question the more evolved version of Catholic education. This concern had its genesis in the 1970's, particularly within the clergy, resulting from a view that "... it had become difficult to make any significant distinction between Catholic and the government schools" (Connell, 1993, p.637).

The continued expansion of the role of diocesan Catholic education offices as service bureaucracies based on greater centralisation of authority and power has been seen as diminishing the distinctiveness of the Catholic school sector. The Australian Schools' Commission itself warned of the dangers for Catholic systems in simply mirroring the State bureaucratic structures (Schools' Commission, 1978, p.11). The absence of women in leadership positions in government school systems has been well documented by Australian researchers (Chapman, 1986; Limerick, 1991; Blackmore, 1999) indicating the perpetuation of the gender regime in these schooling organisations. The Catholic education organisation should have been conscious of not mirroring the gender-segmented career structures in the government school systems because Catholic education had the example of many women religious leaders.

Career structures and processes have been established in the Catholic education organisation to support its educational enterprise, including its religious identity. Career mobility options consist of two basic career positions, classroom teaching and administration. Within both role career designations, this case study reveals how

women still face considerable obstacles in reaching their preferred career destination. Obstacles result from the prevailing cultural landscape in the organisation which assumes a high degree of individual commitment to organisational goals and purposes. This commitment often involves work within the local parish church and long hours. Women in this case study were keenly aware of contesting priorities in their lives and the limits they set for themselves to accommodate family, work and other life choices. For some women in the case study meeting one's career potential remains an issue of curiosity rather than a major concern.

Whilst the enterprise bargaining process has delivered some improvements in the development of career structures, it is also apparent that feminised industries throughout Australia have not done well when compared to industries dominated by men (McLennan, 2000). This is most notable in the relative improvements in salary and conditions over the past ten years that have accrued to male dominated professions. Teacher's salaries have not maintained their level of relativity with other occupations. While starting salaries might be comparable to those in other professions, there is both a ceiling after six years and a salary gap that widens from virtually day one of entering the profession. In 1975 a teacher's salary was comparable to a parliamentary backbencher's salary whilst in the year 2000 a backbencher's salary is thirty percent higher than a teacher's salary.

In terms of establishing particular cultural patterns, the re-conceptualisation of Catholic education throughout Australia has shaped the career context. Emerging organisational cultures continue to affect the extent to which women feel integrated within Catholic education. There are signposts within the organisational context which shape such feelings:

Organisational structure, rules, policies, goals, mission, job descriptions, and standardised operating procedures perform an interpretive function, for they act as



primary points of reference for the way people think about and make sense of the contexts in which they work. (Morgan, 1997, p.144)

The assumptions embedded in the culture of organisations subtly influence the behavioural norms of employees. Norms that affect membership, relationships, working style and working hours will affect the extent to which women can participate in or can feel that particular organisational roles are compatible with their total life context. Career positions in education remain highly gender-segregated with classroom teaching and support roles being the domain of women and administration at all levels of the organisation being strongly associated with the ways of men.

Changes that have occurred to career processes within Catholic education organisations are in many ways a response to the intervention of public policies. Such policies have resulted from anti-discrimination legislation requiring scrutiny of recruitment and selection procedures within the exempted boundaries negotiated by Catholic education authorities. Underpinning this structural and pragmatic response is an emphasis on the role of the educator within the Catholic school. The fields of meaning surrounding career in this setting are shaped by the Catholic religious culture as much as the secular, professional meaning of the teaching career. Women are positioned within these fields of meaning in ways, which continue to create new hurdles.

#### The Discursive Underpinnings of the Career Context

Because career in Catholic education terms is subject to the ideological forces of the religious tradition of the Catholic Church and the market discourses associated with education as a client driven commodity, there is the potential for contradiction and ambiguity in the construction of career outlook. In the following section, selected examples of the discourses of the Catholic Church which are designed to guide Catholic

education are examined. Such discourses contribute to the construction of the culture of the organisation. These discourses guide organisational thinking and action through the promulgation of ideas, beliefs and values that are based on taken-for-granted assumptions.

#### A Missionary Focus in a Contested Religious Framework

Catholic education finds its purpose through the creation of a mission driven ethos. Various religious discourses establish the notion of teaching in Catholic education as a dedicated vocation framed as a ministry of the Church and lived out through the service of the educator. The cultural representation of the teacher in the Catholic school depicted within Church documents on education contributes to a complex and contradictory interplay between the gendered expectations embedded in the organisation, and the needs and desires brought to the workplace by individual women and men.

Within the established career structure, women must negotiate an organisational culture predicated on the privileging of the masculine in the systems of language, beliefs and practices that constitute the discursive framework of the organisation. This discursive framework, however, has been disrupted by women's agency. The revealing of discursive gaps has been instrumental in identifying the silences and practices that shore up male privilege. Women's agency in the Catholic education organisation has continued to evolve in line with the massive shifts in feminist consciousness and praxis notable in the last half of the twentieth century. This is due to the dramatic increase of women in the paid workforce, the women's movement which continues to evolve, and advances in technology which affects how people conduct their lives. Women's agency in the Catholic education organisation has been motivated through the establishment of a feminist theological tradition within the Catholic Church and the adoption of gender

equity as a discourse appropriate to Catholic social teaching. The male clerical structure of the Church is a constant reminder to Catholic women that equality may be fine in principle but the rhetoric is yet to be made meaningful in practice.

When the feminine gaze is cast upon the Catholic Church it is apparent that there are few organisations “as obviously man-centred, patriarchal and resistant to change” (Wainwright, 1997, p.16) as the Catholic Church to which the Catholic education organisation is inextricably tied. As one participant in this research study stated, “You really know men are in charge when you belong to the Catholic Church” (IT3). The career advancement and professional attainment of women in a Catholic education organisation involves complexities which women in other organisations face such as problems of fitting into a male model of career, community attitudes towards career-oriented women and the limiting impact this may have on public policy initiatives. In addition, career advancement for women in Catholic education involves the unique difficulties associated with ecclesiastical structures in the Catholic Church and its teachings that have imposed for centuries, a collective and subordinate identity on women as the ‘second sex’.

#### Church Discourse on Catholic Education

A series of documents written by the Congregation for Catholic Education located in the Vatican in Rome (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977; 1982; 1988; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998) has influenced the religious culture of Catholic education in Australia. These documents have provided guidelines that have shaped debates leading to particular policies. They provide a set of concepts and a language to describe and justify changing values and beliefs about the nature of the Catholic school, the children and families whom it should serve and the role of the educators within Catholic education wherever it is located in the world. Catholic

schools are required to define their authenticity through the development of community as outlined in the declaration Gravissimum educationis (Abbott, 1966), which notes the importance of:

...the transition from the school as an institution to the school as a community. This community dimension is perhaps one result of the new awareness of the church's nature as developed by the council. (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, n.31)

Two documents are of particular importance to my research. These documents are, Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (1982) and, The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1998). In Catholic education, these documents have been quoted in policy statements, used as the basis for in-service programs for teachers in Catholic schools and are referred to extensively in accredited courses from the Australian Catholic University. In relation to the purpose of this case study, I believe these documents present a discourse which promotes the organisational career context as one that is based upon ministry and professionalism tempered by a Christian perspective. This discourse underpins the nature of the professional communities that the Catholic Church hopes will flourish within Catholic education organisations. The location of women's voices within this discourse and the contribution such discourse might be able to make to challenge the low status and gender-laden images of the teaching career in general is of interest to this research. An examination of these documents assists in developing an understanding of Catholic education as a place for a career for women.

Both documents, although to different degrees, see the purpose of the Catholic school as being transformative in the world which reflects a significant discursive shift resulting from the Second Vatican Council. Prior to the Council, the purpose of a Catholic education was essentially to provide an environment conducive for the

‘salvation of souls’ (Pius XI, 1929, n.22) which essentially required a person to live an exemplary Christian life to be rewarded in the next life rather than to be transformative in this life. This position reinforced the dualistic understanding prevalent in Catholic Church theology of a profane or secular world versus a sacred and spiritual other world.

Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith recognises the importance of lay men and women who teach in Catholic schools as a relatively recent phenomenon (n. 3), and insists that “the most basic reason for this new role for Catholic laity, a role which the church regards as positive and enriching, is theological” (n.2). The document provides directions for the evolving theology of lay ‘ministry’ (n.24) with an exploration of the Catholic lay teacher’s professional (n.27), spiritual (n.40) and apostolic life (n.41). The document emphasises the communal nature of the Catholic school (n.38) which is supported by a theological mandate and an extensive social agenda (n.22). On his *ad limina* visit (a meeting held every five years in a bishop’s term of appointment) to the Vatican in 1998, the Bishop who leads the diocese in the case study, highlighted the important contribution made by lay educators to Catholic education and the need to renew support for and give thanks for this contribution.

In respect to incorporating and developing the rather secular concept of career, Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith provides quite a positive orientation. It describes the world as being good and ‘allows’ the individual teacher to be ‘of the world’, proposing Christ as the exemplar and means of gaining personal and communal perfection. The personal response of the teacher to a career is to be viewed as professionalism tempered by a strong sense of vocation and a committed faith life. Adherence to “Sacramental life will give them the strength they need to live this career, and bring support when they fail” (n.72). Being ‘of the world’ but having a supernatural faith orientation, is the special characteristic of those educators who are lay persons.

They are required to offer to their students a concrete example of the fact that people deeply immersed in the world, living fully the same secular life as the vast majority of the human family, possess this same exalted dignity as others who have chosen religious life (n.18).

Lay Catholics: Witnesses to Faith also encourages the lay teacher through his or her own life experiences to assist students to take their place in society. The teacher must prepare students in such a way that they will make the kind of social commitment which will enable them to work for the improvement of social structures and to make these structures conform to the principles of the gospel (n.19). The cultivation of civic and political responsibility espoused in the document provides a solid foundation for expecting the Catholic education organisation to address social justice issues and to robustly implement gender equity reforms which impact on the career chances and choices of women.

A critical reading of this document encourages careful discernment of what the secular response to career development and the establishment of opportunities for career advancement may be interpreted as within the context of the communal and faith-centred Catholic education organisation. What is purely secular, such as the concept of career, is not to be considered antithetical to the organisational arrangements of Catholic education. Career, however, is to be located within the communal dimension of the organisation and must contribute to the common good. Although the document shows concern for adequate remuneration and a positive work environment, of more importance and pre-eminent in the career development of teachers is formation of individuals in the Christian way of life. This is important because a teacher, like “(e)very human person is called to live in a community, as a social being, and as a member of the People of God” (n.22).

The type of community referred to above was defined by Vatican Council II which produced not only a new role for the Catholic Church in the modern world, but a new conception of the Catholic school and of Catholic education (Bryk, Lee & Holland, 1993). The nature of the Catholic school “is dependent upon the nature of the Church and the Church is fundamentally the model for the community that the school should be” (Arthur, 1995, p.139).

McLaughlin (2000) provides a detailed explanation of the importance of the notion of community:

(T)he concept of community cannot be contained by such traditional institutions as family, neighbourhood, region, ethnic group, school or parish. The concept is beyond individual togetherness and its existence cannot be engineered or coerced. In contrast, it acknowledges and respects the validity of human experience, which implies that the identity and dignity of each are inextricably bound up with the quality of relationships, developed through life. (p.100)

McLaughlin indicates that to be authentic, Catholic education authorities must ensure that they are operating on principles consistent with an active social justice, community paradigm. There are several axiomatic Christian principles which must be honoured within this paradigm: solidarity with the oppressed, distributive justice, a preferential option for the poor, democracy, power sharing and basic human rights.

Women’s voices are silent within the document Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith. It displays the masculine authoritarianism associated with the clergy. It is written in an ecclesiocentric tone, which emphasises the authority of the Bishop in “entrusting Catholic schools to the laity” (n.46). The caveat “in communion with the Magisterium of the Church”, is reiterated three times throughout the document (n.18; 38; 59). The influence of a paternalistic masculinity is also apparent in the many exhortations that emphasise the notion of a lay vocation as the devoting of one’s life in service and humility to the ministry of Catholic education. This focus creates a sense of



the teacher being an unadulterated vessel of transmission, labouring quietly within fluid work boundaries, giving without measure within an environment that would more likely resemble the cloistered hallways of a monastery or a convent rather than the modern Catholic school.

The reality of a woman's life, juggling her many roles and responsibilities, cannot be explained within the Church vision of the paid working life of a lay teacher or administrator in a Catholic school. The document assumes a gender-neutral organisation and re-inscribes gendered relationships based on a clerical hierarchy that emphasises the masculine norms of paternalism and authority. The real, embodied and gendered persons who inhabit Catholic schools are given a religious patina in this document in which any sense of professionalism is well tempered by the vocational aspiration. The continuing infantilisation of lay Catholics is alluded to in the document with phrases that equate the adult human person with a 'child of God' (n.18).

In examining The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium as a discursive instrument which shapes the career context of Catholic education, it is possible to see a shift in understanding presented by the Congregation for Catholic Education of the purpose of Catholic education. In this document, Catholic schools are located more firmly within a multi-faith world. It acknowledges that the Catholic school is located within the reality of the contemporary world in which new challenges must be faced. These challenges include "a crisis of values which, in highly developed societies in particular, assumes the form, often exalted by the media, of subjectivism, moral relativism and nihilism", and "(R)apid structural changes, profound technical innovations and the globalisation of the economy" (p.5). "Within the extreme pluralism pervading contemporary society" (p.5), the document recognises that "(n)ew requirements have given force to the demands for new contents, new capabilities and

new educational models” (p.6). Moreover, this document affirms the public role of the Catholic school as an educational institution:

The school cannot be considered separately from other educational institutions and administered as an entity apart, but must be related to the world of politics, economy, culture and society as a whole. For her part the Catholic school must be firmly resolved to take the new cultural situation in her stride and, by refusal to accept unquestioningly educational projects which are partial, be an example and stimulus for other educational institutions, in the forefront for the ecclesial community’s concern for education. (pp.19-20)

Such a position would seem to have some relevance to the renewal of the organisation including the management of career development in Catholic education. In a workplace climate in which it would appear that Catholics have achieved equal opportunity and anti-discrimination through secularism rather than through any direct action on the part of the Catholic Church, the document is indeed timely. This is not to say that Catholic education offices have ignored the requirements of legislation associated with equal opportunity and sex-discrimination although the continued position of having blanket exemptions from sex discrimination legislation has been questioned (Furtado, 2000). What is implied however, is that rather than adapting what has already been achieved in improvements from a social justice stance within the secular society, Catholic education should be taking the lead in assisting such a stance.

The teachings promulgated within the documents of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education are meant to have an impact beyond mere intellectual discussion. In accord with the religious purpose defined in the documents, it is assumed that those who teach in Catholic schools will share a Catholic vision of life, a common purpose and commitment, as well as acceptance and support for the espoused values and beliefs in the educational task of the school. A notable emphasis on redefining the distinctive purpose of Catholic schooling has come about in response to the movement out of the

system of the men and women who belonged to religious orders, who have been almost totally replaced by lay women and men. Praetz (1980) notes that the employment of lay teachers in the 1970's and 1980's resulted in a view by some Church authorities that, without intervention, schools could be staffed by non-committed or antipathetic personnel threatening the religious identity of Catholic schools (p.27).

In contrast to this deficit understanding of the lay educator, the document Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith gives lay participation (albeit Catholic lay) in the Catholic education enterprise a degree of legitimacy that gives them confidence in their roles as teachers and administrators in Catholic education. "The most basic reason for this new role for the Catholic laity, a role which the church regards as positive and enriching, is theological . . . (t)he authentic image of the laity within the People of God has become increasingly clear" (1982, n.2).

The initiatives of the Bishops to create a theologically literate lay teaching force has occurred in conjunction with a shift in the articulation of the mission of Catholic education. The original mission saw the purpose of Catholic schooling as quite definitive based on support from a Catholic population who in the main were practising Catholics with parochial and sectarian predilections. The mission has moved to a less fixed position and is defined as an 'evolving one' (McLaughlin, 1997). Practising Catholic families are dwindling at the same time as market forces continue to create the circumstances that make Catholic schools viable alternatives to government schools for families regardless of their religious affiliation or financial position. A pluralistic and multi-faith community is an increasing reality for Catholic schools. The community includes the teachers, about whom it cannot be assumed that they all "share equally a common culture" (Bates, 1986, p.89). The assumptions about those who should teach in Catholic schools found in Church documents, however, do not accommodate such

plurality. Rather, a vision is promoted of a group of educators who have a thorough understanding of and a deep commitment to the purposes of Catholic education.

McLaughlin (2000) outlines what he sees as the obligation on the part of the Catholic education organisation, based on the social justice/communal nature of Catholic schools, to provide support, especially for young teachers. Many of these teachers, who were born after the Vatican Council, have little first hand experience of the shifts in religious communities experienced by their older colleagues:

It seems obvious that the young teachers initially employed in a Catholic school, and who may not have developed yet a mature relationship with Christ should have their faith nurtured in an educational, personal and pastoral environment designed for its promotion. As well as the provision of professional education, teachers need the opportunity to participate in retreats, and to acquire more sophisticated attitudes and skills in interpersonal relationships. (p.73)

In assisting all teachers to maintain the distinctiveness of the Catholic school, opportunities have been provided for teachers in Catholic schools to participate in professional development designed to improve their theological literacy. Credentialling and accreditation requirements for different positions have been established which have required a collaborative relationship between Catholic Education Office authorities and the Australian Catholic University.

Much of the direction, which the Australian Bishops have provided for Catholic education, has been determined through the documents provided by the Congregation for Catholic Education. Through documents such as Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, the momentum was established for requiring accreditation of teachers and formal religious studies qualifications for those aspiring to senior management roles in Catholic education. McLaughlin (1997) suggests that this document indicates that Catholic school educators must not only practise their faith, but

also give witness to their faith through participation in specific professional development to assist the individual in religious formation. This formation is necessary in fulfilling the role of the teacher in the Catholic school as expressed in the following:

The lay Catholic educator is a person who exercises a specific mission within the Church by living in faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school: with the best possible professional qualifications, with an apostolic intention inspired by faith, the integral formation of the human person, in an exercise of that pedagogy which will give emphasis to direct and personal contact with students, giving spiritual inspiration to the educational community of which he or she is a member, as well as to all the different persons related to the educational community. To this lay person, as a member of this community, the family and the Church entrust the school's educational endeavour. Lay teachers must be profoundly convinced that they share in the sanctifying, and therefore educational mission of the Church; they cannot regard themselves as cut off from the ecclesial complex (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, n.24).

The process of accreditation to teach in Catholic schools and accreditation to teach religion in Catholic schools has followed on from the establishment of the approved policy for all Queensland diocese titled Faith Education Criteria for Appointment to Positions of Senior Management in Catholic Schools (Queensland Catholic Education Commission, 1986). The basic premise of the accreditation policy initiatives is expressed in the policy: “to ensure that teachers develop a deeper understanding of the nature of a Catholic school and its contribution to the mission of the Church” (p.1). In order to gain employment in Catholic schools, teachers now need official accreditation by the Catholic Education Office. Accreditation requirements are set to provide formal recognition that a teacher has both qualifications and competence in respect to the particular character and educational philosophy of Catholic schools.

Accreditation has ongoing, although not onerous, requirements on the part of the teacher and is portable amongst all participating Catholic schooling authorities in

Queensland. This process, along with opportunities for staff to participate in prayer and worship, is designed to provide opportunities for teachers to develop a mature faith by nurturing the choice for a personal commitment to Christ. There is, however, no guarantee that the individual will have uncritical trust in the institutional Catholic Church (McLaughlin, 2000, p.51).

The development of religiously defined policies such as accreditation has been a major internal initiative of Catholic education that is designed to determine a teacher's continued employment in Catholic education. This initiative was seen by one case study participant as an organisational response to "the need by the Bishops and priests to become convinced that the laity could be trusted in Catholic schools" (IT 3). There has been no research conducted to date by the Catholic education authorities on the impact of these policy directions either in terms of the desired policy outcomes or in terms of teacher attitudes to these imposed requirements. Dwyer (1993) notes that the transitional work by Catholic education authorities in moving from religious to lay personnel in Catholic schools is by no means complete and warns of "the potential for generating (by the authorities), not universal appreciation . . . but pockets of resentment, frustration and cynicism" (p102).

Whilst not describing their responses in terms of appreciation or cynicism, the participants in this research identified three general responses to such policies: compliance, non-compliance and commitment. 'Compliance' is best described as being seen to do the right thing such as participating in staff prayer, careful preparation for religious education classes and attending Sunday liturgy; 'non-compliance' is associated with "just going through the motions" and not being seen to make waves; 'commitment' is described as "a genuine personal faith response" within the vocation of Catholic education whereby a person willingly and sincerely adopts a Christian



perspective to their roles in Catholic education and “ would certainly mean a commitment to parish life” (FG 1-4). The extent to which women in this research personally align themselves with one of these categories was not examined.

The documents outlined above, in their entirety, provide some direction for defining the ‘modus operandi’ of Australian Catholic education. This is an important issue for an organisation that has been described as at risk of being assimilated into the general Australian culture to the point of being indistinguishable from it (Dwyer, 1993). Contributing to such a view, in recent years, is the changing workplace context with challenges of individualism, competitiveness, managerialism and market ideology all influencing the Catholic education organisation. The changing workplace context which has emphasised the values of the market, has created shifts in the cultural values within the organisation. Market-place values appear contradictory to the communal, faith-oriented culture which Catholic education promotes through its policies. For women in Catholic education, there is a sense of ambiguity surrounding the incorporation of religious values associated with vocation and secular values associated with professionalism.

#### The Machinations of the Market

Whilst the Catholic education organisation translates its official Church statements into policy and practice, the established career context is also subject to another set of ideological influences associated with a market-oriented discourse. Bureaucracies and management trends as espoused within the secular world support these ideological influences. Of significance within market discourse for Catholic education in recent times has been the restructuring of industry as an Australian and global trend.

Along with other educational organisations, Catholic education has had to consider the instrumental focus on education designed to produce multi-skilled workers to ensure



Australia can become 'the clever country'. This focus has impacted on teachers and their views on the teaching career, mostly in a negative way. Blackmore (1996) describes the way in which 'greedy organisations' seek to "fuse the emotions of the worker and the aspirations of management" (p.338) by cultural production incorporating aspects of social life which are rendered into the organisation's version of the ideal worker. This can be described as the 'commodification' of the teacher designed to accommodate the organisation to rapidly changing economic, political and social environments.

The issue of employment of teachers in Catholic schools has not been the sole prerogative of the Catholic education authorities. Catholic school authorities operate within the wider industrial and political arena through which the career aspirations and needs of teachers are expressed in the industrial relations process of enterprise bargaining. Within this arena, the notions of teaching as ministry are melded with and sometimes pitted against the notion of teaching as work which has professional standing and deserves just remuneration, professional development and appropriate workplace conditions. The political forces of governments have a strong influence within the Catholic education organisation because of the funding and accountability measures that have provided the means for continued existence. Through these forces, market economics, which has been the hallmark of Australian Government in recent years, has prompted the continued restructuring of education including Catholic education.

Catholic education is immersed within the broader trend of restructuring which has emerged out of recognition by government and influenced by the business world, of the need for fundamental reform in education. According to O'Donohue and Dimmock (1998), restructuring is a phenomenon that has three main dimensions. These dimensions are:

1. Changes in the way teaching and learning occur in schools;
2. Changes in the occupational situation of educators, including conditions of entry and qualifications of teachers and administrators, and school structure, conditions of teachers work in schools, and decision-making processes; and
3. Changes in the distribution of power between schools and their clients, or changes in the governance and incentive structures under which schools function.

Whilst there have been waves of restructuring in Australian education since the 1970's (Spry, 2000), the most recent manifestation of restructuring has located education as an instrument in micro-economic reform (Dudley & Vidovich, 1995). As a consequence, the purpose of education is to ensure employability of students and national economic growth. Spry outlines the emergent issues resulting from the current version of restructuring in education that includes changes in teaching and learning, the working conditions of teachers and the distribution of power in education. The impact of restructuring on Catholic education has been significant according to Spry although research in respect to this impact is limited. Of significance is the increasing level of centralisation within Catholic education that has seen the transfer of much of the authority and responsibility for Catholic education from local school communities to diocesan, state and national Catholic Education Offices and Commissions. In addition, there has been a significant increase in government intervention in Catholic education.

Other changes associated with restructuring, which have also impacted on Catholic education organisations, have included the gender equity reforms associated with the introduction of Equal Employment Opportunity for Women in the Workforce legislation, and changes in the articulation of career paths and competency frameworks for teaching. Human Resource Management has been incorporated into the operations

of the Catholic Education Office. This management focus has resulted in the establishment of divisions of School Services, Religious Education and Curriculum and Financial Management. The introduction of clearly defined employment procedures and performance appraisal is also part of the Human Resource Management plan.

Restructuring has come at a cost. As one case study participant stated, “teachers and administrators in Catholic schools face the same soul-destroying, energy-sapping environment as teachers in other systems” (IT4). Spry (2000) explains that the reasons for this current malady are a direct result of restructuring:

The working conditions of educators are presently characterised by work overload, role ambiguity and low-levels of learning productivity. In addition teachers exhibit low levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem and perceived low occupational status, recognition and rewards, and feel a sense of frustration at being unable to perform the task required. (p.15)

Women in the case study provided first hand experience of the effects of this rapidly and radically changing educational context. Whilst not being able to articulate the specifics of change beyond comments such as “ridiculous amounts of paperwork” (FG1), and “the constant interruptions to the routines of classroom teaching in response to the school needing to be in everything” (FG2), several women expressed feelings of being overwhelmed. These feelings included “needing to be an automaton with no real feelings” (FG2) and “sadness at the lack of respect for the desires of the teacher to actually teach rather than be in everything to help create school image in the public forum” (FG4). One research participant stated that the Catholic Education Office is seen as “more business-like” and “there is so much more accountability” (IT3). Although this sense of being overwhelmed was notable in some of the research participant’s comments, there is also a sense that women use their power to exert influence within the case study diocese to ameliorate the effects of the restructuring

process. This view was gleaned from the response of a research participant who is a member of the Equal Opportunity for Women in Workplace Committee: “The EOWA Committee was just a subcommittee of the Staffing Committee until we asked the Director to give us Standing Committee status” (IT2). This committee has adopted a position that the concept of mission in Catholic education provides a discursive structure in which restructuring may be located and infused with an ethical foundation. Such a foundation can guide the decisions that are taken in regard to issues affecting the workplace conditions for teachers and administrators.

### Ministry and Professionalism: The Hallmarks of the Ideal Teacher in the Catholic School

Given the location of Catholic education within the tradition of the Catholic Church and also in the secular world, the organisational career within Catholic education is anchored within the discourses of ministry and professionalism. The diocesan policy, Ministry of Teaching in a Catholic School, (Catholic Education Office, 1991), states “Teachers and administrators in Catholic schools are called and challenged to live out the ministry of Jesus, the Teacher” (p.1). Within this document, the professionalism of the teacher is expressed through the commitment of the individual to maintain professional standards, to support other colleagues and to seek and encourage others to pursue the ministry of teaching. Notwithstanding the current low status of teaching, the professionalism of the teacher is perhaps best understood in terms of them being ‘transformative intellectuals’ as espoused by Henry Giroux (1988). This term moves the teacher beyond the nurturing maternal act. It is important, however, that good teaching recognised through professionalisation combines both emotional and intellectual labour since, “(g)ood teaching is a blend of the two” (Freedman 1990, cited in Acker 1996, p.144).

Ministry is a term often used in Church related work to describe service provided by individuals, in the name of the Church. In describing teaching as ministry, the idea of professionalism is made clear:

Professionalism is marked by, and raised to, a supernatural Christian vocation. The life of a Catholic teacher must be marked by the exercise of a personal vocation in the life of the Church, and not simply by the exercise of a profession.  
(Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, n.37)

‘Ministry’ has its roots in early Christian communities. Ministries were taken up in the community as needs presented themselves: they were based on the call of the spirit in baptism and in the competencies of different people. Over time most ministries were absorbed into Church offices, particularly that of bishop. While recent significant changes in Church thinking have brought a new flourishing of ministries, there is still a widespread belief that ministers are delegates of the bishop (or priest) who is the one who is really responsible for all (Schillibeeckx, 1990). The exclusiveness of the ordained ministry of the priesthood is an issue that creates division in the Church, and in general contributes to a view of ministry as having a male face. This is an interesting conundrum in the understanding of teaching as ministry, at least as far as women are concerned.

Ministry has implications for the ‘ideal teacher’ that the Catholic Church would like to see working in Catholic schools. The teacher must provide professional expertise in the provision of education to students after gaining entry-level qualifications and credentials that are comparable with teachers in government schools. Teachers in the Catholic schools must develop a clear understanding that their roles cannot be separated from the school’s ecclesial identity. Ideally what is needed, according to McLaughlin (1996), is “Catholic teachers who are practising their faith but who are also willing to give an appropriate form of witness to it as part of their professionalism” (p.150). Both

the practise of one's faith and witness are essential if the teaching career in Catholic education is to be recognised as an authentic ministry of the Church. This perspective is presented to each new teacher on commencement of employment. It is clearly inferred from the document Ministry of Teaching in a Catholic School (CEO, 1991) that ideally, any teacher in a Catholic school is expected to have developed:

1. An understanding of what it is to believe in God as expressed in the teachings of the Catholic Church, and;
2. An understanding of what it is to belong to a worshipping community that sees itself as the people of God and a commitment to participate within this community.

Teachers are employed and initiated into the organisational career with an invitation to accept the vision of the teacher's role in helping to create authentic Catholic schools. Who actually gets the opportunity to work in Catholic education, however, is a vexed question. Non-Catholic status does not necessarily disqualify a person from employment as a teacher in a Catholic school but it would prevent a person moving into a principal's position. It is expected that any teacher who is employed in Catholic schools would not be indifferent or antagonistic to the Catholic faith tradition. There was a view from some research participants that in some schools, it would be difficult to get a job if you were a non-Catholic but this would not be the case in more difficult to staff schools. At a time when many Catholic schools are throwing out the welcome mat to non-Catholic students and their families, the non-Catholic status of some teachers is yet to be acknowledged as potentially enriching the religious environment of the organisation.

Lifestyle is another dimension which impacts on decisions about who is welcome to participate in the ministry of teaching in Catholic education. Since the Catholic

education organisation has continued to successfully seek exemptions from certain clauses in the Sex Discrimination Act, practising homosexual and lesbian teachers are not knowingly employed. Another lifestyle issue which affects those who can work in Catholic education is irregular marriage outside the Catholic Church. From reviewing the documents produced by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, there is little room for differences within the vision of the ideal teacher in the Catholic school. Within the case study, there are examples of individuals in each of the categories mentioned, although in truth, they maintain discretionary silence about their lifestyles. In terms of the ideal teacher, the non-Catholic teacher remains a non-entity in the Church documents.

The experience of women in the Catholic Church has not created a strong sense of women's ministry. Ministry is not a gender-neutral term. Women's experience of marginalisation in the Church has had largely negative effects, according to Schneiders (1991), on the ministerial dimension of their spirituality. Women in general have rarely functioned in public roles in the Church, a church that encourages women to be socialised into private, male-dependent roles. Women have at various times been excluded from the Church sanctuary and from sacred offices because of their sex. For most women there has been little chance and little example of exercising religious leadership and it has been with either grudging or accommodating acceptance that women have viewed the male monopoly of leadership and authority as normal or decreed by God.

Whilst there is an openness today to women taking on some leadership roles within the Church, there is a corresponding view that this is in response to the shortage of male clergy. For women, the masculinity associated with the concept of ministry is a strong reminder of the systemic subordination of women in a Catholic Church organisation. It



is tied to the patriarchy that remains a structural feature of the Catholic Church and is central within the subordination of women debate. The position of women in the Church is of concern for Catholic education authorities because it is clearly understood that teachers in Catholic schools will take pivotal leadership roles in the Australian Catholic Church, “primarily because they will be there and the clergy will not” (McLaughlin, 1999, p.31). The majority of these teachers are women.

#### Placing Women in the Career Context of Catholic Education.

In composing their lifestreams, women in the case study organisation operate within the cultural mosaic of Catholic education. Within the mosaic, the patriarchal bargain is set and is influenced by both religious and secular ideologies of the wider society (Kondo, 1990). Women are caught between a religious ideology that exalts motherhood and virginity, and a market ideology based upon efficiency and results that requires teachers to commodify themselves. Women may resist or accommodate within these boundaries or move beyond the boundaries by leaving Catholic education.

The women who participated in this research gave thoughtful and insightful comments about their movement between different and contradictory worlds: the world of work and the world of their private lives. In trying to balance both worlds, the research participant’s comments revealed how women position themselves within different contexts. The following comment demonstrates how the research participant wishes to define context by shifting the boundaries between self and context to suit her personal circumstances.

I’m always trying to do it all. I want to be a good teacher and a good mother and a good wife and friend. Sometimes school is a haven from the pressures of homelife and sometimes I can’t wait to get home but I can’t imagine not coming to school. But I want to work out what I have to do and be like to be considered for more senior jobs. (FG3)

In the case study organisation, religious ideology strongly informs the playing out of gender. Women must negotiate their way through the cultural politics which emerge out of the struggle between the dominant Catholic culture and the competing, although arguably subordinate, market culture.

Within the changing cultural pattern of Catholic education, there is presently a cautiousness that emanates from the potential loss of religious identity. The suggestion that Christ has been reduced to an invisible partner in the process of cultural reproduction is a fear that Catholic school authorities in Australia are attempting to address. Presently, the Queensland Catholic Education Commission is conducting a research project throughout the five dioceses in the State, looking at establishing the defining features of the Catholic school of the future. The case study diocese has devoted many hours and engaged many people in this project which is yet to be finalised. What has emerged is the following list of defining features of the Catholic school of the future within the diocese.

The ideal Catholic school will:

1. Have a consistent commitment to Gospel values;
2. Play an integral role in the evangelising mission of the Church;
3. Model God's love for all by being renewing communities where all are valued, affirmed and empowered;
4. Be staffed by qualified, competent people who witness to Gospel values;
5. Be communities of learning that provide quality, relevant, holistic education;
6. Be sacred places where the spiritual life is nurtured; and,
7. Be welcoming and open to all who seek a Catholic education (Catholic Education Office, 2000).

These features have merit in that they have come from the local community. They

re-iterate what is desired for students in Catholic schools, their families and how the work of the Catholic school will contribute to the mission of the Church. The role of teachers in making the features more than rhetoric is addressed but there is a lack of clarity in how the organisation will build up professional communities throughout the diocese as a means of achieving the desired outcomes. The defining features position teachers as more than a resource for Catholic education, but the question of how teachers might be encouraged to participate pro-actively and with responsible autonomy in bringing the defining features to fruition is yet to be addressed.

The above issues highlight the nature of the relationship between the individual and the organisation that is implied within the Church documents on Catholic education. This relationship has implications for the way teachers engage in their careers. As a profession, teaching should promote occupational autonomy. Teaching in the tradition of the Catholic Church, however, has a history that is antithetical to personal autonomy. The task of the teacher in pre-Vatican Catholic schools was “the transmission of a package of beliefs, ‘faith’, a gift of God and rejected at peril, and of rules, ‘morals’, imprinted by God on each soul” (Hastings, 1996, p.272). Vatican II provided the blueprint for the transformation of Catholic schools in which students and staff would be treated with the dignity of persons created in God’s image. After thirty years, however, there still remain the vestiges of pre-Vatican thinking with a tension notable between intellectual activity and fear of change. Most teachers in Catholic schools are aware that prominent theologians have been silenced for their views and in some cases have chosen to leave the Church. With a highly educated laity staffing Catholic schools, replacing what Hastings refers to as “the deferential peasant community of the past” (p.283), the issue of personal and intellectual autonomy remains a constant issue, but one that is stifled in debate. For one of the women research participants, the issue of

personal intellectual autonomy was notable in the following comments:

I find one of the most galling things is the need to toe the traditional Church line when I'm teaching issues like sexuality. I wanted a rep from the AIDS Council to come and speak to my R. E. class and was told I couldn't because they would promote the use of condoms. It's difficult to share your own views with the kids when they clearly don't conform to Church teaching. (FG1)

Other participants in the case study alluded to an implicit understanding on the part of the Catholic education hierarchy, that teachers are a resource for the organisation. The introduction of compulsory transfers for teacher graduates who have completed their second year of service and a previous attempt to transfer teachers who had been in a school for ten or more years, have contributed to the feeling that a teacher is a commodity for the use of the organisation. In an earlier enterprise agreement, a clause was negotiated to move teachers of ten or more year's experience in one school to other schools. In response to the attempt to move teachers after ten years in a school, the majority of eligible women refused to comply with the clause (there were no men eligible at the time), on the grounds that they could not be forced to move. There was a view expressed within one focus group that this move by the Director devalued the place of these women in their current schools.

Women in the research described the strong friendships they had established within their school communities and, for some, the feeling of belonging was very strong in both their school and the local parish of which the school was an integral part. The sense of community which is an element of the Catholic school identity seems at odds with compulsory transfers. There was a certain 'esprit-de-corp' recognised by different women, built up within individual schools which the idea of a compulsory transfer system would diminish. This situation serves as an example of women's agency shaping the career context in Catholic education but this is still contested terrain.

Given such examples of the fissures and potential fissures in the relationship between the individual and the organisation, this case study reveals how women are in some ways estranged from the systemic reality of the diocese and, in most cases, unaware of the broader organisational reality. Some organisational policies associated with the career context appear to ignore the experience of women, especially the reality of the informal processes, such as the need to satisfy interpersonal needs through established friendships which were established and nurtured in particular schools.

One way women can make inroads into organisational change is by appropriating the principles which underpin the organisation in the name of creating an inclusive organisational career context and actively promoting change. Whilst acknowledging the secular influences in establishing career structures, it is quite clear that the organisational career in Catholic education is connected to an understanding of the Catholic principles of social justice. For some women in Catholic education, especially those with feminist leanings, this issue of social justice brings into question the place of feminist theological interpretations of Christianity as an element of professional development for staff. Feminist perspectives on Christianity have been given prominence in Catholic education through the scholarship and leadership of religious women. As these women have moved out of Catholic education, the quest to include feminist perspectives in professional development opportunities is the responsibility of lay women. Taking up this responsibility may be difficult for women who are concerned about maintaining their economic base and not damaging their career chances in the eyes of those in charge. The formation of alliances, through the union movement, appears to be one solution.

A major consideration for organisations in establishing a positive career context is the matter of resourcing. According to Bryk (1996), in this and all matters, Catholic

education has two important principles enshrined in Church teaching to guide its actions. These principles are based on the notion of community and on the rights of the individual. The first principle pertains to the essence of Catholicism as “persons in community” (Bryk, 1996, p.33). Such a perspective requires priority for the common good over unbridled individual pursuits (Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference, 1992). In considering the means of resourcing Catholic education through the distribution of government funds, it is clear that a larger diocese, with a larger student population, is in a much better position than a smaller diocese to provide professional development opportunities for staff. Professional development is an important consideration in career management and, in the determination of career outlook in a particular diocese. The diocese in the case study and other country diocese are able to offer just a fraction of the services that a wealthier city diocese is able to offer (Griffiths & McLaughlin, 2000). The Bishops of Queensland have recently acknowledged this situation. In order to address the common good and to be faithful to the broad community of Catholic education, the Bishops have approved a redistribution formula for the provision of funding which is designed to provide additional funding to country dioceses. Some of this increased funding may be helpful in the provision of remote location incentives in country diocese’ and in the provision of professional development within term time. This is a significant issue for the diocese in the case study because of the geographically remote schools within its boundaries.

The second principle refers to the rights of the individual and to the Catholic Church view of equality. One of the most potent texts of Vatican II in support of genuine equality and full participation in the Church in all its ministries can be found in Gaudium et Spes, the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Abbott, 1966). In speaking of the ideal human community, this passage asserts the fundamental

equality of all human persons insofar as all are created in the image of God, redeemed by Christ and destined for glory. Differences between individuals in terms of intellectual and physical attributes are affirmed with the following corollary:

Nevertheless, with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. (n.29)

This teaching is foundational to the adoption of equal employment opportunity policies as well as a range of issues including race and ethnicity, age and non-Catholic status, which affect different women's career chances within the organisation. Many of the documents that Vatican II developed provide a rich textual foundation for the development of inclusive structures within Catholic education.

In promoting a theological understanding of community as a principle for Catholic education, there is a need to clearly address the patriarchal and androcentric biases on which the Catholic religious tradition and Catholic education have been based. The notion of community as an expression of the Catholic Church speaks to women of their own limited communion with the Church. The continued exclusion of women from the Catholic Church leadership continues to blight any sense of authentic community based on a discipleship of equals. Bishop Geoffrey Robinson clearly outlined the problem of the disaffection of women from the Catholic Church in his address to the Catholic Church international relief organisation, known as Caritas in 1996:

It is only stating the obvious if I say that there has been for many years a growing dissatisfaction among women concerning their place in the Church. There are four areas in particular. The first is that all positions of authority are seen as being held by men, so the feeling of having no voice is stronger and more pervasive among women than among men. The second concerns the use of exclusive language in the liturgy and in most aspects of the life of the Church. The third concerns the



question of the ordination of women, and the recent claims of infallibility have not overcome the profound beliefs of many women, leaving them in a difficult situation. The fourth concerns the conviction of many women that everything in the Church, right up to its beliefs about God, is hopelessly patriarchal. The Church will ignore these concerns at its own serious peril. (Robinson, 1996, p.7)

The role of the male clerical hierarchy through which the ecclesial dimension of patriarchy is perpetuated in the Catholic Church is also structurally and symbolically embedded within the organisational arrangements of Catholic education. The Bishop is de facto 'the chairman of the board' in business terms. Parish priests have canonical authority within the parish school and have a prominent role in the employment of some teachers and all administrators. Sexism can be identified as both symbolic and structural in the Catholic Church. The knowledge of structural sexism in the Catholic Church is identified in the personal experiences shared by some of the women who participated in the case study. Other women told stories that have attained mythical status about incidents experienced by women they knew. An example of such a story told by one of the research participants related to a woman with whom she worked in the early 1970's. The parish priest paid salaries in the particular Catholic school to the lay teachers on a fortnightly basis. On more than one occasion, the woman in question was not paid on a regular basis and waited for up to six weeks for her pay which created a significant financial impost for her, necessitating borrowing money to survive from her mother. The parish priest did not apologise for the delay in payment and was oblivious to the economics of being a single woman, paying rent and living in the secular way.

Questioned how this might constitute sexism, the research participant was able to elaborate that the school was entirely staffed by women with more than half the staff being women religious. She felt that the priest had an ingrained view of women as being 'taken care of' by husbands or by fathers or by the congregation. The

acknowledgement within Church discourse of the role of a single, independent career woman was and remains unexamined. The research participants believed that if a man had been on staff, there would have been a different response from the priest because a man is viewed as an autonomous individual.

A lay woman holding the position of Director in another diocese provided further examples of clerical sexism. Her revelations provide further insights into the barriers that exist for women seeking leadership roles:

My experience is having been on interview panels where, in one case, the parish priest actually said - (and this was the reason for rejecting a woman applicant for principal one time) - "she is too well-dressed for this place, she wouldn't fit in". Everything about the woman applicant was far superior to the other male applicants being interviewed. Another time, a woman was rejected because she had children and the priest thought she may need time to look after her children but Mr Smith was fine because he had five children and went to mass on Sundays and presumably he had a wife at home to look after him and the family. That priest couldn't see how sexist he was being. He actually thought he was looking after the woman applicant's interests. (IT5)

A genuine response to the principle of community would entail mutual respect and a collegial-participative workplace culture. Again the woman Director shed light on how difficult this can be for a woman in a position of authority when working with the clergy and with other lay men in senior roles:

I've had the experience of visiting a priest in my role as an executive officer of Catholic education and being left standing on the stairs outside the presbytery, with the priest standing above me and when I then went over to the parish school, I had the principal ask me if I got into the house (the presbytery) and when I said 'no', I was then told that the priest had actually said (to the principal) that he'd keep me outside so I wouldn't stay long. I have experiences of men in senior positions in our organisation making irritating comments like "Oh to have a woman in our presence". I find all of those things so fiddly that I ignore them but always ask

myself the question, should I ignore them. I should be making the point that I don't expect that sort of remark. (IT5)

Views were expressed by several women in the research concerning the role of the clergy in Catholic schools and the relationship they have with principals and other senior managers. There was a sense that men are preferred in positions of senior management because 'priests feel more comfortable working with a male than a female'. Whilst such a view was not associated with sexism in every case, it was certainly used to provide further reasons for women to be admitted to the ordained ministry of the priesthood. The following comment indicates the possibility of women helping to create better gender relations the Catholic Church:

The priesthood is in urgent need of some good women. Nothing will really change in the church until women take their place in the ordained ministry. (IT6)

In my own experience as a school principal, I established good working relationships with the priests associated with my school. These very over-worked men had limited time to spend in schools and left the administration to me. The diocese in the case study has experienced, or 'suffered', as some people prefer to opine, a shortage of priests for many years. The average age of the fourteen active priests in the diocese at present, is sixty-two. Although priests are few in number, the need to consider sexism as a clerical issue in this diocese, however, is not to be underestimated. Burns (1992) illuminates the problem albeit in another diocese, where she conducted a research project that investigated the under-representation of women in principal's positions in Catholic education. The following comments came from her survey of priests on the issue of women principals:

- The less women the better
- (Women display an) inability to work harmoniously with the rest of the staff

because of pettiness, favouritism and unwillingness to compromise

- I would favour a man as principal but not in every case (pp.3-4).

These comments cannot be attributed to priests in the case study diocese. However, bishops are chosen from the priests of Australia and it is possible that this attitude can translocate. Whilst the above survey contained many favourable comments, the fact that individual priests felt they could make such blatantly sexist statements in a document that was to be published is indicative of the continuing problem of sexism verging on misogyny within the Catholic Church. The continuation of sexism contributes to a culture of mutual distrust between some women and some priests.

Although there was a general feeling amongst the women who participated in the case study, that the current diocesan Bishop is pastorally oriented and accepting of lay professional expertise, this view was tempered by the knowledge of his impending resignation and the appointment of a new bishop. Following the recent appointments of bishops in Australia and with the knowledge that the bishop is appointed by Rome, there exists a genuine concern that the next bishop will be a conservative. Questions were raised by the research participants about the probability of priests being imported into the diocese under the leadership of the new bishop. As Coriden (1997) indicates, “(c)urrently Catholic canon law has the potential to make any parish priest, a pope in his own parish” (p.35).

It is difficult to hold strongly to a concept of community within which the members of the clergy are supported by structures that are off-limits to the laity. Bishops are appointed by the Vatican and are not held formally accountable to their ‘flock’. Parish priests are appointed by the Bishop and are at liberty to adopt an authoritarian style that ignores transparent accountability that is the norm in other organisations (Tinsey, 1998).

Paradoxically, the notion of community can be an expression of inspired solidarity for women. Women are able to appropriate the understanding of the essential nature of a Catholic school for the purpose of promoting equality, addressing issues of discrimination and in overcoming sexism. Such an understanding has been the position adopted by women in the case study. The establishment of an Equal Employment for Women in Workplace Committee, the training of Sexual Harassment Referral Officers for each school in the diocese, and the establishment of a Gender Equity Reference Group, have inspired small group solidarity.

Careful adherence to the communal and relational aspirations of Catholic education invites scrutiny of dialectical issues concerning careers in Catholic school contexts.

Some of these issues include:

- The understanding of ‘commitment’ as implied in leadership roles that currently demand unreasonable time ‘on the job’.
- The role of the organisation in introducing family-friendly policies in Catholic education organisations and other Catholic Church organisations rather than responding to a union initiative.
- The responsibility of the organisation for supporting individuals to gain credentials which are mandated for particular career positions.
- Employment of non-Catholic teachers and the possible blockage to career advancement due to non-Catholic status.
- Employment of Catholics with known ‘lifestyle problems’ such as marriage outside the Catholic Church, common law relationships, unmarried mothers.
- Employment of Catholics with known, but private, ‘lifestyle problems’ such as homosexuality.
- The continued exemption of the Catholic Church organisation from certain

requirements of the Anti-discrimination legislation.

- Conditions of employment for women in support roles who are poorly paid and often lack permanency in employment.

A career in Catholic education must be viewed against a contested institutional Church background, underpinned by the refusal of the Catholic Church hierarchy to make structural changes in the institutional Church including reform of the ordained priesthood. Catholic education authorities have continued to promote the career context in the organisation as an opportunity to participate in the Mission of the Catholic Church. The women in this case study held a variety of views about their commitment to this Mission from strongly supportive to strategic ignoring of the Catholic Church in terms of an understanding of career.

#### Career Outlook: An Organisational Perspective

Catholic education, like most organisations, wishes to attract and keep motivated and talented staff. To do so requires an intentional response by the organisation to create a positive career outlook for the organisation. Career outlook is the result of both the intentional and unexamined organisational responses to accommodating the needs of employees. The need to establish an appropriate relationship between people and the organisation should be an intentional response by the organisation. Career outlook for women may be established in ways that enhance or limit the ability of individual women to experience their teaching career as rewarding and successful. Women want to incorporate their careers and personal lives and to feel that they are valued and to know that the work they perform is valued within the organisation. It may be necessary, therefore, to change aspects of the organisational career context given that employees today are seeking a deeper sense of meaning from their work lives (Baker, 2000).

The establishment of a positive career outlook within the organisation requires the consideration by the leaders in the organisation of all the complexities associated with the teaching career. Complexities include such issues as the selection of teaching as a career of choice by an individual, recruitment and entry into the teaching profession within the particular school system, career breaks and re-entry, career advancement, career rewards both intrinsic and extrinsic and career redeployment or exit. In addition, the approach to careers must address the lifestream of individuals (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1997). This requires some understanding within the organisation of the personal interests which impact on career. Such issues may include family commitments, achieving personal goals not necessarily associated with teaching and time for pursuits such as enrichment leave and study which supports the teaching career. Within the Catholic education organisation, career outlook also involves questions of dealing compassionately and fairly with lifestyle issues and religious affiliation.

This case study reveals a somewhat fragmented response from the organisation to the development of positive career outlook. The emphasis is firmly placed on entry level qualifications and the formation of teachers for the ministry of Catholic education. My conclusion is that there is a limited organisational response to the complexities of career. Career outlook remains unexamined. There appears to be an unwritten expectation that personnel will continue to 'answer the call' in the search for the vocational experience of ministry in Catholic education. The on-the-ground reality, however, is that recruitment of teachers into Catholic education and attracting people to senior leadership positions, is becoming increasingly difficult.

From the organisation's perspective, the teaching career is constructed within the ecclesial identity of the Catholic school with an emphasis on the ministry of teaching. An important element of ministry is the need to honour the communal and relational



ways of being members of Catholic education. When a teacher makes the choice to seek employment in a Catholic school, the notion of pursuing a career within Catholic education is linked to the willingness of the teacher to contribute to the mission of the Catholic Church through education. The notion of a career becomes subject to the cultural identity of the Catholic teacher as defined within the discourse of the Catholic Church and subject to its religious ideology. The essential and distinctive texts of the Catholic Church on education and social justice and on women, which describe 'how Catholics are to see things', are at the heart of the religious ideology. A religious sensibility is seen as the benchmark for all things within Catholic education and provides a transformational opportunity that is counter-cultural to secular interests:

Post-modern society has a diminished place for religion and often has it as something of merely marginal interest. Today's secular world promotes the view that conscience has merely to do with acting as one sees fit – in fact morality is regarded as entirely a matter of choice and opinion. Materialism, self-centredness, individualism, self-gratification and success need to be challenged as, in light of eternity and our ultimate destiny, the Catholic school must be measured against a different standard from that of the secular world. If all things are seen as God's gifts, they are less likely to be made into gods in their own right. (Annett, 1996, p.6)

The career structures developed within the case study organisation are designed to attract motivated, capable teachers, some of whom will be employed as, or will become, administrators. The career structure is also a response by the Australian Catholic Bishops to have a theologically literate but lay workforce. Career options for teachers who wish to stay in the classroom are recognised as important. Within the organisational career context, however, both the paradigms of market and religious mission operate. Such an amalgam contributes to organisational tensions, as the need to redefine the organisational position in the marketplace requires Catholic education to

create organisational structures that will not jeopardise its survival as an educational institution. As a result of economic restructuring, the organisation has experienced discursive shifts, producing new meanings in its mission with the focus being on evangelisation rather than catechising (teaching the already evangelised) as in earlier times. Organisational practices have evolved with a focus on accountability measures. In essence this means the organisation is caught up in the same value shift that has occurred in government schools. This value shift identifies parents as clients and students as consumers of an educational product. Within this shift, the ideologies of mission and market create competing discourses of equity and efficiency, quality and outcomes, ministry and profession.

Within this organisational context, teachers and administrators are subject to contradictory belief systems and sets of practices. The calculative values of the market in education promote an emphasis upon individual success. One consequence of the individualist stance for the profession has been termed by a principal who participated in the case study as “the clinical professionalism of teachers” (IT3) which she believes has largely replaced the vocational response to teaching. This may, however, be seen as a response to the continuing devaluation of the teaching profession in general. Teachers may feel the need to position themselves within a career context shaped by market ideology in such a way that their skills and knowledge can be understood as ‘career assets’ that create a sense of clinical professionalism.

A career in Catholic education has gendered meanings ascribed to it that are contingent upon the cultural beliefs embedded within the organisational discourses of what are natural orientations for men and women. The discourse of ministry does not construct the organisational career in a gender-sensitive way. An alternative view is to see ministry as a concept that has the potential to over-ride the continuing maternal

ethos of classroom teaching. The focus upon teaching as ministry has the potential to minimise the individualist and competitive stance of the secular notion of the 'successful career'. The concept and practice of ministry, however, requires critical deconstruction in order that the male monopoly and paternalism associated with ministry is revealed and replaced with an understanding of ministry based on mutuality (McLay, 1989).

Within the organisational response to careers, there is a need to acknowledge that the career choices of individual women are framed by the discourses in which they are immersed. Women, whether in classroom careers or in administrative careers, are in the process of being constituted by conflicting discourses related to career roles and other discourses such as those discourses associated with mothering, caring and homemaking. Organisational discourses may actually promote a contradictory position for women. Catholic Church discourse on women tends to reinforce male privilege and female subordination. Religious ideology, which forms 'the cultural superstructure for a system of male domination' (Radford-Reuther, 1975, p.xiv) in the Catholic Church, tries to make social structures look inevitable and divinely given.

A feminist perspective subjects the patriarchal mindset that permeates the Catholic religious tradition to a radical critique. In doing so tensions are revealed within the organisational career context as feminism seeks to create a new balance of values within the organisational culture. The picture associated with women in Catholic education, however, is not one of a uniformly gloomy gender repression. It is possible to distinguish the effects of individual women appropriating and using power. Organisation is achieved through the actions and interactions of individuals and groups pursuing their own strategies, working within and beyond organisational discourses. Discursive practices have the capacity to be both emancipatory and repressive "with

individuals positioning themselves within these practices in multiple ways in opposition to some discourses, in agreement with others” (Bartky, 1990, p.75 cited in Blackmore, 1999, p.17). Women in Catholic education engage in discursive politics that seek to reinterpret, reformulate, rethink and rewrite the norms and practices of the Catholic Church and Catholic education.

In the following chapter, organisational discourses that position women relative to men are examined. Both men and women in Catholic education may speak through a variety of discourses including equal opportunity discourse and ministry. No single discourse is intrinsically more liberating than any other is. Rather, it is a question of the relation between discourses and the context within which they are invoked. Meanings are not fixed and women can be tactical in exploiting possibilities.