

Imagining identity: Enshrining hermeneutics of dialogue and reflexivity within the practices of Canadian Catholic higher education

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Dedication and acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Gerard and Rachel, whose belief in the transformative value of education brought me to where I am today.

It is also dedicated to those I interviewed as part of this research project, who allowed me to walk on the 'sacred ground' of their experiences within Catholic higher education in Canada.

Last, but certainly not least, I gratefully acknowledge my supervisors, Dr. Anne Qualter and Dr. Janet Hanson, whose presence, guidance, and support made this dissertation possible.

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List of abbreviations

ACCU	Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (in the United States)
ACCUC	Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada
CCCB	Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
CEPs	Cultural emergent properties
CGT	Critical grounded theory
CHEIs	Catholic higher education institutions
ECE	<i>Ex corde ecclesiae</i> (Apostolic constitution on Catholic universities)
HEI	Higher education institutions
PEPs	Personal emergent properties
SEPs	Structural emergent properties
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Abstract

Organizational identity is a key focus within Canadian Catholic higher education institutions (CHEIs). For the most part founded by religious communities, these institutions have traditionally depended upon the presence of priests and nuns to ensure the transmission of their religious institutional identities. Today's more diverse workforce needs to be equipped to continue this tradition while also transforming it to ensure its continued socio-cultural relevance. This research project explores how individuals working within CHEIs experience, and exercise agency with regard to, the institutional identity of their workplaces. Working within the critical realist tradition, this project applies critical grounded theory to higher education research. Based on data collected through semi-structured interviews in three different CHEIs, new theory is built through an iterative dialogue between this data, the literature and the researcher's own reflexive process. Three key findings emerge. First, institutional identity within these institutions is re-conceptualized as a balancing act between the structures and cultures of both the church and the academy. Second, a developmental process is put forward which traces how individuals – who I designate as identity-carriers – exercise agency with regard to their institutions' identity. Third, the specific role of mission officer is analysed using Archer's (2003) model of reflexivity. A final chapter examines how this research contributes to both the practice and theory of institutional identity development within CHEIs and beyond. As a whole, this research demonstrates that CHEIs are indeed adapting to their new contexts and finding novel ways to maintain and create their institutional identities. It also contributes to the wider discourse about how individuals connect to their institutional contexts and posits concrete ways of fostering positive relationships between personal and institutional identities in the workplace.

Chapter 1: Introduction

On the evening of 13 November 2015, I lay asleep in my rented flat in Paris. I woke to the sound of ambulance sirens blaring and my phone urgently 'pinging' with text messages asking: "Are you okay?" It was the night of the Paris attack and I was in the City of Light en route to the World Congress on Catholic Education, which was to be held in Rome the next week. After the bombings, an eerie stillness fell over the city as officials begged citizens to remain under lock-down until it was clear that the danger had passed. In that stillness, in face of such violence, fundamental human questions floated to the surface: What fuels such hatred? Where do we find hope in face of terror? And, perhaps most fundamentally, how do we respond?

This story may seem like an unlikely place to begin an EdD dissertation. It certainly may seem removed from my exploration of institutional identity within the context of Canadian Catholic higher education. But, in other senses, it is not. This short, if sombre, vignette illustrates the foundations of my doctoral research. This is true in both the literal and figurative sense. It was during that week in Paris that I wrote the first draft of my research proposal. It should come as no surprise, then, that the deeper, human questions I raise in the above narrative undergird my research.

The experience in Paris highlights the core concept around which my research revolves: identity. From my perspective, the questions of identity weave themselves through the geopolitical turmoil we currently face, the core questions confronting our educational institutions, as well as our own personal narratives. At the macro level, globalization has led to complex and conflicting visions of national identities. At the meso level, institutions are asking deep questions about their mission, purpose, and relevance in response to the realities of today's world. And, at the micro level, I am forced to ask: "Who am I?" and "How do I respond to the world in which I live?" While this research project focuses largely on the meso level of reality, the other planes of a 'stratified social reality', to use sociologist Margaret Archer's (1995) phrase, are in constant interplay with how institutions understand themselves today. Both the impact of the larger social world in which institutions exist, and the role of individuals of which they are composed, shape and transform contemporary institutional life. Using a critical realist lens, this research project focuses on how institutional identity is experienced and enacted by individuals working within Canadian

Catholic colleges and universities. However, it does so while also holding the larger and smaller identity questions in view.

The story I shared above also indicates the context of my research. I was in Paris on my way to the World Congress in Catholic Education, a global meeting of delegates involved in Catholic education sponsored by the Holy See's Congregation for Catholic Education. The congress was called to celebrate and reflect on the 50th anniversary of the Vatican II document on Catholic education, *Gravissimum educationis*, and the 25th anniversary of *Ex corde ecclesiae*, a foundational document in the practice of Catholic higher education. My professional practice is located in the Canadian Catholic higher education sector and is shaped by both my lived experience within these institutions and the vision of Catholic education articulated in the documents I have just named. This context figures highly within my research and I will further elaborate on its unique characteristics below.

My opening vignette also reveals, though somewhat obliquely, my positionality with regard to this research. I am an insider researcher. If this were not the case, I would not have been chosen as a delegate to this particular congress. I come from within the tradition of Catholic education and am shaped by it both personally and professionally. On the personal level, I am a practicing Catholic and, aside from this current EdD programme, have been educated within Catholic institutions my entire life. On a professional level, I serve as the Director of Mission and Ministry within my home institution. In this role, I am tasked with ensuring that our diverse faculty and staff understand the mission of our College and how their own work can contribute to our collective endeavour. I am fully immersed in my research context and am aware that my status as an insider brings with it both benefits and limitations. On the one hand, I easily relate to the concerns shared by those who have participated in my research. On the other hand, I must be attentive to the possibility of bias and blind spots inherent in my worldview. Along with Charmaz (2006), I do not believe that these are insurmountable obstacles. I believe that intentionally engaging with my own subjectivity as a researcher can potentially enrich the account of my exploration. I therefore commit myself to clearly articulating my positionality as well as engaging a reflexive stance with regard to both my position and practice.

My opening narrative shares with you a personal experience. This may also alert you to my methodological approach. I am interested in how individuals experience and engage with the institutional identities of their workplaces, in this case Catholic colleges and universities. I am interested in the stories they tell and how these stories reveal an active and dynamic relationship between personal and institutional identities. As such, my research is iterative, an artful conversation between the stories people have shared, the literature, and my own work to construct theory as a result. I adopt a critical grounded theory approach, which informs both the way I collect and analyse my data and how I have structured this dissertation. I argue that a critical grounded theory approach is compatible with a critical realist worldview insofar as critical realism brings together a realist ontology with a constructivist epistemology (Maxwell, 2012). As a result, this research is inductive, built from the ground up, in the hope that the stories and experiences of the people closest to the practice of Catholic higher education will help us build new understandings of how these institutions work.

Finally, my opening paragraph exposes my deepest questions about the human condition. I am engaged in higher education research because I believe that institutions of higher learning can and ought to play a central role in answering the fundamental questions facing our planet today. As such, my research is not value neutral but contains an inherently critical dimension. I see higher education as a way to build a more just and peaceful world, a means to foster greater understanding between peoples and worldviews, and a source of hope. It is with these lofty goals in mind that I invite you into the story of my doctoral research. I now set the stage for this account by further elaborating upon my research context.

[Catholic higher education in Canada](#)

The Catholic higher education sector in Canada provides a unique example of institutional life in higher education. It is made up of small colleges and universities that, for the most part, are dedicated to the liberal arts and work in collaboration with other, larger secular universities. They also seek to respond to current social issues on the local and global levels. Each of these characteristics leads to crucial questions about the core identities of Catholic higher education institutions (CHEIs) and, even more so, their long-term viability.

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada is made up of 19 member institutions and two associate members (ACCUC, n.d.).¹ Within this group, the institutions themselves vary in size from the very small Collège Universitaire Dominicain in Ottawa (110 total student enrolments) to the larger St. Francis Xavier in Nova Scotia with 5290 students (Universities Canada, 2016). By any account, this is a small sector but this becomes even more apparent when comparing the Canadian situation with that of its American counterpart. The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in the United States reports the existence of 261 Catholic institutions serving 875,000 students in 2015-2016 (ACCU, n.d.). Speaking at the University of Notre Dame, Archbishop J. Michael Miller (2005), then Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education at the Vatican, further contextualized the scope of Catholic higher education. He indicated that, at the time, there existed approximately 1,300 Catholic higher education institutions globally, over and above the 250 ecclesiastical universities that report directly to the Holy See. He also noted that this sector was growing, most significantly in Africa and Asia:

Since 1990, the number of Catholic institutions worldwide has grown steadily. For example, 160 Catholic institutions of higher learning have been established in the last 15 years: 10 in Africa; a whopping 108 in Asia, including 99 in India; 32 in the Americas, including two in Canada, five in the United States and nine in Mexico. In the same period, in Europe, seven have been founded: four in Spain, and one each in Hungary, Italy and Slovakia. (para. 8)

I cite these statistics not to highlight the insignificance of the Canadian experience but to underline why this particular manifestation of Catholic higher education has been understudied and overlooked. I argue that the uniquely Canadian experience can actually offer valuable insight into what it means to be a Catholic institution in a pluralistic and multi-cultural society today.

In North America, religious congregations were responsible for founding most Catholic higher education institutions (Miller, 2005). In Canada, the Basilians, Benedictines, Dominicans, Jesuits, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Resurrectionists, Sisters of Loretto, Sisters of St. Joseph, Sulpicians, and the Ursulines played this role (Shook, 1973). In recent years,

¹ It is important to note here that, while some of the ACCUC member institutions are officially bilingual, they are all located within English-speaking Canada. An exploration of the history and operation of Catholic postsecondary institutions in French Canada is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this study.

membership in these congregations has been decreasing in number and, consequently, their presence in the institutions they founded has diminished. This diminishment has been one of the key precipitating factors in the growing concern about the institutional identity of CHEIs. Without “collars and habits in evidence” (Currie, 2010), these institutions can no longer assume that their religious identity will remain evident by default. In their study of college presidents and their sponsoring communities, Morey and Holtschneider (2001) voiced their concern and suggested that in the future Catholic colleges and universities will either 1) become secular; 2) remain Catholic and connected to their founding congregations; or, 3) remain Catholic but in a more generic, non-congregational sense. In a more recent study, Morey and Piderit (2008) continue to sound the alarm about the continued viability of Catholic identity and culture on these campuses.

The Catholic colleges and universities in question, by and large, focus on the liberal arts. Perhaps still shaped by Newman’s (1896), *The idea of the university*, these institutions are now counter-cultural in their emphasis on a liberal education. While research-intensive universities and governments underscore the importance of applied knowledge and workforce readiness, these small colleges hold on to the values associated with a classic liberal education. In doing so, they are swept up in the wider debates around the significance of the liberal arts (Kelly, 2015). Their institutional identities are impacted as their relevance is questioned by wider social policy and shifting priorities in tough economic times.

Unlike their American counterparts, most Catholic colleges and universities in Canada are affiliated (9 institutions) or federated (7 institutions) with larger, secular universities. The exact nature of these arrangements varies from institution to institution (Trick, 2015). In a general sense, it means that federated and affiliated institutions are administratively autonomous but academically integrated with their partner institutions. The financial arrangements within the partnerships vary. Some federated colleges and universities receive their funding directly from the provincial government² while others receive it through their federation partners. Either way, service agreements govern what percentage of the provincial grant must be returned to the university in return for access to the larger

² Education, in Canada, is under the jurisdiction of provincial governments rather than federal.

institution's resources, both human and material. The partner universities grant the degrees, have a say in program and curriculum development, and in decisions regarding tenure and promotions. Student recruitment and admissions are often done in tandem with the larger institution. Both Trick (2015) and MacDonald (2016) paint a generally positive picture of the role federated and affiliated colleges play within the larger higher education system in Canada. However, the system creates a situation where the smaller institutions within the partnership must continually justify how they add value to the larger institution. A clearly articulated institutional identity is one way to do this.

Canadian CHEIs are also trying to respond to the social context in which they now exist. Historically, these institutions were founded to meet the needs of Catholic populations who had difficulty, sometimes because of restrictive laws, accessing the mainstream institutions. Or, they evolved from institutions whose original purpose was to train men for ordained ministry. Needless to say, today's social context differs. For both pragmatic and ethical reasons, responding to current social needs has become a key concern for these colleges and universities.

Currently, in Canada, there is an urgent need to reconcile the relationship between Indigenous³ and Settler peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has highlighted this need and called Canadian society to account like no other event in its history. The TRC was established in 2008 as a result of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and was given two mandates:

1. (To) reveal to Canadians the complex truth about the history and the ongoing legacy of the church-run residential schools, in a manner that fully documents the individual and collective harms perpetrated against Aboriginal peoples, and honours the resilience and courage of former students, their families, and communities; and,
2. (To) guide and inspire a process of truth and healing, leading toward reconciliation within Aboriginal families, and between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal communities, churches, governments, and Canadians generally. The process was to

³ In Canada, several terms are used to refer to those people who first inhabited this territory: Indigenous, Aboriginal, and First Nations/Métis. My own preference is for the umbrella term 'Indigenous' though I retain the terminology used by those I cite on this topic.

work to renew relationships on a basis of inclusion, mutual understanding, and respect. (TRC, 2015, p. 23)

The three TRC commissioners - Hon. Justice Murray Sinclair, Chief Wilton Littlechild, and Dr. Marie Wilson - spent 6 years travelling across Canada and gathering the testimonies of over 6,000 people who had been personally impacted at residential schools. Residential schools, in the Canadian context, were government-mandated, church-run schools that removed Indigenous children - some as young as 5 years old - from their families and communities. The stories that emerged were heart-breaking accounts of debilitating loneliness, cultural dislocation/genocide, and physical, sexual, mental, and spiritual abuse. When the TRC released its final report in 2015, it had gone a long way toward exposing the truth about residential schools. The process of reconciliation, however, had just begun.

Reconciliation demands that concrete action be taken to rectify the ongoing systemic factors that continue to marginalize Indigenous peoples within Canadian society. These actions must take place within every social and cultural institution in Canada. When it comes to reconciliation, the TRC calls to account both the church and the academy with particular force. The TRC's (2015) final report includes a list of 95 *Calls to action* which are meant to lead the way forward to lasting reconciliation between Indigenous and Settler Canadians. Of these *Calls to action*, many pertain directly to the roles of educational institutions (#6-12, 62-65) and the church (48-49, 58-61). It can also be argued that educational institutions are called to play a key role with regard to those *Calls to action* that relate to the preservation of language and culture (#13-17). By this tally, then, 22 of the 95 *Calls to action* pertain to education and/or the church. The TRC has set in motion a process that seeks to radically transform Canadian society. In doing so, it has the potential to impact both the Catholic Church and universities in Canada and, by extension, CHEIs. This research project, therefore, must carefully examine how CHEIs negotiate their institutional identities in a post-TRC context.

The structure of this dissertation

Canadian philosopher and media analyst, Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) is famous for coining the phrase, 'the medium is the message'. The structure of this dissertation takes his dictum to heart. My writing mirrors the iterative nature of my project. I begin by reviewing

the literature base that undergirds my research questions (Ch. 2) and then move on to discuss the methodology that informs this project: critical grounded theory (Ch.3). From there I depart from the more traditional format and engage in an extended exploration of the themes and concepts that have emerged from my data. In short, I begin to build theory based on the data I have collected. I allow the data – and thereby the voices of those who participated in this project – to interact with the relevant literature and my own reflexive process in this effort to build new theory. As a result, Chapter 4 showcases the experiences of individuals working within CHEIs and characterizes these as ‘balancing acts’. Given that CHEIs are shaped by their relationships with both the university and the church, these individuals are constantly negotiating between the sometimes compatible and sometimes conflicting identities that emerge from these fundamental institutional relationships. The focus here will be on the structures and cultures that shape institutional identity within CHEIs. Chapters 5 and 6 reflect on dialogue and reflexivity as hermeneutical or interpretive processes that enable individuals within CHEIs to negotiate the balancing act. Chapter 5 examines how, through dialogue, some individuals within CHEIs come to be recognized and function as ‘identity-carriers’. While traditionally, members of founding religious communities played this role, my research reveals that anyone within the institution has the potential to act as an identity-carrier. Chapter 6 examines the role of reflexivity and how it impacts individual capacity to exercise agency with regard to institutional identity. Using my own experience as an illustration, I focus on how I, as a mission officer, exercise agency through the reflexive enactment of my role. Basing my work on Archer’s (2003) model of reflexivity, I also explore how other types of reflexives might exercise agency with regard to institutional identity. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the implications of my research for both practice and theory (Ch. 7). By nature, a professional doctorate has a dual purpose. It seeks to both impact practice - in this case the development of institutional identity within the higher education context - and extend the theoretical foundations upon which this practice is built. In my concluding chapter, I will demonstrate how my research responds to both of these mandates. At this point, however, I turn to the literature that has informed, and given rise to, my particular research questions.

Chapter 2: Building the literature base

As a practitioner-researcher, I have approached this research through both my own experience within the field and through the literature related to my topic: institutional identity within Catholic higher education institutions (CHEIs). Three bodies of literature inform my research: 1) scholarly debate on Catholic identity, mostly arising out of the American context; 2) work on the evolving concept of organizational identity; and, 3) critical realist approaches to the study of organizations. The first serves as the foundation for reflecting on my particular research context – pointing to gaps in explanatory power – while the other two give rise to my specific research questions which I articulate as follows:

1. How do individuals working in Catholic colleges and universities experience the Catholic identity of their institutions? (organizational theory)
2. How, and to what extent, do individuals act as agents of Catholic identity in their workplaces? What factors enable or hinder this process? (critical realism)
3. How do different institutional structures and histories impact how individuals experience the Catholic institutional identity of their workplaces? (critical realism)

Consistent with a critical grounded theory approach, this initial review of the literature outlines my entry into the topic at hand. The iterative relationship between data and theory building means that I will return to the literature later to explore the themes that arise from my data.

Catholic identity – foundations of the debate

The publication of Pope John Paul II's (1990), *Apostolic constitution on Catholic universities*, commonly referred to by its Latin name, *Ex corde ecclesiae* (ECE), proved to be a watershed moment in the relationship between Catholic institutions of higher learning and the Roman Catholic Church. With this document, John Paul II sought to clarify the role of CHEIs with regard to the broader mission of the institutional church.⁴ Recognizing both that Catholic universities emerged “from the heart of the Church” (ECE, 1) and asserting that their relationship with the Church “is essential to [their] institutional identity” (ECE, 27), the

⁴ Here, along with Dulles (1991), I make the distinction between the institution of the Roman Catholic Church and other ecclesiological constructs that emerged from the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

pontiff reiterated the four essential characteristics of a university.⁵ To be Catholic, universities must exhibit:

1. A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the community as such;
2. A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;
4. An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life. (ECE, 13)

Ex corde ecclesiae clearly named what, in the eyes of the Church, constitutes the Catholic identity of a college or university. Much of the academic literature on Catholic identity emerges as subsequent reflections on *Ex corde ecclesiae* by those working on the front lines of Catholic higher education. This literature asks three broad questions: What is meant by Catholic identity? How do we measure Catholic identity? And, what practices support the presence and evolution of a distinctly Catholic identity on university campuses?

Given that *Ex corde ecclesiae* took a typological approach to the question of Catholic identity, it is perhaps not surprising that the literature seeks to further clarify these criteria from the perspective of the CHEI. Both Steinfels (1995) and Hellwig (2003) argue from the tradition of Catholic education and create typologies of its key components (figure 1). In doing so, they translate the ecclesiastical language of *Ex corde ecclesiae* into categories that resonate more readily with the Catholic intellectual endeavour. Comparing these two sets of criteria, we see significant overlap but are also alerted to the fact that there is no absolute consensus about the exact nature of the Catholic intellectual tradition and subsequently the Catholic identity that CHEIs seek to promote.

⁵ Though it must be noted that this typology was first articulated at the 2nd Congress of Delegates of Catholic Universities held in Rome in January 1969 (Gallin, 2000).

Characteristics of the Catholic intellectual tradition	
Steinfels (1995)	Hellwig (2003)
1) the compatibility of faith and reason; 2) the centrality of philosophical thinking; 3) the appreciation that facts are not value-free; 4) an anti-reductionist approach; 5) the importance of symbolism and analogical reasoning; 6) the role of mysticism; 7) a concern for social justice.	1) furthering the continuity between faith and reason; 2) cherishing the wisdom of the past; 3) building community; 4) avoiding elitism; 5) a sacramental view of the world which sees God made manifest in material reality.

Figure 1

Catholic identity in higher education institutions has also been classified through the analysis of mission statements (Currie, 2010; Estanek, James and Norton, 2006). In a monumental study, Arthur (2006) includes an overview of mission statements from Christian, Jewish and Muslim HEI’s around the world. He, I believe rightly, issues a caution about assuming that mission statements are anything more than aspirational in nature (p. 33). With regard to CHEIs in particular, Arthur’s highlights how social context impacts the degree to which mission statements foreground their Catholic identity.

Typologies take on other forms as well, with institutions as a whole being ranked for their catholicity along various continuums (Arthur, 2006). Morey and Piderit’s (2006) study of 124 university administrators in American CHEIs resulted in a model that includes four institutional types ranging from the most explicitly Catholic to the least: 1) Catholic immersion; 2) Catholic persuasion; 3) Catholic diaspora; and, 4) Catholic cohort. Strain, Halstead and Drexler (2009) critique this model for being based on too monolithic a conception of Catholic identity and culture. As a response, they propose adding a fifth type to the model, that of ‘Catholic engagement’, where institutional engagement with pluralism – both *ad intra* and *ad extra* - becomes a defining characteristic in itself.

The typological approach to Catholic identity naturally leads to the second question of concern within the literature: How do we measure Catholic identity? Estanek, James and Norton’s (2006) study most clearly illustrates the transition from naming to measuring Catholic identity. What began as a content analysis of mission statements revealed a surprising result that led to a more assessment based approach. They found that 91% of the institutional mission statements referred to their desired student outcomes (p. 208). Once

they had a list of desired student outcomes, it became possible to measure if these outcomes were actually evident in the student body. Similarly, Bolduc (2009) links institutional identity and student outcomes, measuring how levels of student religiosity changed during their time at four different types of Catholic institutions.

Moore (2014) provides an overview of tools that have been created to assess Catholic identity and mission. Notable among these is the De Paul Mission and Values Inventory (DMV), which was first introduced by Ferrari and Velcoff (2006) to measure how staff at De Paul university perceived its catholicity. Later, Ferrari and Janulis (2009) expanded the study to include both faculty and staff. The tool was further validated when it was adapted for use at a Franciscan university to study student perceptions of Catholic identity and mission (Matteo, Bottom and Ferrari, 2013). Measuring how Catholic identity is perceived has been the focus of numerous other studies, each targeting the perceptions of specific constituencies - students (Boylan, 2015; King, 2014; King and Herr, 2015), faculty (Sullins, 2004), or administrators/management and trustees (Convey, 2012).

The work to both name and measure Catholic identity is a necessary starting point in the discussion. It delineates the topic at hand and provides some common vocabulary for the discourse. However, both approaches carry with them limitations. The typological approach leads to a rather static conception of Catholic identity and leans toward top-down definitions, derived either from magisterial teaching, church tradition, or the creative minds of those drafting mission statements. The assessment approach lends itself to description of what does or does not exist with regard to Catholic identity. It helps us understand what gaps need to be dealt with, either in terms of student outcomes or perceptions of Catholic identity, but does not elucidate how they might be filled. In asking the 'what' and 'how much' questions, the 'how' question remains unanswered. It is to the literature exploring this last question that we now turn.

Much work has been done to name and analyse the practices that foster an appreciation of Catholic identity within CHEIs. Some of these practices have been put in place as specific responses to the perceived identity crisis within Catholic higher education while others have evolved more organically. This area of research is quite robust and examines practices that pertain to a wide gamut of institutional experience.

The practice of hiring for mission has engendered controversy. *Ex corde ecclesiae* (1990) initiated the debate by calling for a majority of Catholic faculty (ECE, 4), while still recognizing the important role that non-Catholic faculty and staff can play. This led to what has been called the 'critical mass' argument that essentially asks how many Catholics it takes to maintain a vibrant Catholic identity within CHEIs. Garrett (2006) traces how some institutions take a quantitative approach, looking for a simple majority, while others are more concerned about the quality of Catholic teaching staff. Sullins (2004) seeks to verify the assumption that the presence of more Catholic individuals leads to a more Catholic institution. His quantitative analysis of survey data from 1290 faculty at 100 different institutions correlates faculty perception of Catholic identity with the actual numbers of Catholic faculty present within a given institution. He concludes that, indeed, "Catholic faculty expressed stronger support than non-Catholics for the institution's religious identity and less opposition to required theology or philosophy courses. They also had longer institutional tenure" (p. 86). Questions remain about the meaning of these findings (Ferrari and Janulis, 2009) as well as their implications for actual hiring practices. Briel (2012) advocates for a top-down approach that clearly favours hiring Catholic faculty. Heft (2012), by contrast, outlines the bottom-up approach employed at the University of Dayton, where faculty and department heads are given opportunity to learn more about that university's specific Catholic identity and mission in the hope that this will then feed into their hiring processes. Gilroy (2009) examines the pragmatic considerations involved with clearly communicating institutional identity and mission throughout the recruitment and hiring process.

The role of curriculum and program review in maintaining Catholic identity has also been explored. Justice education plays a central part in fostering a sense of Catholic identity (Bergman, 2011). Donaldson (2008) and Brenden (2008) both reflect on their experiences of trying to integrate Catholic social teaching into their social work curricula. Naughton (2009) and Van Hise and Koeplin (2010) do the same with regard to their schools' business education and accounting programs, respectively. O'Connell Killen (2015) outlines how conflicts over core curriculum reveal deeper tensions around the Catholic identity as a whole. It is important to note here that the debates around curriculum and program design are very different in the Canadian context where most of our institutions are either

federated or affiliated with larger, secular universities. The degree to which explicit Catholic teaching can be integrated into our courses and programs is limited by the fact that our courses must remain interchangeable with those taught on the wider campus. In the Canadian context, greater weight must be placed on extra-curricular means of fostering Catholic identity.

How different roles within CHEIs are enacted also contributes to institutional identity and mission. Landy's (1990) early thoughts on faculty formation eventually led to the creation of *Collegium: A summer colloquy on faith and the intellectual life* (www.collegium.org). Morey and Piderit (2008) refer to similar faculty formation seminars. The goal of these practices is to ensure that younger, lay faculty members are sufficiently socialized into the Catholic intellectual tradition and able to integrate these values and concerns into their day-to-day practice as academics. James and Estanek (2012) review the development of the *Principles of good practice for student affairs at Catholic colleges and universities* (Estanek and James, 2010) and assess how these are actually being integrated into daily practice. Finally, Clifford (2006) and Gray and Sullivan (2008) argue that campus ministers play a central role in ensuring the continuity of Catholic identity and mission.

New institutional structures have also been created to carry institutional identity and mission. In the United States, centres and institutes have emerged to focus research and resources. In a recent study sponsored by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU), it was found that 29.6% of these centres specifically related to Catholic identity while 10.9% focused on the charisms or the distinct characteristics of the founding religious communities (Sloma-Williams, 2011). Last but not least has been the emergence of a new role within CHEIs, that of the mission officer or mission leader. In their study of this emerging profession, James, Mayorga and Lehman (2014) defined mission leaders "as someone other than the president who has direct responsibility for the integration of mission across campus" (p. 9). The role was first established in the United States in 1980 and has steadily increased since. In 2010, there were 139 identified mission leaders within CHEIs in that country (James et al., 2014). Currently in Canada there is one, the author of this dissertation, though there is movement toward expanding this approach to mission integration.

Within this body of literature, there is little mention of the role of individual agency with regard to institutional identity. There is, however, one notable exception. Whitney and Laboe (2014) trace Whitney's transformation from a sceptic to an 'agent of mission' during his time serving as a faculty member at DePaul University. His experience illustrates a process through which individuals working in CHEIs come to identify with and, subsequently, enact the institutional identity of their workplaces.

The literature on Catholic identity arising from the specifically Canadian experience of Catholic higher education is rather sparse. However, it is important to note that in Canada the discourse on Catholic institutional identity actually predated *Ex corde ecclesiae*. As early as 1970, a commission created by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops surveyed the perceptions of and practices relating to Catholic identity in the 40 CHEIs that were operating in Canada at the time (Commission of Inquiry, 1970). Sanche's (1995) history of St. Thomas More College between 1961-1977 also focuses on identity, tracing the tension that arose, after Vatican II, from this institution's dual commitment to religious diversity and Catholic identity.

As I mentioned earlier, the literature on Catholic identity is quite robust but, from my own position and context, I still perceive gaps in its explanatory power. First, I question if and to what degree literature that arises, for the most part, from the American experience is relevant in my own context. This is particularly true with regard to federated and affiliated institutions whose identities must be constantly negotiated with their partner institutions. Second, the literature on the nature of Catholic identity that focuses on assessment remains largely descriptive. Even the literature on practices that foster Catholic identity is still largely derived from localized experiences. We are only beginning to imagine Catholic identity as a process that needs to be enacted throughout the institution as a whole. Finally, to rise up to the task of responding to the needs of the world today, Catholic institutions need to be able to do more than replicate what has been done in the past. They need an identity that honours the tradition but also makes it relevant and able to meet contemporary needs. It is with these concerns in mind that I move beyond the literature on Catholic identity to an exploration of the broader discourse on institutional identity as a whole.

Organizational identity: The search for conceptual clarity

Organizational identity⁶ has both been called a generative construct (Albert, Ashforth and Dutton, 2000) and compared to the Tower of Babel (Schultz, Hatch and Larsen, 2002). The quest for conceptual clarity with regard to organizational identity is ongoing. Since Albert and Whetten (1985) first defined organizational identity as the characteristics of an organization that are “central, distinctive and enduring” (p. 265), debate has flourished about, 1) the relationship between concept of organizational identity and other constructs like organizational culture, organizational identification and corporate image; 2) the degree to which organizational identity can explain continuity and change within organizations; and, 3) the appropriate theoretical underpinnings of and methodological approaches related to the concept. I now look at each of these discussions in turn.

The concept of organizational identity has a dual lineage. On one side of its family tree can be found the literature on *corporate identity* within the domain of communications and marketing (cf. Balmer, 2001) which focuses on external image. On the other side, there exists work on *organizational identity* within the discipline of organizational theory which focuses on the internal dynamics of collective identities. According to Soenen and Moingeon (2002), early work on corporate identity focused on visual or symbolic representations of organizations. This identity was controllable and prescriptive, with what the authors refer to as a preoccupation with the ‘manifestations’ of identity. On the other hand, those working on organizational identity saw it as a more descriptive mechanism, which may or may not be managed. For Soenen and Moingeon, this was a more ‘representational’ approach to organizational identity research. Interestingly, this original duality has remained evident within the literature. Whetten (2006) distinguishes research focused on ‘identity-of’ (organizational identity) or ‘identity-in’ (organizational identification) organizations. Puusa (2006) differentiates between the inner and outer levels of organizational identity. And, more recently, Stensaker (2015), in his work on organizational identity in a university

⁶ While the literature on Catholic identity largely refers to the concept of ‘institutional identity’, the literature arising from the domain of organizational theory uses the term ‘organizational identity’. Please note that I see the two terms as interchangeable and will retain the term as used by the authors in question.

context, distinguishes between essentialist and strategic orientations toward organizational identity.

Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition remains the primary reference point for the ensuing discourse on organizational identity. Theirs is also the definition that I used as a starting point of my own research even though I quickly became aware of its limitations. It is therefore worth taking the time to flesh out their initial perspective. They arrived at the concept by transposing theories of individual identity onto organizational reality. They had a two-fold purpose in mind when doing so. First, they wanted to enable the empirical study of organizational identity by outside observers, and, second, they wanted to help organizations ask the more reflexive question: Who are we? They saw the three "criteria of central character, distinctiveness, and temporal continuity as each necessary, and as a set sufficient" (p. 265). Theirs, then, was a focus on continuity within organizations but, even in these early stages, they recognized that there were other complex dynamics in play. They proposed that organizations could be either *holographic* or *ideographic* in nature. In a holographic organization, the sub-units each carry the identity of the whole. In an ideographic organization, sub-units are more specialized and do not necessarily bear its collective identity. The latter scenario allowed for the conceptualization of dual or multiple identities to co-exist within organizations. They traced how organizational identity could manifest itself throughout the whole life cycle of an organization and proposed extended metaphor analysis as an appropriate methodology for its empirical study.

Albert and Whetten (1985) recognized from the outset that organizational identity was interrelated, both empirically and theoretically, with organizational culture. Their approach to the question belied what would later become a key issue in the debate, namely, how the concept of organizational identity functions at different levels of analysis (Puusa, 2006). In their view, identity is usually related to individuals and culture to society. Since organizations are neither individuals nor societies, they felt that organizational culture and organizational identity could not be equated. Doing so would presume that the organization would either be the same as its individual constituents or as the society in which it is situated. We will see later how Archer (1995) grapples with this very question and proposes a critical realist understanding of social reality as a solution to this conundrum. At this point, however, it suffices to say that, for Albert and Whetten (1985), organizational identity was a

mediating reality that allowed individuals to relate to the organization and the organization to relate to wider society. In an effort to gain further conceptual clarity, Schultz, Hatch and Larsen (2002) use Saussurian logic to relate the concepts of organizational image, identity and culture. In this approach, concepts are defined by how they both overlap with and are distinct from other related concepts. Whetten (2006) later returns to the question and posits that both culture and image can be seen as part of the larger concept of organizational identity, if indeed culture and image fit the criteria of being central, distinct and enduring.

Situated within the tradition of social identity theory, Ashforth and Mael (1989) focus their analysis on the individual's relationship with the organization. They distinguish between organizational identification and organizational identity. Organizational identification is the process of developing a shared identity with the group as symbolized by prototypical individuals within it. Referring back to Albert and Whetten's (1985) work, they posit that a more clearly defined organizational identity will facilitate organizational identification on the part of the individual. Furthermore, within an ideographic organization, the fact that individuals tend to identify more closely with their sub-units may lead to intergroup conflict.

Furthering the discussion, Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) propose that image is the mediating factor between organizational identity and organizational identification. What individuals believe to be central, distinct and enduring about their organization (perceived organizational identity) and how they believe others see their organization (construed external image) impacts the degree to which they identify with the organization as a whole. Scott and Lane (2000) continue to explore the interaction between organizational identity and organizational identification and propose a more relational model that sees organizational identity as a "joint construction" between managers and other stakeholders, while still recognizing the power differentials that exist between different constituent groups. Whetten's (2006) re-packaging of Albert and Whetten's (1985) original formulation treats organizational identity as a real analogue of individual identity that cannot be reduced to a collection of individual identities.

Exploring the relationship between organizational identity and image led Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000) to question the original definition of the former, preferring a more dynamic

and fluid concept of organizational identity. They distinguish between Albert and Whetten's criteria of 'enduring features' and the idea of continuity. In their view, the labels for the core or enduring features of an organization may remain the same while the behaviours to which these refer may change. This distinction, then, allows for a more dynamic understanding of organizational identity that allows both for a sense of continuity and change within organizations. In their view, organizational image can be the catalyst for a re-evaluation of organizational identity, particularly if there is a conflict between how the organization is perceived and its sense of identity. A dynamic notion of organizational identity is necessary to enable organizations to adapt to changing circumstances and contexts.

While Gioia, Schultz and Corley (2000) argue for the expansion of the concept of organizational identity to account for continuity and change, Yamashiro (2015) contends that this capacity was already present in Albert and Whetten's (1985) original formulation. Yamashiro claims the shorthand used to refer to Albert and Whetten's original definition, which boils it down to three words – central, distinctive, and enduring – has led to misunderstanding. Going back to the source document, Yamashiro states that "the true assertion of Albert and Whetten (1985) in regard to organizational identity is (a') claimed central character (if identities are stated, several identities may exist and not just one), (b') claimed distinctiveness (if a comparison with others and self-classification can be performed, then an identity need not be unique), and (c') claimed temporal continuity (if an identity has continuity, it may change over time)" (p. 195). By focusing on the organization's claims rather than the assessment of an actual, objective reality, Yamashiro attempts to retrieve the concept in its original form. He further illustrates his argument using Albert and Whetten's own examples to show how variability has existed within the concept from the outset. Of course, the move to a more subjective understanding does run counter to Albert and Whetten's own stated desire to create a concept that allows for the empirical analysis of organizational identity.

Stensaker (2015) also grapples with the question of continuity and change. He holds that the essentialist (criteria-based) and strategic approaches to organizational identity must both be recognized in order to explain the complex dynamics within universities. His model explores the interaction between the type of change process (designed or organic) and its location (internal or external). Designed change results from a strategic orientation to organizational

identity while organic change emerges from a more essentialist approach. He concludes that organizational identity can then be conceptualized as integration (designed/internal), image (designed/external), interpretation (organic/internal), or innovation (organic/external).

The tensions inherent in the concept of organizational identity can be traced to the diverse theoretical backgrounds of those studying organizational identity/identification (Schultz, Hatch and Larsen, 2002; Balmer, 2001; Puusa, 2006). Whether the theorist's starting point is more focused on the individual or the social impacts how organizational identity is conceived. Ravasi and van Rekom (2003) have ranked the theoretical backgrounds influencing organizational identity research along the individual-society continuum, as illustrated in Figure 2.


Theoretical foundations of organizational identity research (Ravasi and van Rekom, 2003)	
Psychological  Sociological	Personal identity theory
	Social identity theory/Self-categorization theory
	Symbolic interactionism
	Communities of practice
	Shared mental models/Transactive memory theory
	Object relations theory
	Structuration theory
	Discourse analysis
	Narrative analysis
	Institutional theory
	Communication theory

Figure 2

Others have also worked to map out the theoretical landscape of the concept (Gioia, 1998; He and Brown, 2013). He and Brown suggest that organizational identity has been studied from the functionalist, social constructivist, psychodynamic and post-modern perspectives leading Whetten (2006, p. 220) to wonder if the concept itself is suffering from an identity crisis! The range of theoretical approaches has led to different researchers focusing on different levels of analysis and deep questions about how these relate (Ravasi and van Rekom, 2003). For example, can theories about identity formulated to account for individual experience be transposed to other levels of reality? If so, how? How do the different levels of reality interact? We will see below how the critical realist perspective inserts itself into the very heart of this debate.

Various methodologies have also been employed to study organizational identity. The study of narratives allows the researcher to access identity at the individual, organizational and social levels (Humphreys and Brown, 2002; Watson and Watson, 2012) and explore the phenomenon of organizational celebrity (Zavyalova, Pfarrer and Reger, 2017). Weerts, Freed and Morpew (2014) trace the concept of organizational identity within the context of American higher education. At each of the four stages they identify – story-telling, saga, strategy, and market responsiveness – different methodological considerations are employed, beginning with descriptive historical studies and moving onto ever more sophisticated qualitative and quantitative studies.

Organizational identity is a complex concept. In an effort to account for the multiple perspectives, Soenen and Moingeon (2002) have created an integrated framework based on the five facets of organizational identity: 1) professed, 2) projected, 3) experienced, 4) manifested, and, 5) attributed. In their view, the five facets constitute a dynamic system where “the five identity types co-exist and influence each other” (p. 26). While they recognize that theirs is not the last word on organizational identity, their framework does pull together some of the diverse strands of the discourse and enable a dynamic approach to organizational identity study (cf. Deslandes, 2015). Indeed, the category of ‘experienced identity’ provides the base for my first research question: *How do individuals working in Catholic colleges and universities experience the Catholic identity of their institutions?* However, the category lacks the capacity to account for how individuals might, in turn, impact the identity of the institution. I turn now to the literature relating to the critical realist study of organizations which helps me conceptualize the reciprocal relationship, or interplay, between individual and institutional identity.

Critical realism as a lens to study organizations

Sociologist Margaret Archer (1995) speaks of the “vexatious fact of society” (p. 1). Society is made up of individuals but cannot be reduced to them while, simultaneously, individuals are shaped by society but cannot be equated to it. In her view, “the problem of the relationship between individual and society was the central sociological problem from the beginning” (p. 1). Unfortunately, divergent ontological strands used to conceive social reality – be they focused on the individual, social, or an unsatisfactory ‘elision’ of the two – have led to an

impasse in social theorizing. Archer's realist social theory builds on Bhaskar's realist philosophy and proposes a morphogenetic approach to study the dynamic interplay between individual and society. She contends that, without resolving the ontological ambiguity underlying social theory, social theorists will not be able to resolve the theoretical conundrums they currently face when studying social phenomenon.

The concept of organizational identity is an example of how ontological ambiguity becomes problematic in our everyday practice of social theorizing. As Puusa (2006) suggests, "the fact that identity is a multilevel notion that can be explored at the individual-, group- and organization level and that the concept of organization identity has its origins in self-identity, has led to conceptual confusion" (p. 26). To date, the efforts to understand organizational identity/organizational identification have largely overlooked the underlying ontological debate. Working within distinct epistemological frameworks (Puusa, 2006; He and Brown, 2013), scholars have tended to either focus on the individual's interaction with the organization (organizational identification) or on the organizational structures that shape its identity (organizational identity). To use Archer's (1995) terms, the research has tended toward either an upwards or downwards conflation of this complex social reality, giving undue priority to either the individual or social structures (in this case organizations) without adequately accounting for the interplay between these different levels of reality. Recognizing this theoretical gridlock has led some authors to propose a critical realist approach to the study of organizations. I conclude this chapter by examining some of these emerging strategies.

Edwards, O'Mahoney and Vincent's (2014) volume, *Studying organizations using critical realism*, devotes a chapter to the impact of critical realism on identity studies. While focused more on the intersection between personal and social identity – following the organizational identification stream – the principles they outline could easily be transposed to the study of organizational identity itself. The critical realist view of stratification allows the principles of analysis to function at different levels of reality. In this case, the structural dimensions of organizational identity can be examined to see how they interact with the 'lower' strata of social and personal identity. Edwards, O'Mahoney and Vincent begin by outlining the limitations of social constructivism and social identity theory with regard to identity studies. They then show how key critical realist insights, including stratification and

emergence, depth ontology, entities and potential powers, structure and agency, historical materiality and criticality, impact identity studies. Of particular interest, is the critical realist notion of the interrelationship of structure and agency. Agency is a personally emergent power (Archer, 2003) that allows humans to impact social structures, choosing to either reproduce or transform them. Social structures, however, also have an ontological status that can, in turn, constrain or enable agential projects. A critical realist analysis allows for an inspection of how these two processes interact to produce social reality.

Critical realism has been proposed as a way forward within a number of different sub-disciplines of organizational studies. Hodgkinson and Starkey (2011; 2012) point in this direction within the fragmented discourse of business management studies. Parallels have been drawn between critical realism and the pragmatic, future oriented design science perspective (ibid). Hodgkinson (2013) specifically advocates the application of critical realist ontology in the study of organizational identity/identification. Furthermore, in Hodgkinson and Starkey's view, "critical realism is a powerful tool in understanding the interplay of structure and agency in design activity dependence, and in theorizing generative mechanisms. As such, it is well suited to theorize aspirations to a more humane and equal society" (2012, p. 606). There is an emphasis on the 'critical' dimension of critical realism.

Institutional logicians have also moved toward integrating critical realist perspectives into their theorizing. Concern arose among institutional theorists⁷ that the focus in organizational studies was tending to reify the organization and lose sight of the role of individual agents (Suddaby, Elsbach, Greenwood, Meyer and Zilber, 2010). They identified two 'black boxes' within the field: 1) inadequate explanations of how agents/actors impact organizations, and, 2) insufficient attention to how organizations relate to their institutional environments (Suddaby et al., 2010). Again, the fundamental question of how the different

⁷ Here we must note another shift in terminology with regard to the words 'institution' and 'organization'. Within this field of study, institution is a broader concept that includes values, meanings, and culture. Institutional environments can shape organizational reality. Suddaby et al. (2010) describe the institution as the independent variable and the organization as dependent.

levels of reality (micro, meso, and macro) interrelate is in play. This interplay is explored within the domain of institutional logics.

Delbridge and Edwards (2013, pp. 927-928) outline the value of the institutional logics approach:

Recent attempts to come to terms with the implications of institutional complexity, where several institutional logics are potentially in play at the same time, has returned attention to questions of agency and structure in institutional analyses. Drawing on Friedland and Alford's (1991) conception of society as an inter-institutional system, human agency is conceived in the context of 'individuals competing and negotiating, organizations in conflict and coordination, and institutions in contradiction and interdependence' (Friedland & Alford, 1991, pp. 240– 241). The concept of logics is valuable because it is built upon an integrated conceptual architecture that works at three levels of analysis (i.e. the individual, the organizational and the societal) (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008; Thornton, Ocasio & Lounsbury, 2012).

However, the need to examine the vertical interactions between levels of reality (Delbridge and Edwards, 2013) and deal with the ongoing "paradox of embedded agency" (Mutch, 2007, p. 1124) remains within the institutional logics perspective. Lok (2010) proposes "microlevel identity work" (p. 1330) as the mediating factor between individuals and the institutions to which they belong. Actors can identify with institutional logics by resisting them, accepting them, or by creating hybrids. The reproduction or transformation of institutional logics is thereby distributed, though perhaps unevenly, among all members of an organization. Creed, DeJordy and Lok (2010) go further to describe this identity work as 'embodied agency'. When individuals encounter contradictory institutional logics or when their personal identities are marginalized by an institutional logic operative within a group to which they belong, they can respond in various ways. They can internalize the contradiction, work to reconcile the contradiction, or claim a role and use it to become agents of change within the organization. We see here how the concern with the intersecting level of reality has become the focus.

Delbridge and Edwards (2013) make explicit the connection between institutional logics and the critical realist ontology. They propose that Archer's (1995) concept of analytical dualism allows the necessary elaboration of Friedland and Alford's (1991) institutional logics and return the agent to her/his rightful place within the discourse. They also draw from Archer's

(2003) work on reflexivity and the internal conversation to examine the specific ways in which agents, as communicative, autonomous, meta-, and fractured reflexives, can interact with the structures they encounter within organizational life. In Archer's (2003) view, communicative reflexives externalize their thoughts about the social world through conversation, autonomous reflexives keep this process to themselves, and meta-reflexives engage in double-loop thinking which includes reflection upon the reflexivity itself. Fractured reflexives, for any number of reasons, are not able to engage in such reflection about their own interaction with social reality. Mutch (2007) also works in this vein, connecting Archer's view of the autonomous reflexive with the concept of the institutional entrepreneur.

These examples demonstrate that critical realism has the potential to provide the ontological clarity needed to study organizations in a way that respects both the autonomy and interweaving of structure and agency. It is at this point, with this dynamic focus on structure and agency, that my final two research questions emerge: *2) How, and to what extent, do individuals act as agents of Catholic identity in their workplaces? What factors enable or hinder this process? 3) How do different institutional structures and histories impact how individuals experience the Catholic institutional identity of their workplaces?* Having laid bare the foundations of my research project - exploring the literature on Catholic identity, organizational identity and the emerging role of critical realism in organizational studies - I now turn to the methodological concerns that underpin my work and the methods/tools that I have employed to delve into my research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology, design and tools of discovery

In late December 2013, I travelled to northern Alberta for a friend's funeral. During the frigid, 16-hour drive, I traversed both geographical and psychological terrain. I was returning to the Indigenous community of Meander River (*Tache'*) where I had lived twelve years earlier. As I drove, I left behind my city, my province, my climate, my geography, and the trappings of my culture. However, I also gradually re-entered a very familiar territory. Reflecting on the journey, I wrote the following in my learning log:

As I re-entered the community, I re-encountered a completely different world-view, a different epistemology. This was a place where dreams are reliable sources of knowledge, the land and geography and all living things communicate truth, education is structured within family systems, elders are the knowledge keepers, story-telling is the primary way of communicating insight, and spirituality is integrated into every aspect of life, including education...

These few weeks have almost been surreal. I have been drawn into this other way of knowing by my personal experiences, my friendship, my grief, and by belonging, as a white person, to an Indigenous community... This is about friendship that allows entry in a profound (though always imperfect) way into another worldview. It's an honour, it's humbling, it's walking on sacred ground. (Learning log, 9 January 2014)

This experience of walking on sacred ground has informed not only the research paradigm I have espoused for this project but also my methodology. In this chapter, I will elaborate on my epistemic choices and their methodological consequences, share with you the process I have used to design the project, and, finally outline the specific tools I have employed to ethically enter the field, collect and analyse the data.

Epistemological commitments

Lincoln and Guba's (2005) four-fold typology of research paradigms – positivist, post-positivist, constructivist and critical – shaped my initial forays into epistemology. Early on, I would have located myself somewhere between the constructivist and critical camps. However, the experience I outlined above, as well as my ongoing coursework within the EdD, challenged my preconceptions. While the critical approach might be able to deal with

the emancipatory agendas related to Indigenous-Settler relations in Canada, it could not carry the broader experience of knowledge embedded in both the material (the land) and spiritual (unseen yet operative) landscapes that I so appreciate within the Indigenous worldview. A purely constructivist approach, on the other hand, would leave us with a recognition of our divergent worldviews but could not fully reconcile the experience of friendship that allowed us to transcend our differing worldviews and find common ground. It was only when I encountered critical realism that I found my ontological and epistemological home.

Critical realism has been variously described as an ontology (Edwards, O'Mahoney and Vincent, 2014), a philosophy of science (Kempster and Parry, 2011), and a meta-theory (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017). For my part, I have recognized in critical realism the operative paradigm through which I see the world. In short, critical realism is a specific worldview that seeks to bridge the ontological divides between the positivist/realist and the interpretivist/constructivist traditions. It is more than a mere 'happy medium' position, however. It allows for the explicit examination of the interplay between different levels or domains of reality. Critical realism contends that there is both an objective reality 'out there' and that our knowledge of that reality is socially constructed and partial. Within a stratified social world, generative causal mechanisms allow different levels of reality to impact and shape each other. As we saw in the previous chapter, this results in a rich capacity to explore the interplay between these different levels of reality, in particular the interrelationship of structure and agency. Since critical realism holds onto the notion of an objective (though often unfathomable) reality, it is able to argue for the relative merits of constructed accounts of that reality (Edwards et al., 2014). Some of our constructed accounts can be demonstrated to be more consonant with reality than others and thereby more freeing. As such, it is possible to propose emancipatory accounts of reality rather than falling into the extreme relativism of all things/views being equal. Returning to my example above, critical realism resonates with me because it carries within it this emancipatory agenda while allowing for an exploration of both seen and unseen realities. It moves us out of our epistemological silos and allows us to examine the intersections between our respective insights. Critical realism, therefore, weaves through my process of data analysis, a process which I introduce below and expand upon in subsequent chapters.

Methodological consequences

The question then arises about the methodological consequences of adopting a critical realist worldview. Indeed, critical realism, as an emerging paradigm, may be critiqued for remaining too abstract, lacking the capacity to tackle the real-world problems associated with social research. However, serious work is currently being done to develop methodology which is grounded in, and cognizant of, critical realist views of the world and society. In this section I outline the development of one such approach: critical grounded theory.

Kempster (2014) suggests that “critical realists place primacy on ontology and reflect a sense of bricolage – using a variety of methods to help reveal the real” (p. 99). Edwards, O’Mahoney and Vincent (2014) would also see critical realist research as being “necessarily inclusive” (p. 16) of different methodologies but go further to outline the particular characteristics of research arising from this worldview. For them, realist knowledge production:

- 1) presumes a meta-theoretical starting point (i.e. the stratified nature of reality, society as an open system, the centrality of emergence, or the causal impact or ‘reality’ of social structures);
- 2) works to uncover generative causal mechanisms that shape the empirical reality under study (depth ontology);
- 3) is inherently iterative, moving back and forth between the empirical and theoretical domains;
- 4) gives pride of place to abductive and retroductive⁸ reasoning;
- 5) explores horizontal, vertical and temporal relationships;
- 6) allows for theoretical pluralism;
- 7) requires the researcher to be explicitly reflexive throughout the research process;

⁸ Edwards, O’Mahoney and Vincent (2014) distinguish between abductive and retroductive reasoning in the following manner: “In their own research practice, critical realists recognizably use two distinct explanatory logics, moving from the empirical to the real through the use of abduction and retroduction. Put simply, abduction re-describes the observable everyday objects of social science (usually provided by interviewees or observational data) in an abstracted and more general sense in order to describe the sequence of causation that gives rise to observed regularities in the pattern of events... Retroduction, on the other hand, seeks to ascertain what the world (i.e. the broader context) must be like in order for the mechanisms we observe to be as they are and not otherwise. This often involves first identifying patterns over periods of time and in different contexts to creatively asking ‘what if?’ to identify often hidden causal mechanisms” (p. 18). The critical realist presumption remains that reality exists and that we can (fallibly) reach toward greater understanding of it by employing such logics.

8) is not value-neutral but works to promote an emancipatory agenda (Edwards, et al., 2014).

Adopting a critical realist framework has consequences for how we go about generating knowledge, as do all ontologies. What critical realism demands, through its focus on reflexivity, is that these ontological influences remain explicit throughout the research process.

Critical grounded theory emerges from the broader grounded theory tradition, a tradition that began with the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Through the development of grounded theory, they were seeking an inductive counterweight to the primarily deductive, positivist approach that dominated social science research at the time. However, their conceptualization of grounded theory retained positivist assumptions of what was considered 'good science'. It sought to remove any *a priori* judgments and theorizing about the data, encouraging researchers to remain objective and discover theory within the data itself. Traditional grounded theory highlighted the need for constant comparison between data and emerging theory. It also called for theoretical sampling to confirm or disprove provisional theories. Later, Charmaz (2006) revisited the epistemological underpinnings of grounded theory and mapped the emergence of constructivist grounded theory. A "constructivist approach places priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data" (p. 130). Individuals under study move from being passive subjects to active participants in the construction of new knowledge. Meanwhile, the subjectivity of the researcher is re-inserted into the picture. Both the views of the participants and the resulting theories are seen as social constructions. Reflexivity and attention to context, in order to ascertain what might be impacting this social construction of reality, are emphasized within constructivist grounded theory. We are now a short step away from the development of critical grounded theory (CGT).

Epistemological concerns led critical realist researchers to call for the development of critical grounded theory (Belfrage and Hauf, 2015, 2017; Kempster, 2014; Kempster and Parry, 2011; Oliver, 2012). These scholars seek within grounded theory the "third epistemological position of critical realism, between the naïve realism of Glaser and the radical constructivism of these recent contributions" (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017, p. 259). In

doing so, they draw aspects of both the positivist and constructivist traditions described above while adding insights of their own. For Belfrage and Hauf (2015), “the promise of CGT, as based on a critical realist foundation, suggests a method capable of overcoming the tendency within organisation and management scholarship, and for that matter beyond, to focus on either agency or structure and instead facilitate the study of the interdependencies between the two” (p. 331). This ability to explore the interplay between structure and agency makes critical grounded theory particularly suitable for my own research. The following discussion of the key characteristics of CGT will further elucidate my reasons for choosing this particular approach to my study of Catholic higher education institutions.

Critical grounded theory

As noted above, retroduction lies at the heart of critical grounded theory. Simply put, retroductive logic “means asking of observed phenomena the transcendental question ‘what must be true for this to be the case?’” (Oliver, 2012, p. 379). It “describes an ongoing two-way, spiral movement between the abstract and the concrete, between theoretical and empirical work, that involves both an interpretive and a causal dimension of explanation” (Belfrage and Hauf, 2015, pp. 334-335). Since retroduction serves as its operating system, CGT is necessarily iterative, engaging in ongoing conversation between theory and data and constantly alternating between ‘deskwork’ and fieldwork (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017). A particular phenomenon is explored by looking at how people experience it (empirical data), seeking the underlying causal powers that shape it (theory), and then showing how these forces work in a particular context (adapted from Kempster, 2014, p. 88). This retroductive interpretation of data therefore allows new theory to emerge and then be brought forward for further interaction with the real world, creating an ongoing conversation between the implicit and explicit dimensions of social reality. As I will illustrate below, this iterative conversation between theory and data has been evident throughout my own research project.

Critical grounded theory allows room for proto-theories to enter into the research process (Belfrage and Hauf, 2017). These do not determine the theories that might emerge from the data but they do point the researcher in a particular direction in her search for that data. Therefore, the “critical realist researcher will begin the process of data collection with at

least some idea of the *potential* mechanisms active in the empirical domain” (Edwards et al., 2014, p. 15). CGT neither demands that the researcher enter into the field as a *tabula rasa* nor that she bracket existing theory completely out of the research process. In my own research, as I outlined in the previous chapter, my research questions have been shaped by extant theories of Catholic identity, organizational identity and the meta-theory of critical realism itself.

CGT retains constructivist grounded theory’s concern for context. However, the critical realist defines context as the causal relations between structure and agency (Kempster, 2014). These causal mechanisms may vary from context to context making any theory emerging from CGT inherently provisional. Emerging CGT must be tested in other environments to see if the purported underlying causal mechanisms are indeed operating in other contexts. CGT continues to seek a theoretical elaboration of reality while accepting the provisional nature of our explanations of that reality. This attention to context fits well with my own research concerns, particularly the underlying question of whether CHEIs in Canada function in the same way as they do in other parts of the world. It allows me to explore how the structures and cultures in which these institutions are embedded shape individual capacity to exercise agency within them.

The ongoing dialogue between theory and data in CGT is made possible by the exercise of reflexivity on the part of the researcher. Through reflexivity, the researcher’s subjectivity is made explicit insofar as is possible. In my view, then, the conversation occurring within the CGT process actually goes three-ways between the empirical evidence gathered in the field, the theory (both extant and developing) and the subjectivity of the researcher. Moving this dialogue from the inner to the outer realm - allowing others to join in - is the central task of a CGT researcher. This happens within a particular project through the testing of emerging theory with respondents but it is also ongoing. The provisional nature of findings is foregrounded as research is disseminated and the conversation continues with the wider research community. Within CGT this sort of transparent reflexivity is an essential part of the research process.

Finally, as its name implies, CGT carries an emancipatory agenda. It seeks to reveal more accurate depictions of reality in order to free humanity from constraining or unjust

narratives that justify and shape unjust social structures. This emancipatory agenda means that I attend to issues of justice/injustice within my own research context. I seek to hear those voices that would not otherwise be heard in the discourse on Catholic identity. I ask questions 'from below' while still attending to those more powerful voices 'from above'. Within in the Canadian context, I also seek to locate my specific research project within the larger social concerns at play, namely the *Calls to action* as put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015). These *Calls to action* and the subsequent principles adopted by Universities Canada (29 June 2015), call for the redress of historical injustices toward Indigenous peoples of Canada, the closing of the education gap between Indigenous and Settler Canadians, and the transformation of institutional structures to include Indigenous knowledge and worldviews.

Integrating the characteristics of CGT that I have just described, both Kempster and Parry (2011) and Belfrage and Hauf (2017) outline the steps for implementing this mode of research. I offer these for comparison in Figure 3 below. Both use proto-theories, recognize the iterative nature of CGT, and name the need to test emerging theory. Kempster and Parry (2011) are more explicit about the importance of returning to respondents with initial theories being developed. Indeed, in their own research they develop causal maps, which they then return to the participants for comment (Kempster, 2014). Belfrage and Hauf (2017) emphasize the fact that CGT is meant to help solve specific social problems and the back and forth dynamic between 'fieldwork and deskwork' that flows throughout the process. I draw from both these approaches in my own exercise of CGT within the context of this project.

Critical grounded theory fits with my personal commitments and concerns as a researcher. However, it would be overstating the case to say that I had designed this research project with the operating manual of CGT in mind. Again, the iterative and downright messy nature of social research has always been at play. I initially hesitated to adopt grounded theory as an approach because I understood it to be limited to its earlier positivist manifestations. I began working on my project using a generally qualitative framework, seeking to refine my research questions and find ways to hear the voices of those working in CHEIs. It is only later that I found my methodological home within the critical school of grounded theory. I am

Steps for engaging in CGT	
Kempster and Parry (2011)	Belfrage and Hauf (2017)
Collect context-rich data; Begin by being aware of the stratified nature of reality and the fact that empirical data may be influenced by underlying causal mechanisms; Draw on ideas of extant knowledge; Generate explanations; Suggest a grounded theory and test it with respondents; Offer theory up for critique by the wider research community.	Name the social problem; Develop proto-theories; Create initial conceptualizations of the process being explored; Engage in continuous cycles of fieldwork and deskwork; Offer a grounded conceptualization of the process under study; Engage in further fieldwork and deskwork; Offer a grounded re-conceptualization of the process; Seek critical reflections on the theory; Offer a tentative CGT.

Figure 3

also aware that I am breaking relatively new ground by applying CGT in the field of higher education research. Those currently developing CGT come from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Oliver (2012) is developing CGT within the discipline of social work, Belfrage and Hauf (2015, 2017) work in the area of management and political science, while Kempster and Parry (2011, 2017) focus on leadership research. In my view, however, CGT also offers a promising way to develop theory and enhance practice within higher education. It allows for an exploration of the particular interaction between structure and agency within higher education institutions. Having set up my tent in this methodological space, I now elaborate on how I went about designing this project and the specific methods and tools I have used to ethically enter the field, collect and analyse the data.

Research design

I set about designing this research project with the help of Maxwell's (2013), *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. This approach enshrined an iterative and reflexive dynamic into my work for the very beginning, a fact that would later stand me in good stead

as I developed my CGT approach. In Maxwell's view, research questions form the hub of any research design. Flowing from, and interacting with, the research questions are the project's goals, conceptual context, methods and concerns about validity. Using exercises drawn from Maxwell's text, I was able to develop a researcher identity memo, create a concept map (Figure 4), draft my research questions and begin to imagine how a dynamic flow could be created between these questions and other dimensions of a research project (Figure 5). Throughout this process I drew heavily from the learning logs that I had compiled throughout the course component of the EdD.

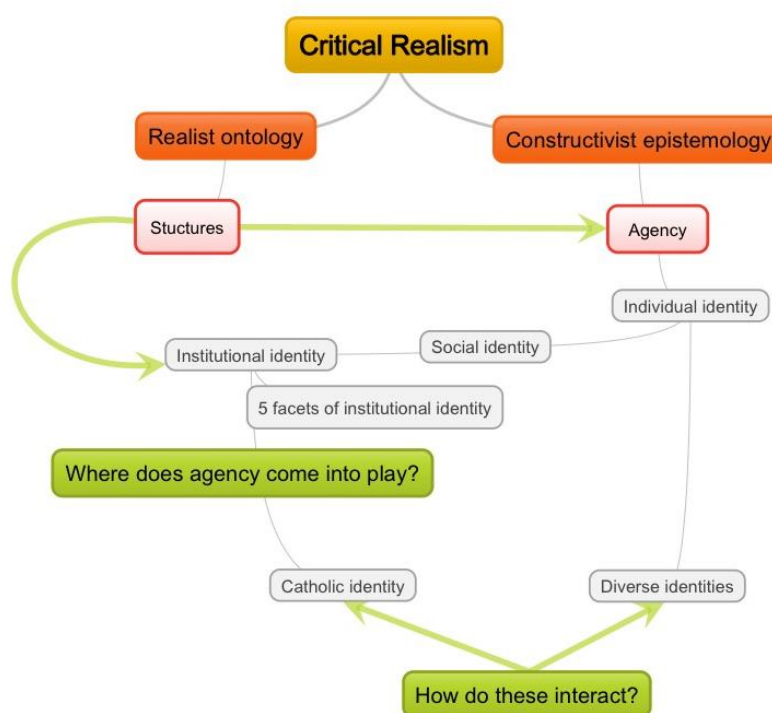


Figure 4: Early concept map of my research project

While some aspects of my earlier conceptualizations of the project have remained intact, others have evolved, particularly with regard to methodology. Nevertheless, this interactive approach allowed me to find purchase on the project fairly quickly, connecting the reflexive dimension of the EdD coursework to the nuts and bolts of research design.

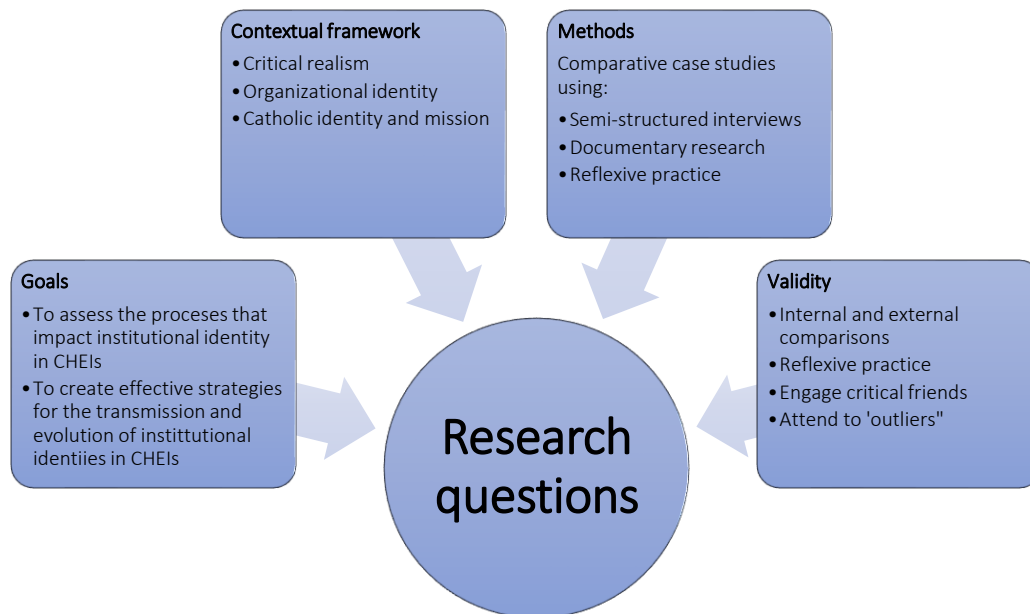


Figure 5: Maxwell's (2013) interactive model of qualitative research design

Before moving onto further specifics, I would like to take a moment to revisit my use of certain terms as I entered into the field. As I noted in the literature review, there is much debate about the concept of organizational/institutional identity and its relationship to concepts like organizational culture, image, logics, and so forth. For the purpose of this research, I adopted Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition of organizational identity - with its focus on core, distinct and enduring features - as a working definition. I recognize the limitations of this definition, in particular its tendency to reflect a static notion of organizational identity. However, the advantage of this approach is that it allowed me to 'grab hold' of the concept and begin a conversation about organizational identity even if the ensuing conversation later demonstrated that the original definition was lacking. I also treated organizational and institutional identity as interchangeable and used these as umbrella concepts that included the other concepts like culture and image. Again, these were provisional conceptualizations that allowed for a dialogue on the topic to begin.

Ethically entering the field, collecting and analysing the data

I consciously use this rather cumbersome subtitle to describe this section that normally would simply be entitled, 'methods'. I do so because, at this point, I am departing from the traditional, linear model of reporting on social research and am entering into the iterative, interactive dimension that more accurately portrays my actual research process. Within this

mode, ethics, data collection and data analysis are intertwined and move forward together, each mutually impacting the other.

Ethical concerns are woven into the fabric of this project. I was informed in my understanding of research ethics by Hall's (2014) work on the ethics of relational responsibility. As a "non-Indigenous PhD candidate working in an intercultural space with Indigenous research participants" (p. 329), Hall was forced to move beyond ethics as merely procedural to a more robust understanding of ethics as a mode of just relations between research participants and researcher. This view entails recognition of the inherently uneven power relations that exist between the researcher and those researched, an unevenness that is exacerbated in a cross-cultural, colonial context. While my own research did not take me into an explicitly cross-cultural environment – I am very much an insider researcher – I am nevertheless called to be attentive the role of power differentials within my own potential and actual interactions with respondents. Insider research also carries its own set of ethical considerations. As Coghlan and Brannick (2014) point out, the insider researcher "has to balance their organizational roles, which they usually hope will continue, with the additional demands of a role of inquiry and research. Insider action researchers need to be aware of how their roles influence how they view their world as well as how they are perceived by others, and to be able to make choices as to when to step into and out of each of the multiple roles that they hold" (p. xiv). It is out of this very concern that I ultimately chose not to engage in this research within my own home institution. My role as Director of Mission and Ministry would shape any interaction on the topic of Catholic institutional identity that I might have with local respondents. I did carry my role with me, by reputation, to my chosen research sites. However, I did not discern any unease on the part of my respondents due to my role. On the contrary, the novelty of my role served to open pathways of conversation.

I also entered into this research project aware that it was bordering on an area of sensitive research: religiosity. In Western culture at this moment in history, religiosity is generally held to be a private matter. While I was not intending to address personal religiosity directly – I was more concerned about the religious dimension of the institution – I suspected that my research would prompt reflections on how personal religious belief, or lack thereof, impacts individual relationships with an explicitly religious institution. In order to deal with

this ethical concern, I addressed the issue directly in my *Participant information sheet* (Appendix A). In fact, personal religiosity did factor in the interviews but the respondents were able to put the topic forward on their own terms.

Given the relatively small number of CHEIs in Canada, maintaining institutional and individual anonymity was also a concern. At first, I wanted to focus my research on the Western Canadian context but, with the help of my supervisors, soon realized that the pool was too small for me to assure institutional anonymity. Without institutional anonymity, individual anonymity would also be jeopardized since often only one person fills a specific role within these small institutions. I therefore expanded my study to include all CHEIs within English-speaking Canada so that I would have multiple institutions of a specific type within my overall sample population.

At the individual level, both confidentiality and anonymity were assured. This was communicated both on the *Participant information sheet* and the *Participant consent form* (Appendix B). Participants were assured that their names and identifying characteristics would be removed from the transcripts and they were given the opportunity to review their transcripts prior to data analysis. No one within his or her own institution or elsewhere would know that they participated in the research. It is worth noting here that adopting a critical grounded theory approach actually helps assure participant anonymity and confidentiality (Oliver, 2012) since the theory building process does not depend directly on participant-generated discourse but is extrapolated from it. I nevertheless maintain the commitment to participant anonymity in any part of the interviews that I include in my reporting. The data (digital audio and transcripts) has also been kept in secure locations, either a password protected computer or a locked drawer.

In keeping with a relational approach to research ethics, I kept my communications with both gatekeepers and participants clear, timely and respectful. I made initial contact with the institutions through their presidents. In one case, the president continued to serve as my primary contact while, in the other cases, the president delegated the role to another senior administrator charged with academic research. I requested and received letters of approval from each of the institutions involved. I also engaged in the local ethics review processes as outlined by the gatekeepers. In one case, the local ethics review process

deemed the University of Liverpool ethics approval (Appendix C) sufficient. In the other two cases, my project was fully assessed by local review boards subsequent to the University of Liverpool approval.

I chose three different sites to represent each of the three structures of CHEIs in English-speaking Canada: federated, affiliated and stand-alone. I also intentionally approached institutions that had been founded by different religious communities or entities. Working with my local contacts, I scheduled two days in each location to conduct semi-structured interviews. These contacts then sent out an email inviting participants on my behalf (Appendix D). This indirect approach protected potential respondents' personal contact information and the email highlighted the voluntary nature of their participation. In two of the three cases, this first request generated enough volunteers to fulfil my sampling criteria. In the third instance, I sent a follow-up email through my institutional contact to connect with an appropriate number of respondents.

I used a purposive sampling technique to ensure that my sample demonstrated both homogeneity and heterogeneity (Robinson, 2014). The group needed to be homogenous enough to be speaking to a similar experience while still being heterogeneous enough to allow for internal comparison. I sought five participants at each site, each representing a different role and social location within the organization: 1) front-line staff person (i.e. student services or campus ministry personnel); 2) support staff; 3) junior faculty; 4) senior faculty; and, 5) someone in management/administration. My final sample generally followed this principle though, in some cases, individuals played dual roles and were chosen on the basis of only one of these. In one instance, a sixth individual volunteered to speak to me while I was on site leaving me with a sample of 16 participants in total. My sample includes an equal number of men and women. Figure 6 charts the characteristics of individuals I interviewed. Once participants had been selected, I immediately sent them a copy of the *Participant information sheet* and *Participant consent form* via email.

You will note that I did not sample for religious background. There are two reasons for this. First, I wanted to be as inclusive of diverging viewpoints as possible. I did not want participation to appear to be predicated on religious affiliation. Second, accessing the information about religious affiliation would have been impossible without involving

someone on-site in the participant selection process. This would have, as a result, hampered my ability to offer anonymity to those I interviewed. This choice did have consequences. While I did connect with people representing a range of different religious backgrounds, I only heard from people who generally felt positive about the institutional identity of their workplace. I was not able to access the stories of those who might feel alienated by the explicitly Catholic identity of their college or university. In retrospect, I might have been able to get around this limitation by using a snowball sampling technique and asking early respondents to identify others within their institution who might have views differing from their own on the topic. This would have hampered the voluntary nature of the process, however. In the end, I included a question in my interview protocol that asked the respondents to speculate on why they felt some people might choose to engage more than others with the Catholic identity of their institution. This was an imperfect technique and points to one of the limitations of my study.

Pseudonym	Role	Years of service
Adam	Campus ministry; faculty	11 years
Bernard	Senior Faculty	34 years
Carrie	Front-line staff	5 years
Diane	Management/Administration	Less than 1 year
Edward	Support staff	1 year
Fiona	Senior Faculty	12 years
Gwen	Front-line staff	3 years
Harold	Support Staff	35 years
Isabelle	Management/Administration	14 years on and off
James	Senior Faculty/Administration	19 years
Kent	Administration	19 years
Lawrence	Senior Faculty	19 years
Margaret	Front-line Staff	9 months
Nolan	Junior Faculty	3 years
Ollie	Junior Faculty	7 years
Penny	Support Staff	10 months

Figure 6: Participant characteristics

Prior to conducting the interviews on-site, I piloted my interview protocol within my local institution. As a result, minor revisions were made to the protocol to increase the clarity and flow of my questions. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted at each of the three sites between February and April 2017. All interviews were done in person at a location

chosen by the respondent. This meant that interviews were conducted in offices, boardrooms and coffee shops, wherever the respondent felt most comfortable engaging in the conversation. At the beginning of each interview, I reviewed the *Participant information sheet* and *Participant consent form*, taking the time to sign the latter at that point. The semi-structured nature of the interview meant that the conversation approximated a natural flow. However, I did trigger conversation pathways by giving participants an overview of the topic under discussion at the beginning of the interview and by posing questions that roughly approximated those on my interview protocol (Appendix E). In general, the conversation began by locating the participant within their organization, moved on to their perception and experience of its institutional identity, and concluded with a reflection on the intersection between their own personal identities/roles with that of their workplace. Each interview began with informal conversation prior to the recorded interview and often continued on after the digital recorder was turned off. The length of the recorded interviews ranged from 23 to 60 minutes in length with the average length of 40 minutes each. Following each interview, I wrote field notes with my impressions, reactions and initial thoughts about each encounter. I also sent respondents a thank you card within two days of our meeting.

Within a critical grounded theory approach, data analysis begins at the moment of the initial encounter with the participant. Indeed, that was the case as I reflected on each interview and wrote up my field notes. However, the genius of grounded theory is that it offers a systematic way of thinking about the data. Drawing from both Kempster and Parry (2011) and Belfrage and Hauf (2017), I created my own 10-step approach to systematically analyse my data. I now look at each of these in turn:

- 1. Write field notes (memos) immediately after each interview:** I spent time on each interview day writing up my initial impressions of the interviews, reflecting on my own personal, sometimes emotional, responses to their content, and flagging any further lines of inquiry that emerged within the conversations. From the outset, I noticed that individuals named multiple understandings of 'Catholic identity' and were extremely dedicated to the mission of their institutions. I also noted that the physical environment was often mentioned in relation to institutional identity. This was a new insight for me so I included this topic in

subsequent interviews. Again, the intertwined nature of data collection and analysis was evident from the very beginning of my time in the field.

- 2. Transcribe the interviews in order to get an overall feel (*gestalt*) of the interview:** I transcribed each interview myself using InqScribe software. This software allowed me to customize my keyboard and pause the digital recording as necessary while I typed. This was a time-consuming and hands-on approach to transcription. However, spending time with the interviews in this way allowed me to immerse myself in them as a whole body of data. I did the bulk of the transcription at the same time which maximized my ability to get an overall feel for the content of the interviews. I then returned the transcripts to the participants to ensure that I had accurately transcribed their comments and adequately anonymized their interviews. Three participants returned the transcripts with minor adjustments for clarity and anonymity.
- 3. Listen to the audio recordings again as a whole and write further memos on each:** After transcribing the interviews, I let them sit for a while as I returned to the literature. With the broad corpus of data in the back of my mind, I was better able to assess which bodies of literature were most relevant to my research topic. Again, this is a departure from the traditional, more linear, approach to the literature. The iterative, back and forth, conversation between the literature and data was imbedded into the data analysis phase and allowed me to further explore areas of the literature that resonated with the voices I heard in the field. After a period of time had elapsed, I returned to the audio recordings and wrote up further memos in their regard.
- 4. Using NVivo software, code interviews and memos by developing unit-by-unit nodes using gerunds (Charmaz, 2006; Hycner, 1985; Kempster (2014):** At this point, I went back to the transcripts and, using NVivo, created nodes (codes) which identified units of meaning within the transcripts. Following Charmaz (2006), I used gerunds whenever possible to name these units of meaning. This allowed for a more acute sense of the active processes in play within the data. However, consistent with the research process as a whole, this stage was not neatly linear. Since NVivo allows for multiple nodes to be created in relationship to the same data, I was soon able to flag recurring themes within the data. I therefore coded at

the unit-by-unit and thematic level largely at the same time. As a side note, my need for visual representation of the data also resulted in my walls being covered with multi-coloured post-it notes that represented themes, reflections and insights related to the data. My own reflexive process was fully engaged at this stage of my work with the data.

- 5. Identify themes emerging from the coded transcripts:** Given the fruitful nature of Step #4, I was then able to create list of themes that recurred throughout the body of data (Appendix F). These themes would later become the raw material for my theory building activity. They represented views that may not have been articulated in each individual interview but which seemed to describe how those I interviewed experienced the institutional identity of their workplaces as a whole. Within the ethos of CGT, however, these would need to be tested in the real world leading me to my next step.
- 6. Return this list of themes to respondents to test for resonance with their experience:** I prepared the list of themes and an explanatory letter, asking my respondents to highlight the themes that resonated with their own experience. Prior to sending this letter out to my actual respondents, I sent it to the two individuals with whom I had piloted my original interview protocol. I wanted to see if the instructions and themes were clearly articulated. Both of these individuals responded positively. I then emailed the letter to my participants. 10 of the 16 participants returned a highlighted list of themes. Two suggested that they would be more comfortable with a broader language regarding the Catholic nature of their institutions, preferring to refer to their workplaces as more broadly Christian while working out of a Catholic heritage. One participant explained that the statements she did not highlight were likely true but simply not part of her personal experience at the institution. One participant's email was no longer in service so I presumed that she was no longer in the employ of the institution. Since I indicated in my letter that no response would be interpreted as support for the themes as articulated, I presume that the remaining 5 participants that did not respond believe this to be the case. Overall, the process of returning the themes to the participants assured me that these themes did indeed represent their experience in the real world. It gave me the confidence to then begin to use these

themes to build theory in response to my initial research questions.

- 7. Generate theory arising from these tested themes using the retroductive question: What needs to be true for this to be the case?** This theorizing seeks to expose underlying generative causal mechanisms within the critical realist sense. Looking at the themes, I asked myself the above question: What needs to be true for this to be the case? In true CGT fashion, I began to build theory from the ground up, firmly rooted in the affirmative responses I had received from my participants regarding the themes I had identified.
- 8. Engage in initial theoretical elaboration by putting themes in dialogue with the literature and re-visiting proto-theories:** I brought the validated themes, literature and my own reflexive process back into dialogue with each other. I sought to create new explanatory models to increase the understanding of experienced institutional identity with CHEIs. In particular, I brought the data into conversation with Archer's (1995) realist social theory and her subsequent (Archer, 2003) work on reflexivity. This resulted in the theory that I will outline in Chapters 4-6. In Chapter 4, I will look at how structures and cultures shape the experience of institutional identity within CHEIs. In Chapter 5, I will look at Archer's morphogenetic sequence and postulate a theory of how individuals come to exercise agency with regard to their institution's identity by becoming identity-carriers. In Chapter 6, I will explore how different types of reflexivity shape how this agency is enacted, with a particular focus on the role of mission officer.
- 9. Engage in comparative analysis across categories of data:** Since I was most interested in the interplay between structure and agency within my data, I analysed it to see if the different structures of institutions actually impacted how my respondents experienced their institutional identities. I came to a surprising conclusion that the difference between federated/affiliated and stand-alone institutions was less marked than I expected. This finding, which I will elaborate upon in Chapter 4, also shaped the theory I propose with regard to the nature of institutional identity within CHEIs.
- 10. Propose critical grounded theory for external critique:** Within CGT, the process of theory building and elaboration continues beyond any particular cycle of research. I now offer the provisional theories I have created for external review and critique,

first to those who will examine this dissertation and, subsequently, to those who are actively engaged in the work of CHEIs in Canada. I will offer concrete ways of continuing this conversation with these practitioners in Chapter 7.

This approach endeavours to respect the principles of critical grounded theory. It outlines an iterative relationship between the data and the literature, engages in a reflexive stance and theorizes vertically using retroductive logic. It also maintains grounded theory's insight about the importance of theoretical sampling. By returning to my participants with my initial themes, I am testing my analysis in the real world and, thereby, increasing the validity of my truth claims. Finally, this approach initiates an ongoing conversation with the wider community, opening my emerging theory to further refining and testing in the future.

I would like to raise one final concern within this section, the question of research validity within CGT. As Maxwell's (2013) model pointed out, questions of validity relate directly back to the research questions. Simply put, validity relates to whether or not a research project has accomplished what it has set out to do. Different research paradigms answer this question differently however. Kempster and Parry (2011) explore validity, reliability and generalizability with regard to critical realist grounded theory. They suggest that critical realists take a rather pragmatic approach to testing their truth claims. Rather than claiming that a theory can be broadly generalized, they hope that a "theory grasps enough of reality to allow us to do things with it" (p. 112). Realizing that social contexts differ, theories generated through CGT must always be tested in different contexts to see to what extent they apply. Therefore, two criteria of validity are put forward: 1) practical adequacy, and, 2) plausibility. I believe that I have dealt with the criterion of plausibility by returning to my respondents with my emerging list of themes (step #6) and the criterion of practical adequacy, in part, by testing to see if my emerging theories 'work' across different sub-categories within my own data (step #9). The process of offering my emerging theory back to both the research community and those most directly involved in the practice of Catholic higher education, will further support the criterion of practical adequacy. Perhaps the more broadly used terms in this regard are relatability and reliability. With this research, I seek not to have the last word on institutional identity with CHEIs. Rather, I hope to offer theories to which practitioners in the field can relate and put to practical use. I also seek to ensure that my own research methods are transparent enough to be judged reliable.

In this chapter, I have sought to make explicit my epistemological commitments and the consequences of these on my methodological choices. I have introduced critical grounded theory and demonstrated how I have applied this approach within my own higher education research. I have shared with you the process I used to design the project and then ethically enter the field, collect and analyse the data. Finally, I have illustrated the iterative dynamic that has infused my analysis of the data. I now invite you to an extended discussion of the theories that have emerged through this process of sustained conversation between the literature, the people I interviewed, and me, the researcher.

Chapter 4: 'Balancing acts' and the negotiation of structures/cultures

“Are we too Catholic, are we not Catholic enough, are we...?” (Kent, administrator)

As I wrap up my last interview, Kent poses this question, ending with a pregnant pause and leaving it unanswered. This silence speaks volumes. Kent is a senior administrator with 19 years' experience at his institution. He sees himself as being “deeply intertwined” with his organization. In my view, he exemplifies the profound commitment to Catholic higher education typical of the people I interviewed. His question, however, points to the unresolved tension he experiences within his institution. It underlines the fact that, for him, its Catholic institutional identity is not a *fait accompli* but rather a continual work in progress, a search for a space that does justice to its espoused Catholic identity without either being ‘too Catholic’ or ‘not Catholic enough’. His question not only sums up his own interview but also articulates a key theme arising from the interviews as a whole. In answer to my initial research question: “How do individuals working in Catholic colleges and universities experience the Catholic identity of their institutions?”, the short answer is: “As a balancing act.”

This chapter explores how those I interviewed experience this balancing act in their day to day work. It illustrates the unique constellation of structural and cultural factors that shape the institutional identities of Catholic higher education institutions (CHEIs) in Canada. Referring to Archer's (1995), *Realist social theory: The morphogenetic approach*, I propose an explanatory framework to account for the inherent and creative tension evident in the experiences shared by my respondents. I show how CHEIs are shaped by two primary structures and cultures – ecclesial and academic - that can either conflict or complement each other. Located at the nexus of academic and ecclesial structures and cultures, people working within these institutions constantly need to negotiate between these two dominant sets of forces that shape their institutions' identities. They must evaluate which aspects of their institutions' identities need to be expressed, and to what extent these need to be enacted, at any given time. Far from being static, Catholic institutional identity is experienced as a complex and ongoing process of institutional definition. Before moving further into this theoretical discussion, however, let us examine this balancing act more closely through the eyes and first-hand experiences of those I interviewed.

Living on a tight-rope

Margaret is relatively new to her organization. She has nevertheless been quickly initiated into the experience of walking on the tight-rope of her institution's identity. When asked what it is like for her to work at a CHEI, she immediately responds by naming the two sets of forces that shape her experience:

... we should make the distinction that it's based on Catholic tradition, it's also a liberal arts [institution], so we live that duality and that sometimes presents itself with real celebrations and, as you might imagine, also some challenges at points. For me personally, I was drawn to that. I'm a woman of strong spiritual faith and so I welcomed that possibility of functioning as what I would call a whole person in my professional role and that has indeed proved itself to be true. So, I embrace the celebrations, and the tensions too, because they're important conversations of how much does the catholicity, the whole Christian heritage, inform what we offer and where is it that we are also more open and more pluralistic in our plans. So, as you can probably think, it's fodder for many good conversations. And, really, I think it's a discerning process. (Margaret, front-line staff)

Margaret not only names the dual nature of her institution's identity but also points to two key strategies that are used to negotiate this duality: dialogue and discernment. Both these activities highlight the continual co-creation of identity that is part and parcel of working within a CHEI. Since these institutions seek to live at the intersection between the structures and cultures of both the church and the academy, they are constantly discussing and discerning how to tread the line of these two accountabilities.

Along with dialogue and discernment, however, Margaret points to 'celebrations' and 'challenges' within her experience. Both of these are evident in the experiences of other respondents as well. On the positive side of the equation, they name many reasons to celebrate the very balancing act in which they find themselves. For example, James celebrates the fact that they are able to create communities that are simultaneously inclusive and willing to engage the whole person:

... what people feel when they come here is a sense of community, they feel that right away, whether or not they're Catholic, there's a sense of community there. They feel care of the person, so they're not treated like a commodity... So, mind, body, spirit, it's in our mission statement to form the whole person intellectually, socially and spiritually, for service to society. So that holistic education is something that we're committed to and that the students appreciate. (James, administrator)

Similarly, Lawrence, a faculty member with 19 years' experience, celebrates his institution's ability to serve as a "meeting ground for people of all traditions and no particular religious tradition to talk about their practice in life, or what they want to pursue to enhance community building and to contribute to society at large". While creating inclusive communities and delivering holistic education, both James and Lawrence underline the importance of preparing students for service to society. This alone, however, would not be enough to distinguish theirs from other higher education institutions. What makes CHEIs unique is their ability to bring questions of faith and spirituality into the equation. Living at the intersection of the church and academy, in their view, increases the breadth of the conversation. Gwen, working as a staff person who engages with students on the front-lines, also welcomes "the opportunity to open the door to a conversation on a spiritual level with students." It's not something that she would initiate but "if that's where the student is coming from then I feel like it's totally appropriate for me to go there with them" (Gwen). Diane, an administrator, highlights this breadth of conversation as a distinguishing feature of her institution, stating that "it's different in terms of the inclusion of topics of spirituality, in terms of courses, in terms of invited speakers, [and] in terms of discourse". An identity worth celebrating is derived from the very process of negotiating the balancing act. Walking this tight-rope between academic and ecclesial structures/cultures allows them to create a dialogic space where, to echo St. Anselm (1033-1109), 'faith can seek understanding'. But, as Margaret so insightfully points out, being located at the juncture of these two sets of structures/cultures can also be challenging.

Edward is a relatively new member of the support staff at his institution and, coincidentally, a new Catholic. He is concerned by the lack of a cohesive sense of purpose and identity that he sees within his CHEI:

... coming here to a Catholic college where I had the understanding that everyone has the same faith and background ... I expected a lot less politics, like office politics, internal politics, politics between management and board, board members. It's kind of a disappointing that everybody is not on the same page as to how the College should either be managed, to proceed. I personally feel that if we had [a] unifying team either through academics or administration, campus ministry, institutional development, that this College would be able to do a lot more and to accomplish a lot more ... (Edward, support staff)

The balancing act is experienced as a lack of shared purpose and common cause, exacerbated by his realization that not everyone working within a Catholic institution is personally Catholic. He yearns for a more cohesive sense of internal institutional identity.

The negotiated nature of Catholic institutional identity can also create tension with how CHEIs relate to external bodies and stakeholders. Sometimes this conflict engages the institutional church. Kent describes this experience:

We've had a couple of key moments where people in positions of authority have come out and made very strong statements about Catholic identity in ways that the [CHEI] community rejected and really had trouble with. And, there was a realization that that person's view did not represent what we felt we did as a community. (Kent, administrator)

Sometimes this conflict is related to the university with which the CHEI is federated. Bernard, a senior faculty member with 34 years of experience, skirts around the tension involved in getting new courses approved by their partner university:

We could possibly offer other areas of courses. The university basically approves what we want to offer as long as nobody else feels like we're cutting into their turf, stealing what they're doing, taking away students from them. (Bernard, senior faculty)

He also wishes that they could offer a major in Theology but cites a lack of political will to negotiate this with the wider campus. Here he is experiencing some of the constraints that

are created by his own institution's relationship with the larger university. He is trying to assess just how far the explicitly Catholic identity of his own institution can reach into the academic identity of the wider institution. While not openly conflictual, the balancing act is nevertheless evident in Bernard's responses.

The tension associated with the balancing act is sometimes felt with regard to what Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) refer to as 'construed external image'. Construed external image is concerned with how people within an organization think they are perceived by those on the outside. In terms of CHEIs, construed external image is particularly complex since people worry about how their institutions are perceived by diverse external stakeholders who hold divergent understandings of what CHEIs should offer. Gwen, for example, laments how they sometimes have to soft-sell their Catholic identity to prospective students:

My experience has been that, from a marketing perspective, the Catholic identity of the College is often seen as being unattractive to the general population. So, students are not looking for a religiously identified educational experience and I find that a little bit frustrating because that was certainly what I was looking for when I was shopping for an educational experience. (Gwen, front-line staff person)

Sometimes the discomfort comes from the opposite direction with a worry that prospective donors might not think that the CHEI is Catholic enough:

... we have a continuum of people who are looking at the small 'c' catholic - in the sense of catholic as in wholeness - and for most people that's what they think of, and it's the Catholic intellectual tradition, and certainly the Catholic tradition, the Catholic social justice tradition. It's not about dogma, and for some few people it might be, and that's where there is a tension sometimes. The donors, some of the donors, tend perhaps to be more on the dogma side, or at least that's the perception. I don't know if that's accurate or not. (Kent, administrator)

However, as Kent's last statement illustrates, it is no wonder that the 'construed external image' may be quite fuzzy given the range of what people within CHEIs understand the word c/Catholic to mean.

As we will further elaborate upon below, faculty find themselves at the very heart of the balancing act. For them, this can mean negotiating a complicated dance that allows space to both transmit the Catholic tradition and be critical of it. Nolan, a relatively new faculty member, who is himself fully steeped in the Catholic intellectual tradition, asks:

... what is my role in the classroom, am I meant to articulate the position of the Catholic church so students can understand it or am I trying to be more critical of the tradition? And, for me, I'm trying to strike a balance of both... So, and sometimes, issues come up where students are very critical of the tradition and I want to make sure that those students who perhaps are critical, they have a way in which they can do that responsibly in the classroom. So, a lot of my classroom lectures quickly become seminar discussions, which the students tell me they greatly value, that they actually have a forum that they can be openly questioning the tradition but in a way that's responsible and is faithful to it as well... But I know I have students who often come to me in office hours or I get emails where some students feel that I'm being too critical of the tradition, and I have students in the same class tell me that I'm being too uncritical. So, the fact that I'm being criticized from both sides tells me I have it just about right. (Nolan, junior faculty)

Nolan finds himself in a 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' kind of situation. However, he takes the fact that he is being criticized from all sides as a sign that he is indeed managing to walk upright on the tight-rope of the institutional identity he incarnates in his classroom!

The complexity of this balancing act is matched only by the dedication to the ethos of Catholic higher education on the part of those I interviewed. Coming from diverse religious traditions and experiences themselves, and playing different roles, they hold in common a willingness to engage in the dialogue and discernment necessary to successfully negotiate the balancing act. But, why is this experience of walking the tight-rope so intense? Archer's (1995) realist social theory helps shed light on this question.

[Realist social theory and the morphogenetic sequence](#)

Theory can serve as a paradigm, a lens, or an explanatory framework (O'Donnell, 2017).

Within this project I recognize that I have used theory in all three of these modalities. The

first part of my dissertation outlined how my project as a whole has been shaped by the critical realist *paradigm* in which I have found my ontological/epistemological home. I have been drawn to this worldview because of its capacity to account for the real impact of social structures while still allowing for individual freedom to interpret, engage and influence those same structures. I have also used critical realism as a *lens* through which I looked at my own research context. It helped shape my research questions by alerting me to the vibrant dynamic between structure and agency in our social world. It also revealed a methodology – critical grounded theory – that, I argue, serves my research questions well. In this second part of my dissertation, I now use critical realist social theory, largely derived from the work of Archer (1995, 2000, 2003, 2010, 2012), as an *explanatory framework*. Archer's models of social interaction are brought into dialogue with the themes that have emerged from my data in order to boost their explanatory potential and connect them with wider discourse about how institutions work. This approach remains consistent with the ethos of critical grounded theory since the data itself has led the way to the specific areas of Archer's theory that resonate best with the experiences of my respondents. It also illustrates the constantly iterative nature of this type of social research, the back and forth motion between theory and data that makes it so vital. Indeed, the next three chapters chronicle the three-way conversation that has taken place between the respondents (data), literature (theory), and me as the researcher - a conversation that I imagine as an iterative spiral that leads to deeper understanding of CHEIs in Canada.

In this chapter, in order to explore the balancing act experienced by those I interviewed, I turn specifically to Archer's (1995) realist social theory. In particular, I look to her elaboration of the morphogenetic sequence in order to explain the interplay between structure and agency within society. I now introduce this theoretical approach before applying it to the specific question at hand, namely, the experience of individuals working in Canadian CHEIs.

As we saw earlier, Archer (1995) begins by referring to the "vexatious fact of society" (p. 1). Here, she is pointing to the fact that society is made up of individuals who each shape society but for whom society does not conform to any of their individual wishes. Society and the individuals that compose it are seen to be two different orders of reality, referring to the wider framework espoused by realists: depth ontology. Indeed, for critical realists, the social

world is a stratified reality with each layer having its own causal or *emergent* properties that impact other layers of reality. As Edwards, O'Mahoney and Vincent (2014) explain, "entities have emergent properties which are dependent upon, but irreducible to, their 'lower level' components. For example, 'wetness' is a property that water has that would not exist if either oxygen or hydrogen were removed, even though neither oxygen nor hydrogen feels wet themselves" (p. 7). What is true for the natural world, according to critical realists, is true for the social world as well.

For critical realists, the problem in social theory emerges when society (structure) is conflated with the individuals of whom it is composed (agency). Downwards conflation over-emphasizes the role of society in determining the actions of individuals, depriving the latter of their capacity to shape society. Meanwhile, upwards conflation reifies individual perceptions/desires with that of the whole, denying the real impact of social structures/cultures (in the form of enablements or constraints) on people's ability to effect change. Finally, a third unsatisfactory option is also outlined by Archer (1995): central conflation or *elision*. In this scenario, structure and agency are seen as inseparable, as two sides of the same coin, thereby negating the stratified nature of social reality put forth by realist social theorists.

In order to deal with the 'vexatious fact' of society and avoid the conflation of structure and agency - be it downwards, upwards or central conflation - Archer (1995) proposes that analytical dualism is necessary to understand the *interplay* between structure and agency. Here, the key word is 'interplay'. Social structures (and cultures) are analytically separated from the agents upon which they have an impact and vice versa. While our human experience of agency within society (should we think of such matters) is very much integrated, understanding the mutual impact of structure and agency requires that these two domains be viewed separately. Doing so allows us to identify their distinct emergent properties or causal impacts. For Archer, analytical dualism is possible because structure and agency each possess "autonomous emergent properties which are thus capable of independent variation and therefore of being out of phase with one another in time" (p. 66). As such, structures have emergent properties or causal impacts on other layers of social reality. These are known as structural emergent properties (SEPs). Likewise, cultures have emergent properties which impact other layers of social reality that are referred to as

cultural emergent properties (CEPs). Finally, people have their own emergent properties known as personal emergent (or people's emergent) properties (PEPs)⁹. In realist social theory, then, SEPs, CEPs and PEPs are analysed separately to enable an examination of the interplay between the different levels of reality. One final distinction is important here: structures pertain to material conditions that shape society (e.g. distribution of resources) while cultures relate to ideas that shape society (e.g. beliefs that may justify the unequal distribution of resources).

The morphogenetic sequence is put forward by Archer (1995) in order to conceptualize the interplay between structure and agency. As mentioned above, SEPs/CEPs/PEPs can exercise their causal powers independently and at different points in time. The temporal dimension is key. "Structures (as emergent properties) are not only irreducible to people, they pre-exist them, and people are not puppets of structures because they have their own emergent properties which mean they either reproduce or transform social structure, rather than creating it" (p. 71). Morphogenesis, following Walter Buckley's definition, refers to "those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system's given form, structure or state" (Buckley, 1967, p. 58; in Archer, 1995, p. 75). Archer adopts what she calls the:

...unlovely term 'morphogenesis', to capture both the possibility of radical and unpredictable re-shaping (...), and the fact that the genesis of this re-shaping lies in the interplay between structure and agency – a process which can only be examined because of their temporal separability and an outcome which can only be explained by means of analytical dualism (p. 75).

This being the case, the morphogenetic sequence must examine the structures/cultures that pre-exist a certain social interaction (conditions), the interaction itself, and the resulting structural elaboration (Figure 7). Of course, if morphogenesis is possible then so is morphostasis, the case where agents choose to reproduce the pre-existing structures or cultures rather than elaborate upon them.

⁹ Archer (1995) refers to PEPs as 'people's emergent properties' while Archer (2003) defines these as 'personal emergent properties'. I will retain her latter use of the term.

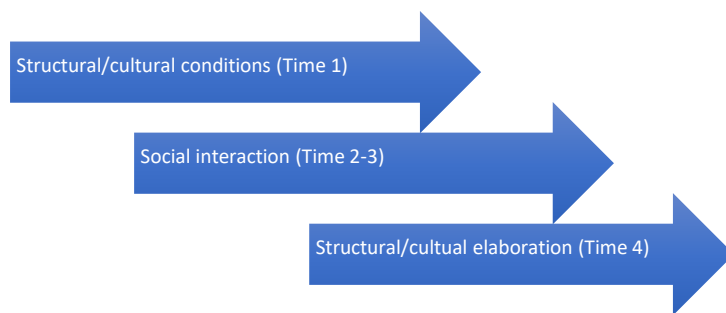


Figure 7: The morphogenetic sequence (adapted from Archer, 1995, p. 76)

We are now coming near to our own topic at hand, the balancing act that is experienced by those working in Catholic higher education institutions (CHEIs). To understand this balancing act, we need to analytically separate the exercise of agency from the structures and cultures that provide the conditions surrounding such agential activity. In a simple morphogenetic sequence, we can analyse a particular social interaction by reviewing the structural and/or cultural conditions (SEPs and CEPs) that precede it, the interaction itself and the resulting elaboration (or reproduction) of those structural and/or cultural conditions. In reality, of course, there are likely no such neatly configured morphogenetic sequences. At the very least, I am willing to assert that no such neatly configured morphogenetic sequence can explain the balancing act that individuals working in CHEIs experience. Rather, I propose a model where two very well elaborated and distinct sets of structures (SEPs) and cultures (CEPs) serve to shape the social interactions within Catholic colleges and universities – those of the church and the academy. These two sets of SEPs and CEPs interact in various ways and can either be conflicting or complementary. Situated at the intersection of these very real, causal structures and cultures, people working with CHEIs must then continually assess which forces are impacting them at any given time. They must also judge how to best interact with these forces in order to serve their particular interests as institutions which seek to maintain credible links with both the Catholic Church and the academy. Figure 8 below illustrates this balancing act, with the red triangle representing the social location of those working within CHEIs.

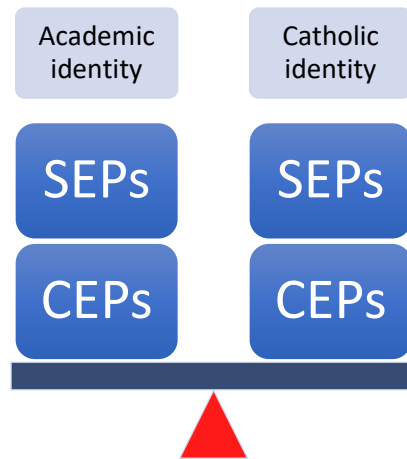


Figure 8: The balancing act of CHEIs

Archer’s (1995) model accounts for the possible interactions between various structures (and cultures) in society. For the purposes of illustration, I focus here on the interaction between social structures. The relationship between structural emergent properties (SEPs) can be either necessary or contingent, compatible or incompatible, giving rise to four scenarios or 'situational logics' (Figure 9). When two SEPs are necessarily related and compatible with each other, the conditions are ripe for the *protection* of the current status quo. When these same SEPs are incompatible, the need for *compromise* arises since their relationship remains necessary for each to persist. When two SEPs are only contingently related, the complementary scenario gives rise to *opportunism*. If these are incompatible, the *elimination* of one or the other SEP from the specific social interaction becomes possible. The same logic can also be applied to cultural emergent properties or CEPs.

	Complementarities/ Compatibilities	Incompatibilities
Necessary relationship	Protection	Compromise
Contingent relationship	Opportunism	Elimination

Figure 9: Archer’s (1995) situational logics

In the case of Catholic higher education institutions (CHEIs), their relationships with the structures/cultures of both the church and the academy are necessary rather than contingent. They cannot continue to exist as CHEIs if they do not maintain their necessary relationships with both the Catholic Church and the academy. Should they fail in this

endeavour, they either lose their status as Catholic institutions or as full-fledged colleges/universities. The balancing act I witnessed in each of the CHEIs I visited is a result of their ardent desire to avoid either of these two outcomes. Therefore, in the eyes of those working with CHEIs, both the relationship with the church's SEPs/CEPs and the academy's SEPs/CEPs are necessary. The possibility of these necessary relationships being either compatible or incompatible, however, persists (Figure 10). Compatible relationships lead to reinforced behaviours while incompatible ones give rise to the need to negotiate, the 'balancing act'.

	Compatible relationship	Incompatible relationship
Academic & Ecclesial Structures (SEPs)	Reinforced behaviours	Negotiated behaviours
Academic & Ecclesial Cultures (CEPs)	Reinforced behaviours	Negotiated behaviours

Figure 10: Situational logics arising within CHEIs (the 'balancing act')

We can therefore imagine four scenarios in which CHEIs find themselves when relating to their two primary sets of structural/cultural conditions. As mentioned above, when academic and ecclesial structures or cultures are compatible, the resulting behaviours are reinforced. When these same structures and cultures are incompatible, the relationship must be negotiated and the balancing act ensues. For example, both the cultures of the academy and the Catholic intellectual tradition value academic rigour. Given the framework above, then, the impetus toward academic rigour within CHEIs ought to be reinforced. Indeed, this reinforcement is evident in the data I collected – 9 of the 16 interviewees mention the importance of academic excellence and the delivery of quality education. Conversely, where the two sets of structures/cultures are incompatible then we would expect tension or conflict to arise. We saw, for example, in Bernard's reflections above, that competition for scarce resources (SEPs) had the potential to scuttle the development of new courses if these were perceived to be "cutting into [the federation partner's] turf, stealing what they're doing, taking away students from them" (Bernard, senior faculty). This was particularly true, in Bernard's view, when the possibility of developing a major in Theology was broached. Here the competing SEPs (material resources) and CEPs (differing views on the place of Theology as a discipline) would make engaging in such an endeavour extremely challenging. Indeed, in reality, that has proven to be the case to date.

Having outlined the nature of the balancing act through the lens of Archer's (1995) realist social theory, I now return to the data. Using my own proposed model of the relationship between ecclesial and academic SEPs/CEPs, I look at two areas in particular: 1) the differing experience between federated, affiliated, and stand-alone institutions; and, 2) the role of faculty at the heart of the balancing act.

The differing experiences of federated, affiliated, and stand-alone CHEIs

The desire to compare the experiences of those working in federated, affiliated¹⁰ and stand-alone institutions has been part of my research project from the beginning. My third research question specifically asked: *How do different institutional structures and histories impact how individuals experience the Catholic institutional identity of their workplaces?* I came to this project with a sense that the experienced institutional identities of federated and affiliated institutions would vary from that experienced in the stand-alone institutions. This hunch was reinforced as I read the literature arising from the American context which describes the experience of stand-alone institutions. As a result, I deliberately structured my project to include sites that represented all three institutional structures. Looking at the three types of institutions through the lens of realist social theory would also suggest that the experiences of those working in federated/affiliated institutions would be significantly different than those of people working in stand-alone institutions. Since the federated and affiliated institutions' structures are more intimately linked with that of their partner universities, a greater potential for collaboration and/or conflict exists. In point of fact, however, the difference between the two experiences, while present, is less stark than I would have initially imagined. It is more a difference in degree than of kind. I believe that the model I have proposed above, however, has the potential to explain why this might be the case. While federated/affiliated institutions are, indeed, more influenced by the structures of their partner universities (SEPs), stand-alone institutions are nevertheless still negotiating the balancing act with regard to academic and ecclesial cultures or ideas (CEPs). I explore this in more detail using three examples: 1) the relationship of CHEIs to their

¹⁰ The differences between affiliated and federated institutions are subtle. Indeed, since the partnership agreements vary so much from one instance to another, sometimes institutions that call themselves affiliated function very much like federated ones, and vice versa. For the sake of this research, I largely analyze federated and affiliated institutions as one reality since they both must negotiate their identities in relationship with the structures and cultures of other, larger institutions.

physical environment; 2) the negotiation of course and curriculum development; and, 3) the question of academic freedom.

Physical environment

As I conducted my interviews, I was surprised by how often people referred to their physical environment and how it shapes institutional identity. Indeed, the theme was so prominent in my first set of interviews that I intentionally explored the question in the following two sets of interviews.¹¹ In light of these findings, I am able to trace how the physical environment shapes the institutional identity of each of the three institutions in slightly different ways. In the case of federated/affiliated institutions, these relate to the physical structures (SEPs) of the wider university and communicate something of the CHEIs place within the wider academy. In the case of the stand-alone institution, their physical environment (a SEP) actually interacts with the ideas (CEPs) of what it means to be a Catholic college or university. I illustrate each of these interactions below.

Adam, who works in a federated/affiliated institution, shares the following when asked about its key defining characteristics:

Oh, my goodness. Well, one is... I'll say, the first one that comes to mind, interestingly, has nothing to do with Philosophy, Theology or whatever, it's the location.

Interviewer: Okay.

And the reason I say that is that, if you know this campus at all, we are right in the middle of it. I mean, we are literally right in the middle of it. There's administration over there, the President's office is over here and the Senate is over here ... So, that's the first thing. We have, as they say, location, location, location. We got it! (Adam, multiple roles)

¹¹ Here is an example of the interaction between data collection and data analysis that is typical of a critical grounded theory approach. I was able to flag new areas of exploration during the data collection phases since, within grounded theory, the process of data analysis begins, provisionally, at the moment data collection begins.

So why is location so important for Adam in his experience of working in a federated/affiliated institution? Physicality would fall into the category of a structural emergent property (SEP) which, in the case of federated/affiliated institutions, is intimately related with the physical structure of the wider university. The fact that his CHEI is located in the centre of things, rather than hived off in an unknown corner of the campus, speaks volumes to Adam about the convergence of the structures pertaining to both the university and the CHEI. The CHEI is able to function as an integral part of the university because of its physical location at the heart of things. The structures of the university and the CHEI reinforce each other. The latter's physical location serves as a tacit but ever-present reminder that the federated/affiliated institution is welcome on the landscape of the wider institution and is a key player within its academic enterprise.

Walking into my second research site, I am instantly struck by its physical appearance. The first thing I see is an attractive donor wall that integrates messaging about the CHEI's founding history. I am then drawn into an open and spacious meeting space adjacent to a coffee shop where students are either studying or conversing. James reflects on the impact of the physical environment at this particular site:

... a few years ago, the student newspaper on the main campus rated the top 10 spaces at the [university] and I think four, four were in our building... the chapel, the space outside the chapel, the library, and the student commons downstairs... And what they seem to like about the space is, they're open, they're welcoming, they're stress free, they're human, and they're conducive to dialogue, discussion, or, if you're not with someone else, they're conducive to reflection. You know, I like to sometimes come in and see people, if they're sitting by themselves, looking out those windows at the gophers or rabbits or the snow, or they're doing their studies or... and I take it for granted, until I go to other university spaces and they're busy, they're noisy, they're chaotic, they're stressful. Maybe meaningful discussion is happening, I don't know, but I have trouble having a meaningful discussion in those spaces. So, if we're trying to cultivate dialogue and discussion and openness, you need to have physical spaces that are conducive to that. (James, administrator)

Here the physical structures of the CHEI are directly contrasted with the physical spaces on the wider campus. This contrast communicates the distinctive institutional identity of the CHEI and the value it places on dialogue and reflexivity. While there is no explicit intention to enter into competition with the wider university, the physical space speaks for itself and the student newspaper recognizes the difference by awarding the small institution four of the ten best spaces on campus!

So how does physical space communicate institutional identity in a stand-alone institution where there is no direct external comparator? Here, the intersection does not happen with the SEPs of the wider university but an intersection happens nonetheless. The physical structures of the CHEI intersects with the ideas (CEPs) of what it means to be both a Catholic and an academic institution. Margaret reflects:

I'm drawn to the old and the new [architecture] because I think it's symbolic... I think it's very indicative of who and what the place is because there's a strong historical foundation that we cherish and we savour ... and it's welcoming the new and who it is we need to be in today's world. So, I quite like that. (Margaret, front-line staff)

While physicality plays a role in the stand-alone campus, that role is more symbolic and plays out at the level of ideas. Kent's reflections corroborate this:

... I think, for instance, if we were one of those older looking universities that had a cloistered walk and that had a formal chapel, there might be less anxiety that we're not Catholic enough because we'd have those symbolic markers... (Kent, administrator)

Physical spaces communicate identity in both federated/affiliated and stand-alone institutions however these are differentially related to structures and cultures. Federated/affiliated institutions relate, naturally, to the physical structures of the wider university. In the first instance, we saw that their physical location communicated their integration with the wider campus. In the second case, we saw how their physical space spoke of their distinct values in relation to the wider university. In the case of the stand-alone campus, the relationship was not with external structures (SEPs) but with ideas (CEPs)

and physical space was looked to for the symbolic role it plays in communicating the CHEI's institutional identity.

Course and curriculum development

The differing experience of federated and stand-alone institutions is also evident in the balancing act that occurs with regard to course and curriculum development. Here, we might expect the difference to be fairly straight-forward. At one level, this is true.

Federated/affiliated institutions need to negotiate with their partner institutions while stand-alone campuses enjoy a greater freedom to shape their academic offerings as they please (while still shaped by external structures related to quality assurance).

Federated/affiliated institutions must navigate the structures (SEPs) of their partner universities, as we have already seen in Bernard's example above. Stand-alone institutions have no such structural constraints. Indeed, this does allow the stand-alone institution in my sample to create a core curriculum that includes Religious Studies, something that would likely not be possible for their federated and affiliated counterparts. However, the situation is not quite so simple. Even where there is no institutional partner with whom to negotiate course and curriculum development, the stand-alone campus must still navigate the academic and ecclesial ideas (CEPs) regarding appropriate academic offerings. Therefore, Nolan and his colleagues deliberate on what distinct academic programming in their institution might look like:

... [in the] last several years there's been a real desire to create a [programme] in Catholic Studies. So, when I was hired, they gave me a draft of a proposal for a program and then there's a four-person committee, which I was a part of, and we were asked to evaluate do we want to pursue, continue with this draft? Our committee felt that we did not, so we sort of, basically, put it aside and created our own programme which we are hoping to submit to the government of [our province], [by] end of the summer, early fall. So, over the last two years, I've been intentionally thinking about and talking about, with both administration here as well as my fellow colleagues on faculty and staff members and students, trying to figure out what does it mean to be Catholic? (Nolan, junior faculty)

Compared to their federated/affiliated counterparts, the stand-alone campus may be structurally freer in terms of course and curriculum development but they must still discern how their academic offerings reflect what it 'means to be Catholic'. The balancing act continues at the level of ideas despite the fact that the same structural constraints are not in place. Kent points to this same phenomenon:

... [the faculty] want to revisit the liberal arts core and I know that, for some, it's going to be, we don't want it at all, our students don't want it. And so, really, this is taking us to... wrestling with our identity and our mission as a university. And there will be a moment at which we're going to say, 'okay, well we have a mandate, what does that mean?' And so, I think we've been searching for ways to safely get into that conversation because there's a lot of fear from some people and an equally ardent desire for people to have that conversation. (Kent, administrator)

Being true to the 'idea of a Catholic university' involves continual dialogue and discernment whether or not there are structural constraints at play. The difference in how this negotiation occurs in federated/affiliated and stand-alone institutions, then, is one of degree rather than kind.

Academic freedom

The difference between federated/affiliated and stand-alone institutions may perhaps also be illustrated with regards to academic freedom. In this instance, I note that my reflections are more speculative since they arise more from an absence of discussion on the question of academic freedom in the data I collected from federated/affiliated institutions. The topic did come up, however, at the stand-alone institution. This difference prompts me to retroductively reflect on why this might be the case.

Pope John Paul II's (1990) promulgation of *Ex corde ecclesiae* prompted much debate on the question of academic freedom within CHEIs (cf. Richardson, 2000; Russo and Gregory, 2007). With regard to academic freedom, *Ex corde ecclesiae* stated that every Catholic university "possesses that institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively and guarantees its members academic freedom, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of truth and the

common good” (ECE, 12). The ensuing debate centred on whether academic freedom was a conditional or unconditional right within CHEIs. *Ex corde ecclesiae* seems to be putting conditions on academic freedom by placing it alongside the rights of the individual and community and subservient to the pursuit of ‘truth and the common good’. Not surprisingly, a clamour arose from the academic community within CHEIs at the time.

Among those I interviewed in federated/affiliated institutions, however, only passing reference was made to academic freedom. This was simply to indicate that they enjoyed full academic freedom like their colleagues on the wider university campuses. A full discussion of the debate on academic freedom, however, did emerge on the stand-alone campus. Now, again, I am cautious about the assertions I make here. There could be any number of reasons to account for this difference, including the relatively small size of my sample. Yet, I do note that the controversy over *Ex corde ecclesiae* happened largely within the American context where stand-alone institutions predominate. Could it be that stand-alone institutions feel more vulnerable with regard to the possible encroachment of the church on their right to academic freedom? Could it also be true that those working within federated/affiliated institutions rely on their partnered status to protect academic freedom? Does being intertwined with the structures of the larger, secular universities, serve as a sort of buffer with regard to the institutional church when the latter is perceived to be trespassing on academic freedom? As far as the balancing act under scrutiny here is concerned, this would be a case where the cultures of the academy are juxtaposed with that of the church in order to protect unfettered academic freedom within the CHEI. I recognize that these questions cannot be resolved with the evidence I have gathered but they are nevertheless worth noting and flagging as a future pathway for exploration. Could it be, in negotiating the balancing act between the structures/cultures of the church and the academy, that CHEIs sometimes play off one set of rationales against the other for their own advantage?

The different structural realities of federated/affiliated and stand-alone CHEIs do shape how individuals working within them experience their institutional identity. However, this difference is not quite as stark as one might imagine. Federated institutions must negotiate both the structures (SEPs) and cultures (CEPs) of their partner institutions while stand-alone campuses engage in the balancing act more explicitly at the level of ideas (CEPs). The

difference in the balancing act is therefore more a difference of degree or intensity than in kind. The balancing act exists in both contexts but is catalysed in different conditions. For federated institutions, both SEPs and CEPs spark the discussion. In stand-alone campuses, where the constraining impact of external SEPs are farther removed, the conversation is more so engaged at the level of symbols or ideas.

The particular experience of faculty

Faculty are in a unique position with regard to the balancing act of CHEIs. Indeed, they are perhaps the ones who experience the tensions between the structures/cultures of the church and academy most directly. Their roles, more than any other within the CHEI, place them firmly on the tight-rope in all aspects of their work, be it teaching, research or community service. In terms of the balancing act, they are on the front-lines.

We saw earlier how Nolan faced a ‘damned if you do, damned if you don’t’ type of situation as he negotiated the balancing act within his classroom. Others reflected on the tension as well. Sometimes this was voiced as a critique of faculty who were seen to be disengaged from the day to day life of the CHEI:

- hardly any of the faculty were there but lots of staff (Adam, multiple roles);
- we have a weekly social but it seems that there's very few academics that attend (Carrie, front-line staff);
- I'm a little disappointed that not more faculty go. Engagement of faculty has been a challenge more than engagement of staff for some reason, I'm not sure why (James, administrator).

Sometimes faculty themselves named the difficulty of balancing the demands of being full-fledged academics while still trying to engage with the Catholic identity of their workplace. Fiona, a senior faculty member, first points to the time constraints people face when trying to balance the multiple demands placed upon faculty, demands which might preclude them from fully engaging in activities which foster the Catholic identity of their workplace.

However, she also points to a subtler constraint placed upon faculty as they try to remain credible on the wider university campus. In her experience, faculty “are afraid that if they have, if they talk, if they're identified with a Catholic college that they'll be considered a

conservative reactionary. It's a larger social issue going on..." (Fiona, senior faculty). Carrying the banner of Catholic identity is particularly challenging for faculty who must work harder to prove their academic competence in light of negative stereotypes associated with narrow iterations of Catholicism.

Isabelle, an administrator who has been at her institution for 19 years, also reflects on how faculty experience the 'squeeze' between the academic and ecclesial structures/cultures of their workplaces:

... the challenge now is, some of the people that we've hired in the last 12 to 15 years, they're part of a generation that is very focused on their career tracks. They are thinking of what they need to do to advance in their careers, perhaps deal with family pressures, and they feel constantly pressed for time. If people feel like learning about the institution's mission and identity is another thing they have to do on top of all the other things they have to do, then they can get stressed or feel like too much is being asked of them, and, it seems like, okay, what are the most crucial tasks I have to achieve in a week? I've got to get this stack of papers marked, I've got to finish this article, I've got to go to this committee meeting that involves writing a big report, and then it's like, and really, you're asking me to take an hour on Friday to go hear something about mission and identity? (Isabelle, administrator)

Isabelle, who herself has experience as a faculty member, understands the difficulty that faculty members face as they try to meet the challenging expectations of their roles. However, the challenge likely has less to do with time-management or faculty resistance to the Catholic mission of their CHEI and more to do with the complexity of the balancing act that they are trying to negotiate. Faculty are most closely integrated into the structures of the academy in terms of performance appraisal, quality control and professional advancement. For the sake of the credibility of the institution as a whole, it is also important that faculty work to the same standards as those in other, secular universities. This is the case regardless of whether the CHEI is federated or stand-alone. Quality assurance processes mandated by governments, tenure and promotions processes bench-marked against other academic institutions, and faculty members' own desires to remain competitive within the wider job market all serve to draw them more fully into the

academic side of the balancing act. The structural constraints and enticements of the academy are more powerfully experienced on the part of faculty, sometimes at the expense of their ability to fully engage with the Catholic identity of their workplace. Even when they are personally committed and supportive of this Catholic identity, faculty members are shaped more so than others by the structures and cultures of the academy. Without addressing these structural and cultural realities, the challenge of fully engaging faculty in the Catholic identity of the CHEI will remain unsolved. What is clear, however, is that their perceived lack of engagement with the Catholic dimension of their institutions' identity is not a question of ill-will or a reflection of their personal antipathy towards it. Indeed, when faculty are asked who is responsible for the creation and maintenance of the Catholic identity of their workplace, they see themselves as key players. They care for and support the mission of their CHEI but they are also drawn more intensely than those playing other roles into the nexus of the competing demands placed upon them by the structures and cultures of the academy.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have looked at the structures and cultures that shape the experiences of those working in CHEIs in Canada. We have identified the balancing act that so characterizes this experience. Using Archer's (1995) realist social theory and her conceptualization of the morphogenetic sequence, I have proposed my own theoretical framework in order to explain this experience. Located at the nexus of the structures/cultures of both the church and the academy, CHEIs are situated in a space where their institutional identities must constantly be negotiated and defined. I have illustrated how this process differentially shapes the experience of those working in federated, affiliated and stand-alone CHEIs and shown how faculty are particularly impacted by this balancing act. On this last point, we may be reminded of Becher's (2001) discourse on academic tribes and territories which would further illustrate the complex relationships that faculty must negotiate within CHEIs. Not only are they engaged in the balancing act between ecclesial and academic cultures, they are also deliberating between the demands of the disciplinary cultures and that of their wider academic institutions. Trowler's (2014) reflection on Becher's original work and their subsequent collaborations does, however, note that wider institutional factors, as well as external forces, are now more clearly impacting the way faculty members relate to their

disciplines. This line of inquiry would merit further research. However, at this point, we will move from this discussion of structures and cultures that shape the experience of those working within CHEIs to an exploration of how they become active agents of this negotiated reality that is Catholic institutional identity.

Chapter 5: The hermeneutics¹² of dialogue and the role of the ‘identity-carrier’

¹² Here I use the term ‘hermeneutics’ in the broad sense, defining it as an interpretive process through which tradition and practice are linked. In this chapter and the next, I explore how dialogue and reflexivity are used to interpret the tradition of Catholic higher education as it is shaped by the structure/cultures of both the church and academy, thereby enabling individuals to exercise agency with regard to institutional identity.

We began the last chapter with Kent's question: "Are we too Catholic, are we not Catholic enough, are we...?" His is the question that lies at the heart of how individuals experience the Catholic identity of their workplaces. They are constantly negotiating their way through the structures and cultures that shape their experience, a negotiation that I have labelled the 'balancing act'. But how do they go about this process of negotiation? Or, in critical realist terms, how do they exercise agency with regard to the institutional identity of their workplaces? Here, I explore how dialogue is the central dynamic through which individuals interpret the experience of the balancing act. Through dialogue¹³, they are initiated into active engagement with the complex institutional identity of the CHEI. Finally, through an identifiable developmental process, they become agents of this identity as they work to co-create and maintain it.

Dialogue, however, presupposes the presence of interlocutors. With whom, then, do these individuals engage in this institutional identity building dialogue? I propose that this dialogue takes place with people who are identified as identity-carriers within the institution. I also suggest that identity-carriers are 'made not born' and that there is a clear process through which individuals come to play this role. In this chapter, I will 1) begin by exploring the centrality of dialogue within the data; 2) examine who people think is responsible for the dialogical process of identity creation; 3) introduce the role of the identity-carrier; 4) posit a model to describe the development of identity-carriers; and, 5) propose pathways for further research on the role of identity-carriers with regard to the creation and maintenance of institutional identity.

The centrality of dialogue

Dialogue is a constant theme that runs through the stories of those I interviewed. A text search reveals that the word 'dialogue' itself occurs 18 times within the data. When the search is expanded to include the words 'dialogue', 'discussion', 'discourse', and 'conversation', the total rises to 96! Respondents, when asked to validate themes, also responded favourably to the phrase: "Dialogue across diversity is a key component of who we are." It would seem that Catholic institutional identity is a dialogical reality. It is through

¹³ Dialogue, in my view, presupposes reflexivity. While reflexive processes are intertwined with the dialogical processes I describe here, the explicit role of reflexivity will be dealt with in the following chapter.

dialogue that individuals negotiate the balancing act and interpret their experience. It is through dialogue that they eventually become agents of institutional identity.

The dialogue can take place as part of intentional institutional processes. For example, people report being invited into processes to create mission and identity statements as well as institution-wide strategic plans. For example, Fiona reports:

We have all College meetings once a term where we talk about the mission... [A]lso we used to have days away at the beginning of the fall term where we would talk about mission. So, there are actually official avenues which are productive and again the whole College would go when we would talk about it... And we also had a strategic planning exercise which talked a lot about the mission as well. But that took place in the all College meeting, the day away, we talked about those things that we'd like to see. (Fiona, senior faculty)

Processes such as these are both intentional and invite wide participation. However, there is also evidence of less intentional approaches to dialogue which are nevertheless effective. When asked what contributed to his own understanding of institutional identity and mission, Kent refers to the importance of conversation:

There have been certain key individuals and extended conversations. So, [name of colleague] - and I think you know [him] quite well - and really reading key documents about Catholic social justice, about Dorothy Day, about key figures. Also, [former presidents'] vision for the place ...just being with them and being part of the ... faculty and the, you know, sitting around for hours having conversations about what we meant about it. (Kent, administrator)

Time is invested in informal conversations about mission and identity. These conversations happen with people who already carry the identity of the institution, in this case a particular colleague and the former presidents of the institution. Through dialogue, newer members to the community are invited to learn about the institution and, eventually, become active dialogue partners themselves.

Sometimes institutional processes that are not intended to be about identity and mission, nevertheless spark this discussion. Nolan describes one such instance:

... two years ago, we had a search for our new Vice President and Academic Dean, and as part of that search, faculty were welcome to come and meet the candidates and pose questions. And, during that process, some of the questions that came from certain faculty members that were raised are about, you know, 'this is a Catholic institution, how do you feel you connect with our mandate?' And, I think out of that conversation to these people or candidates coming, that sparked lots of conversations among us as faculty about how do we understand what we are as a Catholic institution. What kind of answer do we want to see this person giving us? And I think that that's been a conversation that's started that we're still trying to figure out how to answer. (Nolan, junior faculty)

The co-creation of identity, the negotiation of the balancing act and the constant discernment about what it means to be a Catholic institution, takes place through dialogue. Indeed, it is Margaret who underlines just how central both dialogue and reflexivity are to health and well-being of her institution:

I think sometimes the University struggles with the balance there and how we can live that out responsively and responsibly with each other without one maybe domineering the other ... there's careful dialogue and there's honest dialogue. People will say, 'hey, you know this feels a little too Catholic, you know, or, what's happened to our spiritual base here, we seem to be extending too much into the liberal arts', so there's a tension but I would call it a healthy tension. It, it causes people to be very pensive and reflective and I think it's healthy for us in the long run. Because if we were to shut that down I think we would be at a loss and I dare say the larger community would lose out as well. (Margaret, front-line staff)

On the flip-side of the equation, however, lies a concern about being excluded from the dialogue. If, indeed, dialogue is central to negotiating the balancing act of institutional identity, factors that stifle dialogue have the potential to derail a healthy sense of that identity. Edward, as a new Catholic, worries about not understanding the vocabulary of the

documents that ought to help him learn about the institution and engage in the conversation:

But, at the same time, the document is a huge document and it's not written in a way that everybody would easily understand unless they have a philosophical background and have a more understanding of the Catholic faith because I'm a new Catholic so to speak, like baptized in 2011 or 10, and I don't know that much about the Catholic faith so for me, personally, it's a huge document and it seems daunting to read from beginning to end. So, in my opinion, to encourage people to understand better I would probably recommend that documents like this be shortened and written in a language where everybody would understand personally. (Edward, support staff)

Similarly, Kent worries that some people “don't have any language. They don't know how to get into the conversation, don't particularly even know what to ask. So, again that's probably our responsibility for trying to create grounds for conversation” (Kent, administrator). With this comment, Kent leads us to our next question: Who is responsible for the creating and maintaining institutional identity? In other words, who initiates the dialogue and who is responsible for making sure everyone can participate?

[Who engages in this dialogue?](#)

Those I interviewed put forward a variety of answers to the question of who is responsible for creating and maintaining the institutional identity of their college/university. Five respondents pointed to people in leadership:

I would think that, first and foremost, that begins with our president. He's the one that articulates the mission for the institution and our president [name] is someone who is, maybe because we're a small institution, he is extraordinarily present to faculty, to students and to staff. So, I know on several occasions I've had issues I need to discuss with him and he's always made his office wide open to faculty walking in and talking with him and that's been appreciated. (Nolan, junior faculty)

The president is expected to both articulate and communicate institutional identity. In this case, we see how the president does so by being open and communicating directly with his

faculty and staff. He engages them in the institutional dialogue which is at the heart of the process of identity creation.

At one site, a federated institution, the campus ministers are identified by four of the six respondents as people who are responsible for creating and maintaining institutional identity. The campus ministers in question are not members of the founding religious community. In fact, they are lay women. I suggest that this indicates that, in this institution, campus ministers have already been taking on an active role in transmitting institutional identity. It also points to a broadening imagination with regard to who – beyond members of the religious community and designated leaders – can pass on identity.

Faculty also see themselves as responsible for transmitting institutional identity. Fiona, a senior faculty member, believes that faculty are the ones who can best maintain continuity with regard to institutional identity, since their roles tend to endure the longest. Similarly, Lawrence, a senior faculty member at a different institution, states:

I think it's the faculty. It's very simple. If we could get out to the world at large what actually happens in the classroom, [name of CHEI] would thrive. If we could have our message aligned with what is actually taking place, it's not that anything more needs to take place but where the identity of the university exists is in the faculty members who do the day in and day out work and they're all very gifted people. Both full time and sessionals, we're very graced with exceptional people. (Lawrence, senior faculty)

By far the most common response to the question of who is responsible for transmitting institutional identity, however, is “all of us!” Nine of the 16 interviewees indicate that they feel everyone is responsible for transmitting institutional identity:

Oh, I think we all are [responsible]. Certainly, those who have gone on before us laid a very strong foundation and that's been communicated over the decades but, right now, I think we all have a role to play. Leadership is certainly important but, like if the rest of us weren't conveying that, our messages would fly in the face of leadership so then you have discontinuity and some discord, potentially, and I don't think that would fly, you know, and no one would really gain from that. (Margaret, front-line staff)

Margaret relates the current processes concerning the transmission of institutional identity to those who have been involved with these processes in the past. She also indicates that these processes are collaborative and participatory. She recognizes the role of leadership but also realizes that institutional leaders need the support of those in the trenches. She is beginning to articulate an important dynamic that directly relates to the question of how the dialogue about institutional identity takes place. There is an interplay between those who carry the identity – i.e. the leadership, and ‘those who have gone before us’ – and the sense of collective responsibility felt by those who work within CHEIs. Everyone is meant to participate in the dialogue but certain individuals, more than others, carry the institutional identity and facilitate the entry of others into the dialogue. In this, there is a fascinating interaction between the whole and the parts of the institution with regard to the co-creation of institutional identity.

If we look back to Albert and Whetten’s (1985) early work on organizational identity, we remember that they proposed that organizations could either be *holographic* or *ideographic*. In holographic organizations, all sub-units carry the institutional identity of the whole while, in ideographic organizations, these sub-units are more specialized in terms of identity. The concern within CHEIs has been that, once religious communities are no longer present, these institutions would become more ideographic and less cohesive in terms of mission and identity. Institutional identity would no longer permeate throughout the whole of the institution but be borne only by certain designated leaders, for example, the president, mission officers or campus ministers. The accounts of those I interviewed, however, do not suggest that these CHEIs are functioning as ideographic organizations. Rather, the respondents assert that they are all responsible for the transmission of institutional identity and express a clear desire that their organizations remain holographic. Even with a more diverse workforce, members of CHEIs see themselves as part of a cohesive whole. This cohesion is achieved through dialogue.

Dialogue links the vision of the identity-carriers to the wider institution in order for it to remain holographic. We see, as well, that the role of identity-carrier has been expanded beyond those who belong to the founding religious communities and even formally designated leaders. These ‘identity-carriers’ play an important role in inviting others into, and equipping them to participate in, the identity-building dialogue which then enables

them to successfully negotiate the balancing act. We now take a closer look at the role of identity-carrier.

The role of identity-carrier

So far, we have examined how dialogue is the central mechanism through which individuals within CHEIs negotiate the balancing act. We have also looked at who they believe is responsible for the ongoing creation and transmission of institutional identity within their workplaces. The next question, however, is with whom do individuals within CHEIs enter into dialogue in order to be initiated into the conversation themselves? If the ideal is a holographic institution where all take responsibility for the creation and maintenance of institutional identity, then how do new members get initiated into this dialogical process of identity creation? I suggest that they do so by entering into conversations with specific individuals, individuals who are perceived to be knowledgeable resources and recognized as 'identity-carriers' within the institution.

The term 'identity-carrier' is one which I have coined as a result of this research. While the people I spoke to refer to an ideal scenario where everyone exercises agency with regard to their institution's identity, there is nevertheless a recognition that certain people play a particular role within this process. These people carry the institutional identity in a particular way and are recognized as such by the wider CHEI community. In the past, the role of identity-carrier was played by the religious men and women who founded these institutions. The concern, as was noted earlier, is that once the religious communities withdraw there will no longer be anyone to play the role of identity-carrier. My research would indicate that this concern is somewhat overstated. Where there are still members of religious communities still present within the CHEIs, they do continue to play the role of identity-carrier. However, as I will outline below, others are being initiated into the role of identity-carrier and continue to play this role both effectively and creatively within these institutions.

For my purposes here, I define an identity-carrier as someone who actively exercises agency with regard to the institutional identity of their workplace. They do so willingly and with insight into the contemporary needs of their institution. They engage in specific behaviours which allow others to enter into the dialogue around, and co-creation of, institutional

identity. For example, they help articulate institutional identity and mission, they are open and welcoming toward new faculty and staff, they recognize gifts and value others' contributions, they model a compassionate workplace, and they create processes for mission integration. Identity-carriers initiate others into the balancing act while recognizing that newer members of the community may already come with varying degrees of readiness to walk this tight-rope. Most importantly, they are recognized by others as identity-carriers and serve as resources when questions regarding institutional identity arise.

In order to illustrate how identity-carriers play their role, I share with you the case of Harold, a member of support staff with 35 years' experience. Harold has a background in engineering and in the construction industry. When the economy took a down-turn, he looked for opportunities that would provide him more security than he had as a self-employed contractor. He also looked for a work situation that would fit his particular set of skills. He found this opportunity within the CHEI where he now is one of its longest-serving members. He describes his role as follows, clearly linking the work of support staff to the wider mission of the institution:

... my role here is essentially to look after the health, welfare and safety of people that come to the institution, students, the public, and that's pretty much my role. Day to day operations of a facility that does the primary role of the mission, that's our mission is to keep the place running and to do the things that need to be done to support the bigger and better objectives that the institution has. (Harold, support staff)

During his interview, Harold clearly credits the members of the founding religious community and members of the campus ministry team with helping him develop his own understanding of the institution. Nowhere does he indicate whether he has any personal religious affiliation but he is clearly well aware and highly supportive of his institution's identity and mission. He names specific experiences that helped foster his understanding of and commitment to his institution's identity and mission. First, he speaks about how the members of the religious community within his organizations first related to him. In his words, they:

“approach each and every person in a very accepting level. And it's been my experience that they engage the sense of question and everything in terms of what does it mean? What does it mean to you and what's the meaning behind it?”

(Harold, support staff)

The identity-carriers he encountered communicated their acceptance of him and demonstrated the type of questioning that is required to connect to the ‘why’ to the ‘what’ of his role. They laid the foundation for what would later become a well-defined reflexive practice within Harold’s own exercise of the role of identity-carrier.

Harold also points to a formative experience where he had an opportunity to visit a sister institution run by the same religious community as his own. He describes this encounter as a moment when he came to understand the greater purpose of his own institution:

In terms of how do we share the mission or come to learn the mission, I had an opportunity ... to, years ago, visit one other [name of religious community] institution. This was my only exposure to a [name of religious community] run organization. I had no clue and we're here all alone in [this part of the country] and there's a variety of various different other initiatives and holdings. I had a visit to [the sister institution] and I was able to spend a few days with [name of religious community] that previously had been here to learn and I was able to experience a very different kind of an environment. And I got more understanding of what we were from seeing something else. Things fit together, things brought together. When I came back I talked to our Campus Minister and I said, this is really an incredible conversion for me, if you will, because I was able to see something new, I was able to see something and get a sense of where we fit in and where everything else fits in, the much bigger picture.

Note here that Harold describes his visit as an ‘incredible conversion’. This experience is understood as a turning point. By entering into conversation with recognized identity-carriers in another institution, he is able to make the link between his own work and the broader mission and identity of his own workplace.

This experience changed the way Harold conceived of himself in his role. He returned to his own context ready to exercise agency with regard to its institutional identity and mission. He relates how he went back to the Campus Minister to suggest that students ought to also have the opportunity to visit other sister institutions. Later, he shares how he has created processes to help his own team relate their work to the wider mission and purpose of their CHEI:

... we're a support department but we engage in actually an organized approach towards our mission and we were influenced significantly by ... a sort of a 5-step program that is Jesuit, a Jesuit philosopher had done ... And, it's experience, understanding, judgment, decision and action. A 5-step process towards basically assessing and doing everything that you would do. And we, we kind of adopted that as far as an approach toward our department. And it's, the delivery of the mission occurs through this, it was very profound, and it made a lot of sense to all of us because we operate within an arena within the institution that's substantially different than most of the rank and file.

While he might not articulate it in this way, Harold is using Bernard Lonergan's (1992/[1957]) categorical imperatives to engage in action learning sequences (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). This allows him and his team to connect their roles as support staff with the broader mission and purpose of their institution. They are engaging in deliberate, reflexive activity to link their work to the Catholic institutional identity of their workplaces. In doing so, even though they work behind the scenes, they are acting as 'identity-carriers' for their institution.

Harold's example illustrates two things. First, we see the importance of his interaction with identity-carriers, in this case members of the religious community that founded his institution and the sister institution that he had the opportunity to visit. He explains the value of feeling accepted and entering into meaningful conversation with these individuals. Second, we witness his transformation into an identity-carrier himself. Once he has made the connection between his own role and how it can serve the broader mission and identity of his institution, he is then able to exercise agency and begin inviting others into the conversation. He does this by initiating action-learning sequences with his team that enable

them to connect their own work with the goals and purpose of the wider institution.

Harold's transformation into an agent of institutional identity points us to our next topic of discussion: the developmental process through which individuals become identity-carriers within their institutions.

The development of agency over time

We now return to the literature in order to build theory with regard to the development of identity-carriers over time. As we saw in the previous chapter, Archer's (1995) morphogenetic sequence allows us to conceptualize the interplay between structure and agency within the social world. Archer goes through great pains to underline the temporal dimension of this process. Morphogenetic sequences take place over time. For her, "*morphogenetic analysis ... accords time a central place in social theory*" (p. 89, emphasis in original). The three-part morphogenetic cycle attends to 1) the structural conditions that were created in the past, 2) the social interaction that occurs in the present, and, 3) the structural elaboration (or reproduction) that will emerge in the future as a result of the current interplay between structure and agency. She introduces the concept of double-morphogenesis whereby the interaction between antecedent social structures and the reflexive actions of current agents allows society to develop in unpredictable ways but also changes the agent in the process (p. 75). Attending to the dimension of time, "structures (as emergent properties) are not only irreducible to people, they pre-exist them, and people are not puppets of structures because they have their own emergent properties which mean they either reproduce or transform social structure, rather than creating it" (p. 71). The impact of the interplay between structure and agency over time goes both ways. Applying Archer's (1995) insight regarding the importance of temporality to the question at hand allows us to theorize about how agents within CHEIs both shape and are shaped by the structures and cultures of their institutions over time. Furthermore, it enables us to conceptualize the process of development of 'identity-carriers' which I submit is akin to a life-cycle.

This idea is not completely absent within the literature on Catholic identity. As we saw in Chapter 2, Whitney and Laboe (2014) trace and reflect upon Whitney's experience as a faculty member at DePaul university, a Catholic/Vincentian institution. In this first-hand

account, Whitney moves “from an initial point of scepticism before arrival on the DePaul campus as a new faculty member, through moments of fear, concern and misunderstanding, to moments of deeper insight and learning, and finally to active mission agency” (p. 137). He describes his experience of onboarding, learning about the Vincentian mission of his institution, his budding realization about how his own values intersected with this mission, his growing ability to make personal and intellectual connections with the institution’s identity, and, finally, the recasting of his own work using Vincentian concepts/categories. This process eventually enabled Whitney to act as an agent of his institution’s identity and mission.

Those I interviewed also shared stories of how their own ability to exercise agency with regard to institutional identity developed over time. We saw a specific example of this in Harold’s story above. His is an example of how institutional structures and individual responses interact to effect change on both the structures and the actors involved. While not completely identical to the stages identified by Whitney and Laboe (2014), there is nevertheless a clear progression from neophyte to identity-carrier that can be traced within my data. The stages or moments of this life-cycle can be inserted into the three stages of the morphogenetic cycle resulting in the following progression:

1. Social conditions
 - a. Pre-entry
 - b. Entry
2. Social interaction
 - a. Orientation/Formation
 - b. Investment
 - c. Dealing with conflict
 - d. Making the connection
3. Social elaboration
 - a. Becoming an identity-carrier

Since I did not initially engage in this research with the concept of an agential life-cycle in mind, the complete progression I propose here is not evident in any single account but, rather, is a composite of the processes shared by those I interviewed. Taken as a whole,

they begin to describe the life-cycle of an identity-carrier (or mission agent, if I were to use Whitney and Laboe's terms). This life-cycle becomes visible when we attend to the dimension of time within the morphogenetic sequence. I introduce it here as a starting point with the full knowledge that this theory is very much contingent upon further research in the field. However, within the tradition of critical grounded theory, I believe that this back and forth, or iterative, pattern is methodologically justified. I now look at each of these stages of the life-cycle in turn.

The life-cycle of an identity-carrier

Pre-entry (Conditions)

With the temporal dimension of the morphogenetic sequence in mind, we can discern that different individuals have different starting points with regard to institutional identity and mission. They have been shaped by different prior conditions and come more or less equipped to deal with the Catholic institutional identities of their workplaces. Some, like Whitney (Whitney and Laboe, 2014) above, begin as sceptics. Others arrive at the CHEI deeply steeped in the Catholic intellectual tradition. Adam, who is perhaps the most extreme example, puts it this way:

... I call myself a Catholic education junkie. Okay, I mean I've spent all but one year of my academic life as a student and as a teacher/professor/administrator have been spent in Catholic education. The one year I was not in Catholic education was kindergarten! (Adam, multiple roles)

Adam comes into his role within this particular CHEI equipped with the experience of a life-time in Catholic education. His deep identification with the cause allows him to enter into his current role and hit the ground running.

Finally, others see a fit between their skill set and that of their institution upon arrival. Nolan describes his entry into the position as follows:

Actually, it's funny, anecdotally, when this job advertisement was posted, and I read it, they wanted someone who could do [name of discipline] as well as [name of discipline]. That's what I do. Someone who could do social justice. That's what I'm trained to do. Once again, small, Catholic, liberal arts, and I saw the job

advertisement and I gave it to my wife and said, 'Can you do me a favour and just read this over because I'm worried I'm projecting on to this. It's almost too perfect.'
(Nolan, junior faculty)

These examples show how individuals arrive at their respective CHEIs with different sets of skills, experiences and questions about what it means to work in such institutions. Recognizing these diverse starting points, then, becomes important when trying to foster their ability to exercise agency with regard to institutional identity. Some, like Adam and Nolan, will be able to hit the ground running. Others will need time to learn and discern how their own life experience and skills can connect with the identity and mission of a Catholic institution.

Entry (conditions)

Entry into the institutions also happens in different ways. For some, the initial connection is sometimes simply a question of looking for an opportunity. When asked what attracted her to apply for her current position, Isabelle remembers:

I was looking for employment and was motivated partly by the desire to obtain a job, but also partly because I felt that the values and character of the institution were a good match for the sort of working environment I was looking for. (Isabelle, administrator)

It is interesting that these stories of looking for opportunity are quickly followed up with explanations about why the interviewees believe there is a good fit between themselves and the institution. The initial impetus to enter a CHEI may not have anything to do with its Catholic identity or the Catholic intellectual tradition. However, upon arrival, individuals come to see a point of intersection between their own values and those of the institution. This is similar to the experience that Whitney (Whitney and Laboe, 2014) describes upon his entry into a Vincentian university.

As we saw earlier, Harold also came to his institution looking for opportunities but recognized within that opportunity a fit between the role and the skills he possessed:

Quite frankly, my application for this job came about at a time when the economy was not at its greatest point... And an opportunity was out for someone to essentially look after the building, to take on aspects, and my background was in control and air systems and electronics and so on and a building is just a number of components that are brought together to be one. I felt comfortable with that and said I seriously, I'm going to throw my hat in the ring... I was fortunate enough to get an interview, I was fortunate enough to be short-listed, and I was fortunate enough to get the position. (Harold, support staff)

After 35 years at the same institution, Harold still considers himself fortunate to be there. What initially began as a search for opportunity in light of economic recession turned into a venue where his skills both fit and are valued over time. We saw, as well, in Nolan's example above, how a skills fit initially attracted him to the position within a CHEI.

There is also evidence to indicate the importance of networking with regard to entry into these roles/positions. People refer to the fact that they knew someone working at the institution prior to their considering a position. Sometimes those connections were also actively engaged in recruiting them for the role. Shoulder-tapping people for positions with CHEIs is a common practice. Carrie shares her experience of being shoulder-tapped:

Honestly, it was some nuns phoning me saying, "You should apply". I didn't see the job posted. [The president] says that he told me about it in a board meeting but I don't remember at all. And I guess I told him, "no"! (laughter) Yeah! The nuns kept phoning. That's it! (Carrie, front-line staff)

We see here again the structural conditions that pre-exist agential activity. The fact that Carrie was already part of the wider Catholic community and well known to the nuns meant that she was recognized as a potential candidate and a good fit for her current employment. We can also identify agency being exercised on the part of the nuns who, while not part of the CHEI itself, still feel themselves aligned to its mission and actively seek out individuals who will support it. The interplay between structure and agency even outside the strict confines of the institution enables certain individuals to enter into the CHEI more easily. The institutional identity of the CHEI is shaped by the fact that certain people will more likely

enter into their employ simply because they are known by the wider Catholic (or academic) community.

In some cases, people are 'grown' into the positions. Former students are recognized as potential contributors to the institution and become employees. Gwen describes her experience:

Well, I was a student at [name of institution] in my undergrad and developed good relationships here and appreciated the environment of the College. And the position that I'm in now came open almost exactly at the time that I finished my graduate degree. And I was very much encouraged to apply because of my experience working with the Campus Ministry Team from a student position. And, I guess I was attracted by the opportunity to engage meaningfully with a ..., to do work that I found meaningful and by the good relationships that I already had with people here.
(Gwen, front-line staff)

Gwen's experience affirms the fact that people come into the institution with different starting points but also illustrates the shoulder-tapping processes that are in place to recruit potential employees. In these situations, it would seem that internal and external networks (structures) are enabling certain individuals to enter these institutions as faculty or staff more easily. The question, though, emerges regarding the *ad hoc* nature of these shoulder-tapping processes. Particularly in Carrie's case, the nuns took it upon themselves to link her skills with the opportunity at hand. What happens when/if the wider Catholic community is less active in its shoulder-tapping work? How will suitable candidates be identified and encouraged to apply for these positions? Again, these are important questions to consider when creating processes for the creation and transmission of institutional identity and mission. We saw earlier in the literature on Catholic identity the more intentional processes that are being put in place elsewhere with regard to hiring for mission. In my own data, there is evidence of hiring for mission practices being employed but the informal shoulder-tapping approach still seems to be a common experience.

Orientation/formation (social interaction)

Once the individual has entered the institution, the interplay between the institution's structures and their own agency begins. I begin by exploring those interactions related to orienting new faculty and staff. Both formal and informal processes are in play in this regard. It is through these processes that institutional learning takes place. Formal orientation processes include workshops, study groups and retreat opportunities. Descriptions of these sorts of processes, however, are usually accompanied by sentiments such as those expressed here by James:

... it's something we have to work harder on, beginning with orientation. Orientation of all new members to the College, whether they're staff, students, faculty, or board members. We have something of an orientation now but I think it could be much stronger with regard to mission and identity. (James, administrator)

He later laments that there is "very little in way of orientation. So, they come in, it's kind of orientation by osmosis, which is not intentional enough". Indeed, it would seem that orientation by osmosis is the more common practice within CHEIs. People recount coming to know more about their institution by being in the bath of its identity and culture. While perhaps less than ideal, these informal processes are nevertheless occurring and offer those I interviewed the opportunity to interact with their institution's collective mission and identity. They recount coming to know more about their institution through building relationships, feeling part of the community, and experiencing compassion within that community. In other words, they are being invited at this stage into the dialogue related to the co-creation of institutional identity and the ongoing negotiation of the balancing act.

We saw earlier how Nolan appreciated his president's availability to answer questions about institutional identity and mission. Similarly, when asked what help shape her own understanding, Isabelle recalls:

I think getting to know the ones at the institution who are most knowledgeable about its mission and identity. (Isabelle, administrator)

Finally, Penny, a young member of the support staff, talks about how she learns about the institution through relationships:

... we also have really tight connections even, you know, with our VP and Dean of Academics. Where they are a constant, you know, resource. I've never felt like there's a wall there, where I can't go to them with a question. So, that's really unique as well. (Penny, support staff)

What is interesting in these last three examples is the fact that learning through relationships is evident across roles. Nolan the faculty member, Isabelle the administrator, and Penny the support staff, all learn by engaging with others who are recognized as resources or identity-carriers. Also, in only one case is this identity-carrier a member of a religious community. The potential to carry identity transcends membership in the founding religious community even though the religious men and women are still seen as valuable resources where they are present. Finally, the way the identity-carrier responds – their openness to questions – is valued by the individuals learning about institutional identity.

The sense of being part of a community also affects how individuals connect with institutional identity and mission. Earlier, we saw how feeling accepted by an identity-carrier was important to Harold early in his career. A sense of belonging facilitates entry into the ongoing dialogue that co-creates institutional identity. Indeed, the CHEI is the antithesis of an impersonal institution where its members remain anonymous cogs in a wheel. Diane, who recently moved from the wider university to play a role in its partner CHEI, recounts the loss of anonymity as a key difference:

I'm used to kind of being ... a peon in a great big place where there's a lot of anonymity ... to kind of being in a small place where everybody knows everybody.
(Diane, administrator)

For Diane, this sense of community is an adjustment and a natural extension of being part of a smaller, more intimate community. For others, feeling part of the community is a gateway to connecting with the institution's identity and mission. Margaret, who is still relatively new to the institutions describes her learning about the institution as:

“just becoming part of the community and hearing people reference [identity and mission] and just living it. So, it's the spoken word, it's the lived experience ...
(Margaret, front-line staff)

Fostering a sense of community is seen as an explicit part of their mandate regarding students. However, that same community is experienced by faculty and staff, community which allows them to envision themselves as part of the institution's identity and mission.

Finally, the experience of compassion within the CHEI is another component feeling part of the community. Those I interviewed appreciate that their institution values family and recognizes their need to balance work and family. They speak of receiving compassionate support during times of grief and see the extension of such support as consistent with institutional identity and values. As much as any formal orientation process, these human connections serve to link the individual to the spirit and ethos of the institution.

The orientation of new faculty and staff occurs through both formal and informal processes. It is through these processes that individuals begin to discern how they can best interact with the institutional identity of their workplaces. While there is a recognition that more work could be done in terms of formal orientation, informal processes make up the shortfall. People are, indeed, still 'oriented by osmosis' as they build relationships, gain a sense of community and receive compassion within it. As people are shaped by the community into which they have entered, they also shape it in return. They do so by deciding to invest their time, talent, and sometimes even money, into their organization.

Investment (social interaction)

Eventually, individuals decide to invest themselves in the identity and mission of their institutions. The level of commitment they describe, at least among those who volunteered to be interviewed, is quite striking. They have entered the institution with different levels of understanding of its identity and goals, they have learned about these through formal and informal means, and, at a certain point, they desire to make a contribution to its mission. They decide to actively enter into the conversation.

We saw earlier how Harold referred to his 'conversion' to mission awareness. Edward shares his own, moving, story in this regard. He first encountered his current place of employment during his time there as a student. He readily admits that he was then suffering from depression. He believes that the compassion of those he encountered at the CHEI helped him learn how to cope with his illness. Now, as an employee, he is ready to give in

return or invest in his institution. At a meeting to encourage his peers to support the CHEI's capital campaign, he risks sharing his own experience:

And I was a student who benefitted from the College and it was through the people that I met here that has allowed me to pull through and I just basically said that I have made 40% less than my previous job in government and I'm, and I also know that I work for a discount compared to other executive assistants across the street there at the [university], and I just basically said that if I weren't here today I would have nothing to give. So, to me I just basically said that I highly encourage everybody to give whatever that they can because this place helps out a lot more people than they realize. (Edward, support staff)

Not only has Edward made a financial sacrifice to be part of the CHEI, he also is willing to share his personal struggles to further the goals of his institution. He has made a choice. Others have made similar, though less dramatic choices. Adam, when offered a role within his religious community that would possibly necessitate a move, insisted that he remain at his current location in order to stay at the CHEI. Margaret illustrates the level of her commitment by enduring a long commute to and from work. Penny delights in her ability to make an impact on students' lives through her role. At a certain point, these individuals have decided that they are 'in' with regards to their institution's identity and mission.

People also invest in their institution through their willing participation in institutional processes. Rather than being passive recipients of institutional structures, they begin to actively engage with these. People report being part of strategic planning processes or collective endeavours to articulate the institution's Catholic identity and mission. While the institution initiates these processes, individuals choose to participate, and claim the results of these deliberations as their own. Here, the interplay between structure and agency is at work.

Dealing with conflict (social interaction)

Moments of conflict within the institution are also opportunities for individuals to choose how they can (or cannot) relate to it. Carrie shares the story of how referring to their institution's Catholic identity statement helped them navigate controversy and become

more explicitly inclusive of LGBTQ students. While she is personally aligned with the decision made by her institution, she recognizes that there are those who disagree:

... this student came to me and said, 'Every time I take a class in Theology, I feel like I'm going back in the closet until halfway through and I know my professor and if I can come out again'. And I thought that was like, really sad, so I told the [administrator] and we had a big faculty meeting about it ... And so, we wanted to just put up safe spaces stickers and it turned into quite the controversy and, at the end of the it, the [administrator] just made the decision and said, 'You guys made the identity statement and mission says we're open to all sorts of peoples so the stickers are going up'. And this is because of the identity and mission that ... so it's very hard to argue, all of a sudden, if this thing should go up. She said nope, you guys said we're an open and inclusive society so we'll put that up and ensure the dignity of our students and it was just a dead discussion. So, and for the most part, people were happy. There's always one or two outliers but the rest of everybody, like everybody else was really happy with the result... (Carrie, front-line staff)

In moments of such controversy, some recognize themselves in the positions taken by the institution as a whole while others do not. While this particular moment of conflict affirms Carrie's commitment, we can wonder what is going on in the minds of those she describes as 'outliers'. Do they continue to engage in the life of the institution or do they withdraw?

Making the connection (social interaction)

Eventually the connection is made between the individual's sense of his/her own role and the identity and mission of the institution as a whole. We saw this earlier in Harold's example. He described the 'aha' moment when he came to understand the wider purpose of his institution. He described this moment as a 'conversion' which allowed him to make fundamental connections between his personal identity and that of the institution. Whitney and Laboe (2014) also highlight the moment when Whitney was able to make the link between his training in student affairs theory and the Vincentian ethos of his institution. Once this connection has been made, individuals are ready to begin exercising agency with regard to the institutional identity of their workplaces.

Becoming an identity-carrier (social elaboration)

At this point, the individuals involved, regardless of role, are willingly serving as identity-carriers. They have recognized how their own values and skills fit with the identity and mission of the whole. They have committed themselves to participating in the continued creation and transmission of this identity. Most importantly, others recognize them as individuals who can act as resources with regard to institutional identity and turn to them for advice. We have already seen many examples of how individuals enact that role:

- Nolan points to how his president has an open-door policy and is accessible to answer questions about institutional identity and mission;
- Carrie describes how her administrator uses the Catholic identity and mission statement as a resource to make decisions regarding controversial issues;
- Penny and Isabelle both relate how developing personal relationships and friendships with identity-carriers allowed them to learn more about the institution's identity;
- Edward points to the connection between his experience of compassion within the institution and his sense of its purpose and identity;
- Harold creates opportunities for his staff to engage in reflexive, action-learning sequences in order to connect their work to the mission and identity of the wider institution.

The life-cycle of the identity-carrier is an example of what Archer (1995) calls double-morphogenesis. As individuals interact with the structures and cultures of their workplaces, they are transformed as much as they, in turn, transform those very same structures and cultures. If they so choose, they can become identity-carriers who facilitate the entry of others into the dialogical process of identity creation within these institutions.

Pathways for further research

The principles of critical grounded theory demand that all theory remain provisional. Within this methodology, there is a certain humility involved in developing and proposing theory. Theory is proposed but then offered for further examination by those who are closest to the reality under scrutiny. The model I present here – the proposed life-cycle of identity-carriers – is offered with this in mind. The developmental process related to identity-carriers would

need to be brought back into the field in order to see if this process can be traced more clearly in the professional life histories of people working within CHEIs. I offer this model as a beginning, as a pathway that invites further research into the life-cycle of identity-carriers.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the centrality of dialogue as a process through which individuals working in CHEIs interpret their experience of the balancing act. I showed how they are committed to maintaining the holographic character of their institutions and believe that they are all responsible for creating and maintaining institutional identity. I then introduced the role of identity-carrier, those who are able to facilitate the entry of others into the dialogical process of identity creation. I explained how identity-carriers themselves are 'made not born' by proposing a model that traces the life-cycle of identity-carriers. Finally, I suggest that this is just the beginning of the discussion on the role of identity-carriers. In the next chapter, we will continue this reflection by exploring the role of one particular type of identity-carrier: the mission officer.

Chapter 6: The hermeneutics of reflexivity and the morphogenesis of a mission officer

In the previous chapter, we examined how dialogue enables individuals to enter into the process of creating and maintaining institutional identity. Through conversation, people learn how to negotiate the balancing act between the structures/cultures of the church and the academy within CHEIs. However, dialogue is an external manifestation of other, more hidden conversations. The way individuals choose to enter (or not) into the identity-building dialogue is predicated on their internal reflexive processes. Archer (2003) identifies reflexivity or the ‘internal conversation’ as the personally emergent property (PEP) that allows individual actors to shape their social realities. In our case, it is through engaging in reflexive processes that people decide whether or not the work of the CHEIs fits with their own “ultimate concerns” (Archer, 2003, p. 125).

For Archer (2003), reflexivity is a conversation that is genuinely interior, ontologically subjective and causally efficacious (p. 16). Individuals use their reflexive powers to assess their own ultimate concerns, projects and practices. In doing so, they shape how they play their roles in society and, by extension, shape society itself. As actors¹⁴, we are incumbents of roles and our “aim is to occupy a role(s) which expresses our concerns – that which we value most and are readiest to live out” (p. 119). As such, roles are “the social expression of our personal identities” (p. 122). Archer contends that “we also have the causal power to personify our roles as Actors in a unique manner, to modify them incrementally, or to find a role personally wanting once we come to occupy it” (p. 122). Her research suggests, however, that individuals engage their reflexive capacity in different ways. As we saw earlier, she posits four types of reflexives – communicative, autonomous, meta-, and fractured – each with their own sets of ultimate concerns, projects and practices.

I continue now by exploring the role of mission officer through Archer’s model of reflexivity. Since the only ‘internal conversation’ to which I have direct access is my own, I offer my own reflections as an illustration of the morphogenesis of a mission officer. It is my hope that sharing these will reveal how this developing role can most effectively contribute to the

¹⁴ Archer (2003) sees the individual, like society, as a stratified reality and distinguishes between the person, actor and agent. Agency is a collective trait that individuals assert by being part of social groups. As such, agency can be either corporate (chosen) or primary (given). At the level of actor, individuals choose how they will play their social roles. It is the individual as actor that concerns us here. Finally, Archer (p. 119) sees the human person as reflexive being who can deliberate about both her/his roles (actor) and position in society (agent). These distinctions, in her view, are necessary to avoid eliding the individual with society and to allow internal reflexive process to remain truly internal.

identity-building dialogue within CHEIs. It is also my goal to expose the type of internal conversations that undergird the external conversations we explored in the previous chapter. I begin, therefore, by explaining how I came to play the role of mission officer within my particular context, St. Thomas More College. I continue by outlining Archer's (2003) model of reflexivity through my own experience as a meta-reflexive and naming the tensions that are, for me, inherent in the role. From there I highlight the specific concerns, projects and practices that allow me to most authentically inhabit the role and transcend these tensions. I then conclude by postulating how I, as a meta-reflexive mission officer, might best engage other types of reflexives in the identity-creating dialogue of CHEIs.

The genesis of a role

In 2010, I was seconded from my role in campus ministry to serve as the Special Advisor to the President on Mission Education. This was initially a temporary measure meant to support the new president during a transitional time in the life of our college. Our founders, the Basilian Fathers, were no longer able to provide personnel to serve the college and were withdrawing from their role as its sponsors. I believe that I was chosen for this role because I possessed significant institutional memory, already acted as an identity-carrier in my role as campus minister (though I would not have named it such at the time), and because I had previously shown leadership in college-wide strategic planning processes. Eventually the role was made permanent and I was given the title of Director of Mission and Ministry.

Part of what attracted me to the role was the fact that I was able to create it from the ground up, guided by the mission of the college and the emergence of the profession in American CHEIs. I am always most energized when I am creating something new.¹⁵

Therefore, the challenge of conceptualizing the role for our particular Canadian context was, and continues to be, very appealing. I am grateful for the support I have received from my colleagues and for the fact that the institution as a whole has entrusted me with this task. However, it is also truly challenging to play a role that lacks any direct precedents. It requires time and energy to define the role both for myself and with those around me. And, as I have come to understand through this research project, there are some inherent

¹⁵ We will see below how this pioneering energy is consistent with the meta-reflexive search for the ideal.

tensions within the role as it is currently structured and as I experience it. It is to these experience that I now turn.

“The unsettled life of a ‘meta-reflexive’” (Archer, 2003, p. 265)

I explore my experience of the role of mission officer through the lens of Archer’s (2003) model of meta-reflexivity. In doing so, I will contrast my own reflexive process with that of communicative and autonomous reflexives¹⁶. Meta-reflexives, for Archer, have a specific way of engaging with the structural/cultural enablements and constraints that are put before them. They are characterized by a sort of double-loop thinking that allows them to engage in primary reflexivity about the world in which they live but then also to reflect on the act of reflection itself. The meta-reflexive approach is not superior to that of the communicative or autonomous reflexive, it is just markedly different. While communicative reflexives engage in a ‘thought and talk’ process that links their own thoughts to those of others, and autonomous reflexives remain highly individualistic in their reflexive approach, meta-reflexives are focused on their own subjectivity and self-improvement for the sake of reaching an ideal self/society. As such, “pragmatism can never be the resort of the ‘meta-reflexive’. As people seeking to conform themselves and be conformed to their ideal, their responses are evaluative through and through” (p. 272). My experience of reading Archer’s (2003) chapter on meta-reflexivity was like looking in a mirror. Her outline of the meta-reflexive process has become a tool-kit for understanding the particular joys and tensions I experience with regard to the role of mission officer.

Archer (2003) begins by tracing the objective circumstances that characterize the meta-reflexives in her study. They, like autonomous reflexives but unlike communicative reflexives, are marked by contextual discontinuity. Both their early life experiences and the choices they make lead to clear shifts in social contexts through time. In my case, the first and decisive shift happened when I left home for a private, Catholic, all-girls boarding school at the age of 13. This took me away from my small, rural, Francophone home-town and onto a path of upwards mobility through education. The academically rigorous environment

¹⁶ Archer (2003) has a fourth category of reflexive – the fractured reflexive. For any number of reasons, the fractured reflexive is unable to actively engage in the reflexive process and therefore cannot effectively exercise agency within her/his social context. I, therefore, focus on Archer’s other three types of reflexivity here.

prepared me for entry into university and steered me away from my original life circumstances that would have likely seen me become a rural farmer/wife. This eventually took me out of my Francophone culture into the culture of the Anglophone majority within my province. It is important to note here, however, that I nevertheless experienced contextual continuity in one area - each of the educational environments I encountered was shaped by the Catholic intellectual tradition.

In her study, with regard to meta-reflexives, Archer (2003) sought to identify “the point at which these subjects became fired with their ideals” (p. 275). Each individual had had an experience that allowed their ideals to coalesce. In my case, this defining moment came with my participation in the Canada World Youth exchange at the age of 19. I took part in the seven-month exchange program between Canada and Zaïre (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and my eyes were abruptly opened to the realities of the Global South. This experience gave birth to my concern for social justice and opened my eyes to the effects of unjust social structures. I returned to Canada to complete a double honours degree in Sociology and Philosophy. I also became involved in the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. I did so because, unlike the government-run development projects I had witnessed in Zaïre, Development and Peace placed the self-determination of the local population front and centre. Already my choices were being influenced and shaped by the ideals I carried.

Archer (2003) examines how her respondents manage to dove-tail their concerns, namely their need to develop performance skills, enhance self-worth and maintain physical/mental well-being. Meta-reflexives have difficulty doing so since “they work for an organic integration between their concerns, rather than to a (principled) formula for their accommodation in hierarchical order” (p. 278). Meta-reflexives see things holistically and tend not to subordinate some concerns for the sake of fulfilling their ultimate concern. In contrast, according to Archer’s schema, communicative reflexives subordinate other concerns for the sake of their ultimate concern of fostering relationships with friends and family. Autonomous reflexives do the same in order to focus on their performance skills and prioritize work, negotiating other aspects of their lives in this regard. Meta-reflexives, on the other hand, try to keep all the plates spinning at once and often find themselves in situations where “the three concerns will not come into alignment with one another, or

they slip out of alignment” (p 279). In my own case, this desire for an integrated alignment of my concerns led me to take on role as a youth minister in a local parish rather than pursuing my initial goal of becoming a social worker. I felt that I could integrate my faith commitments with my desire to serve others while still making a modest income. However, it soon became apparent that traditional parish life would not fulfil my desire to contribute to building a more just world. I therefore began a Master’s program in Pastoral Ministry focused on Social Justice/Social Ministry. Meanwhile, as a pastoral team, we developed an Inner-City Ministry to encourage our own parishioners to connect with local social justice/service organizations. This experience put me in contact with Indigenous peoples struggling to find their place in an urban environment and eventually led me to take on a pastoral role in a small parish in the Dene community of Meander River, Northern Alberta. Note here again the contextual discontinuity that Archer describes as part of the meta-reflexive experience. Meta-reflexives regularly uproot themselves in the pursuit of their ideal. At that time in my life, the ideal was conceived of in terms of living in solidarity with marginalized peoples. In some respects, this ideal continues to be a motivating factor in the way I conceive of my professional role.

Meta-reflexives also have a keen sense of vocation or calling (Archer, 2003). Their vocation is to become the kind of person which will further their ideals and, as a result, their inner dialogue has a distinctly qualitative or evaluative tenor. Their internal conversation is often “about the recognition and nourishing of qualities tending toward the ideal, and the uprooting or taming of those which are antipathetic to it” (p. 266). For me, the concern with vocation was quite literal, perhaps because the language of vocation is so prevalent within the Catholic context. I characterize my involvement in pastoral ministry as a ‘calling’. Indeed, for five years, I served as the national coordinator of the *Celebrate the Call Project*, an effort to create a network of Catholic lay ecclesial ministers in Canada. But, this focus on a ‘calling’ to ministry, as we will see below, comes with built-in tensions since women continue to be excluded from ordained ministry within the Catholic Church.

Finally, Archer (2003) characterizes meta-reflexives as society’s subversives. While communicative reflexives tend toward social reproduction to maintain their close-knit family ties, and autonomous reflexives are strategic efforts to engage society in order to further their performance goals, meta-reflexives are willing to pay the costs associated with

the advancement of their ideals. They will often choose avenues of action that go against their own self-interest in order to align themselves more fully with their utopian vision. Therefore, they are the most likely to be involved in the transformation of social structures and cultures. They are also most likely to move onto other contexts when they become disenchanted with the possibilities for radical social transformation within their current circumstances. Herein lies the source of the tensions I experience with regard to the role of mission officer. At the heart of my angst with regard to the role of mission officer is the cognitive dissonance between being an identity-carrier of a Catholic institution and my desire to be authentic in my pursuit of a more just world. This angst is acute because I see within Catholicism both congruence and incongruence with my own values. I am inspired by the tradition of Catholic social teaching and the scriptural call to justice. I truly love its sacramental and liturgical tradition. However, I am often disheartened by those aspects of Catholicism that fall short of the ideal, as only a true meta-reflexive would! We now take a closer look at these tensions as an example of the meta-reflexive process that I experience with regard to my professional role.

[Naming the tensions](#)

The role of mission officer is inherently that of an identity-carrier within a Catholic institution. As I have previously outlined, my research shows that a variety of people play the role of identity-carrier within CHEIs. The mission officer, however, is one of the few who are specifically mandated to do so through the configuration of her/his role. Therefore, the intersection of the personal identity of the mission officer with that of the institution is a particularly fertile space of exploration. As an institutionally mandated identity-carrier, the mission officer is meant to be aligned with the institutional identity of her workplace. Internal tensions arise when there is a misalignment between her personal identity (in this case an idealistically driven, meta-reflexive one) and that of the institution that exhibits all of the constraints and enablements of a concrete social structure existing in the real world.

I am not alone in contemplating the intersection between personal identity and the role of identity-carrier, or social identity. Similar concerns are apparent among some of the identity-carriers I interviewed. For example, James, an administrator and member of a religious community, highlights the importance of maintaining a healthy distinction between

his personal identity and that of the institution while still admitting that the two are “pretty closely identified”. He recognizes that, as members of the religious community, he and his confreres are the face of the institution:

So, for many people here, the way they see us is almost indistinguishable... we're so closely identified to the institution. (James)

But, he goes on to clarify:

But, on a more personal note, obviously, I'm not [the institution], I'm James, and so I think it's healthy to have a sense of self that says, yes, I'm identified with the institution and my values as a [member of the religious community] are the values of the institution but yet I am not the institution and somebody was here before me and someone will come after me... (James)

For James, then, the relationship between his personal identity and that of the institution is quite seamless but he nonetheless feels that it is important that the two identities remain distinct. For Gwen, the relationship is sometimes more problematic even though she, too, expresses a clear alignment between her values and those of her institution. Her tensions arise with regard to how she is perceived by others in her role as an identity-carrier for the institution:

Yeah, so I think it can be politically hairy to be a Catholic sometimes. Particularly at a quite lefty institution as the [university] is. So, I think, even for those who identify as Catholic, like myself, in my own experience I feel like sometimes I want to disassociate from that identity, I don't want people to think that I have, for example, a certain opinion about gay people because of my Catholic identity. I don't want people to necessarily associate my own opinion about the role of women in society with the Catholic church. (Gwen)

Therefore, the need to negotiate the relationship between personal and institutional identity can be both an internal need (as in James's case) or part of managing external relationships (as in Gwen's case). Either way, this need to negotiate the intersection is a salient feature of being an identity-carrier.

In my own case, there are a number of flash-points that exist with regard to my personal identity and that of the institutional identity that I carry through my role as mission officer. These are compounded by the fact that, as a meta-reflexive, I have a heightened sense of an ideal that will always be held in tension with the real and messy nature of imperfect human institutions. These flash-points are evident, for me, in three main areas. First, like Gwen, I am uncomfortable with how Catholic teaching on homosexuality is often perceived and communicated. My own focus is on the pastoral care of gay, lesbian and transgendered students. I want them to experience a safe, inclusive space within our college. Indeed, I am convinced that, as a community, we successfully create such an environment. However, the fact remains that I am not in agreement with how the Catholic Church currently formulates its moral teaching with regard to homosexuality. This creates a point of dissonance between my personal identity and that of the institution. Voicing this tension out loud potentially jeopardizes my ability to serve as the public face of a Catholic institution.

Second, again like Gwen, I am confronted with cognitive dissonance with regard to the role of women in the Catholic Church. As someone who feels called to ministry and has proven herself capable of pastoral leadership, the fact that ordination remains closed to me (a structural constraint) is a source of tension. Not being ordained is also a liability with regard to how I am perceived as a leader within a Catholic institution. Some colleagues still work out of a model where ecclesial authority is limited to those who are ordained. Exercising leadership with regard to Catholic mission as a lay woman is still sometimes called into question. As a result, I find myself defending my positions more often than I believe I would have to if I were male and ordained.

Finally, and perhaps most acutely, I experience tension with regard to the history of the Catholic Church and its complicity with the colonial enterprise that served to systematically oppress and marginalize Indigenous peoples in Canada. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission brought out in bold relief the damage – the cultural genocide – that came about as a result of governmentally mandated, church-run residential schools. I recognize that these schools were part of a larger set of social structures that served to maintain the hegemony of the European settlers in Canada. However, I am truly ashamed of how, as a Church, we were complicit in that process albeit with the ‘good intentions’ of providing education to those in need. Given this history, I struggle to find ways to authentically move

forward the mandate of reconciliation put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) *Call to Action*. I experience acute tension in my role as an identity-carrier for a Catholic institution when I contemplate this history and as I work to overcome it.

Transcending the tensions

Authenticity is an abiding concern for a meta-reflexive. Therefore, the dissonance I experience between my personal identity and that of the institution whose identity I carry is particularly intense. I continually strive for an unrealistic ideal of complete convergence between my own concerns and that of the institution. So, then, how do I find a way to balance my own need for authenticity with a more realistic sense of how my personal identity can converge with that of the institution? Here I turn to Creed, DeJordy and Lok's (2010) study of embodied identity for inspiration.

Creed, DeJordy and Lok's (2010) study shows "how gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) ministers in two mainline Protestant denominations in the United States experience and address a salient institutional contradiction between their role in the church and their marginalized GLBT identities" (p. 1336). The authors trace a process through which these ministers come to exercise agency within their institutions in order to effect change. Indeed, their experience of contradiction between the various dimensions of their identities serves as the catalyst for this process. According to Creed, DeJordy and Lok (2010), these individuals go through three stages which culminate in their becoming active agents for change within their institutions: 1) internalization of institutional contradiction; 2) identity reconciliation work, and, 3) role claiming and role use (p. 1345). They term the work involved with this transformational process as "embodied identity work", recognizing that the experience can have intense emotional and even physical manifestations.

Reflecting on my own experience of the role of mission officer, I can identify similar stages to those Creed, DeJordy and Lok (2010) describe. The experience of tension I described above is akin to the 'internalization of institutional contradiction' and my examination of the role through Archer's (2003) lens of meta-reflexivity is similar to what they describe as 'identity reconciliation work'. What is left, then, is for me to enter into the final stage, that of 'role claiming and role use'.

Given my own history and ideals, it stands to reason that my exercise of the role of mission officer will focus on Catholic social teaching and the implementation of the TRC's *Calls to Action*. When negotiating the balancing act between the structures/cultures of the church and academy, I will tend to bring forward those Catholic social teachings, based on gospel values, that foster social justice and reconciliation within my particular context. In this, I make a particular contribution to the co-created identity of my CHEI while still remaining true to my own ideals.

The tension I experience between my personal identity and the identity-carrying role of mission officer, then, fuels my commitment to building relationships with Indigenous communities and my work to create structures that will truly indigenize the academy. As a meta-reflexive, I can creatively use my role to advocate for positive change. I can help my own institution connect with reconciliation processes that are currently happening within the church, academy and Canadian society in general. For example, both educational and ecclesial bodies in Canada are now actively seeking ways to respond authentically to the TRC. Shortly after the TRC (2015) released its summary report, Universities Canada (2015) published its response, *Universities Canada principles on Indigenous education*. These principles called its 97-member institutions to find concrete ways to respond to the TRC *Calls to action*. More recently, the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada (n.d.) published its own report outlining the initiatives that Canadian CHEIs have undertaken to support the work of national reconciliation. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (2016) has also released documents responding to the TRC. These relate to specific *Calls to action* (#48 and 49). The first CCCB document "expresses support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People" while the second "considers and repudiates illegitimate concepts and principles used by Europeans to justify the seizure of land previously held by Indigenous Peoples and often identified by the terms 'Doctrine of Discovery' and terra nullius" (CCCB, n.d.). Both these positions are direct responses to TRC *Calls to Action*. These actions mark the beginning of a much longer path toward reconciliation. As a way of authentically living out my role as a mission officer within my own particular time and context, I must fully engage in the work of reconciliation and link my own institution to these broader reconciliation-building movements.

Engaging other types of reflexives

The advantage of claiming my own reflexive stance within my role is that it also allows me to see the blind spots I might have in its exercise. While I am fuelled by an idealistic desire for authenticity and see my own work as a response to a particular calling, other types of reflexives will engage in the identity-building dialogue in different ways. Communicative reflexives will likely be more attuned to the community dimension of CHEIs and will want to foster cohesive relationships within these institutions. Autonomous reflexives will be concerned with the connection between institutional identity and their performance goals. As a mission officer, then, I must not only attend to my own need for authenticity but also to the needs of other types of reflexives. Creating reflexive spaces where all types of reflexives can come to understand how they can most effectively align their particular concerns with the roles they play within the institution is key. The development of such theoretically informed practices is the focus of the next chapter.

Conclusion: Creating a theoretically
informed practice

I began the EdD in 2013 searching for a theoretically informed practice. By that time, I had been working and developing the role of mission officer for three years and realized that my professional practice lacked a firm foundation. The EdD coursework began to create this foundation and provided the vocabulary to help me conceptualize how I could more effectively engage in this role. It is this research project, however, that has truly allowed me to claim solid ground for the practice of my professional role. In this chapter, I reflect on how my understanding of institutional identity as a balancing act, the centrality of dialogue and the development of identity-carriers, and the need to create reflexive spaces will serve to shape my future practice as mission officer. It is my hope that these reflections will also contribute to the wider discourse on this emerging profession within Catholic higher education. I begin by describing the nature of a theoretically informed practice but conclude by reversing the reflection to explore some pathways for the development of practice-informed theory. In doing so, I bring the iterative process of critical grounded theory into these final reflections of my EdD research project. I also respond to the dual mandate of the EdD to engage in research that informs both theory and practice.

Implications for practice

The balancing act and the role of the mission officer

In Chapter 4, we explored how the structures/cultures of both the church and the academy shape the experience of those working within CHEIs. Institutional identity was conceived of as an ongoing negotiation or balancing act between these two sets of conditions (SEPs and CEPs). Institutional identity is therefore construed as a dynamic process of continual co-creation by those working within these institutions. So, what does this conceptualization of institutional identity mean for the professional practice of the mission officer?

First, the need to normalize the balancing act becomes apparent. Rather than looking at Catholic identity as a static set of criteria that need to be identified and implemented within these institutions, the idea of institutional identity as a constant work in progress needs to be affirmed. Thinking of Catholic identity creation as an ongoing process of negotiation between the competing and complementary structures/cultures of the church and academy allows CHEIs to co-create their identities and allow for both continuity and change.

Continuity as these institutions connect with the traditions (CEPs) of the church and the

academy and change as they respond to the current needs of their particular social contexts. There is no cohesive, uniform way of being a Catholic higher education institution today. Rather, there is an identifiable, hermeneutical process that allows people to connect the ecclesial and academic traditions to their current practice as individuals and as institutions.

Second, there is a need to equip individuals to negotiate the balancing act. Walking on a tight-rope is risky business. Therefore, those working within CHEIs need to be able to identify those instances when they are negotiating competing sets of structures/cultures and understand how best to articulate the interests of the CHEI. Here, developing an understanding of the Catholic intellectual tradition, as well as the ethos of a classic liberal arts education, is important. The lists of criterion describing the Catholic intellectual tradition (Figure 1, above), for example, are helpful tools for individuals working within CHEIs to understand the traditions that are shaping their experience. Other resources which connect current employees to the heritage and tradition of their particular institutions will also help them negotiate the balancing act. Faculty, in particular, are pulled in competing directions by the structures/cultures of the church and the academy. Affirming the complexity of their roles and providing examples of senior faculty members who have successfully learned how to navigate this process ought to be part of the mission officer's role.

Third, institution-wide processes to articulate and communicate institutional identity are necessary. We saw earlier how participating in the creation of mission and Catholic identity statements and strategic plans helped individuals feel connected to the institutional identity of their workplaces. I have outlined elsewhere a process to help CHEIs produce Catholic identity statements (Rompré, 2014). I suggest that collaboration and consultation are at the heart of these processes. In light of this current research, it is such collaboration and consultation that enable individuals to imagine how to best negotiate the balancing act of institutional identity.

Fourth, in Chapter 4, we discussed how the configuration of physical space communicates institutional identity. Decisions about building design and décor ought to be made with this in mind. Building spaces that reflect our institutional priorities and communicate, through

symbol, what we value, is another way we can effectively transmit our institutional identities through time.

The development of identity-carriers and the role of the mission officer

In Chapter 5, we examined the centrality of dialogue to the successful negotiation of the balancing act and the co-creation of institutional identity. We saw how identity-carriers facilitate this dialogue and invite others into the process thereby allowing new members to become identity-carriers themselves. The life-cycle of the identity-carrier was provisionally put forward as an identifiable process. It would behoove the mission officer, then, to be attentive to each of the stages of this life-cycle in order to foster the growth of identity-carriers within CHEIs.

Upon entry, we recognize that individuals arrive with different levels of familiarity with the particular work of CHEIs. Some have been steeped in the tradition while others are arriving with less capacity to join in the conversation. The mission officer needs to be attentive to these diverse starting points as she works to create formal processes to orient new faculty and staff. As important as the formal orientation processes are, however, we have also seen how informal processes significantly shape people's understanding of their work environments. Facilitating these informal connections, perhaps through mentorship relationships between seasoned identity-carriers and newer faculty/staff, could serve as an effective practice for the mission officer.

The mission officer must also be attentive to the hiring practices themselves. How do formal hiring for mission practices sit along-side the common shoulder-tapping practices that have traditionally connected potential faculty/staff to these institutions? In my view, this must be a both/and approach. Enshrining discussions about mission and identity from the very beginning of the hiring process is necessary to help foster that awareness from the point of entry onwards. The informal, shoulder-tapping approach may continue to happen in an *ad hoc* manner but formal processes must nevertheless ensure that the dialogue around mission and identity is the norm from the very start of people's tenure within CHEIs.

Infusing a mission and identity focus in faculty hiring processes is particularly important and complex. The balancing act is already in play when faculty are being hired and there are

many competing priorities involved in the final decision. The tug-of-war between academic and ecclesial identities can be felt quite acutely during the search and hiring process for faculty. In term of hiring for mission practices, I prefer Heft's (2012) bottom up approach which fosters an awareness of identity and mission among those who will likely be part of faculty searches and hiring processes. In this way, the faculty themselves become more able to negotiate the balancing act with regard to the processes that directly impact their practice.

The orientation and formation of faculty and staff, as we saw earlier, happens both formally and informally. The formal processes are often *ad hoc* with a default position being more akin to 'orientation by osmosis'. The mission officer must work to create more sustainable approaches to the orientation of faculty and staff, approaches which provide them with the vocabulary necessary to engage in the dialogical co-creation of institutional identity. Workshops, discussion groups, faculty/staff retreats, all of these experiences must include a dialogical space for current identity-carriers to interact with newer faculty/staff, sharing their valuable experiences of how to negotiate the balancing act.

Feeling accepted and having a sense of belonging within the CHEI fosters people's ability to connect with its institutional identity. Community-building events are not simply for the sake of building morale, they also create a pathway for the exercise of agency with regard to institutional identity. While the mission officer cannot be solely responsible for the sense of community within an institution, recognizing its importance may justify her involvement in the more joyous and relational dimensions of college life! It certainly demands that the mission officer be a beacon of hospitality that communicates acceptance and regard for the work of all faculty and staff.

People do choose to invest in the work and goals of CHEIs. They become passionate about their role in the world and are willing to make personal sacrifices to support their missions. Recognizing this commitment and celebrating these efforts can be part of the mission officer's role. This can be done both informally and formally through recognizing service and creating ways to celebrate those who come to model what successfully embodying the ethos of Catholic higher education looks like.

Conflict can also be seen through the lens of identity creation. Times of conflict are times when individuals within organizations can assess whether or not their own personal values align with that of the institution. Using these difficult moments to connect back to the institution's core values and purpose is an effective strategy for clarifying institutional identity, albeit a challenging one.

Mission officers can also initiate connecting conversations or occasions when individuals can reflect upon how their own values and concerns link with those of the institution. These can be informal, one-on-one conversations or integrated into more formal institutional processes and events. Hosting a faculty/staff retreat that integrates discussion and sharing around professional life histories may be a fruitful exercise.

Finally, as identity-carriers are formed, they become collaborators with the work of the mission officer. Indeed, the role of mission officer, while embodied in a specific person, is one that is best shared with a cadre of personnel who are themselves identity-carriers within their respective roles. Identifying and working directly with other identity-carriers will facilitate the mission officer's ability to instill a sense of mission across the various sectors of the institution. The creation of a mission effectiveness team may be a way for identity-carriers to share their experiences and strategize ways to further communicate their collective vision.

Creating reflexive spaces and the role of the mission-officer

In Chapter 6, we saw how different types of reflexives ponder their social realities and exercise their roles in order to align these with their ultimate concerns. Communicative, autonomous and meta-reflexives engage differently with the social world and will function differently within an institution. Communicative reflexives will focus on significant relationships, autonomous reflexives on performance, and meta-reflexives on ideals. Each of these approaches are valuable building-blocks for a healthy institution. The communicative approach will ensure a sense of continuity and community within the organization, the autonomous approach will support excellent performance, and the meta-reflexive approach will help the institution remain focused on its ideals.

The mission officer needs to create reflexive spaces where individuals can ponder how their own concerns, skills, values and commitments mesh with those of the institution. She must provide opportunities where people can assess what is most important to them and discern if and how these values connect to the collective purpose of their CHEI.

I was also inspired by Harold's approach to connecting the work of his team with the wider identity and purpose of his CHEI. The use of an action learning sequence with specific teams to help them reflect on how their work connects with the mission merits further exploration. Can this approach perhaps be replicated in different contexts? I do know that the first-person action research project I conducted as part of the EdD taught module, *EDEV 508: Action Research for Leadership*, helped improve my own supervisory skills, enabling me to better connect the campus ministry team I lead with the concerns of the wider institution. Reflexive spaces can perhaps be created using the principles related to action learning/research.

I also noted in Chapter 6 the internal tensions that can sometimes emerge within identity-carriers. I described my own experience of angst regarding the sometimes-dissonant relationship between my personal identity and my role as identity-carrier. While this is my own experience, my research shows that it is shared by others who serve as identity-carriers. How do we deal with these tensions? How do we respectfully dissent and when do we choose to accept the contradictions that we experience? Moments of contradiction, in my view, ought not to be sublimated but should serve as beacons, alerting us, perhaps, to areas where institutional (or personal) transformation may be needed. Creating safe and discreet places for individuals to explore these issues will, in the long run, help the institution as a whole reflect on its core purpose and values in changing times.

This research project has given me the opportunity to have deep and meaningful conversations with individuals who are committed to the ongoing work of CHEIs. Their stories are inspiring and illustrate how people currently working in these environments successfully negotiate the balancing act, become identity-carriers and reflexively connect their roles with their ultimate concerns. Finding ways to hear and celebrate such stories will help CHEIs to continue to move forward both in continuity with their institutional histories and responding to the changing environments in which they currently find themselves. As a

practitioner-researcher, I commit myself to further research in order to highlight the experiences of those who dedicate their professional lives to the work of these institutions. I also see the need to work collaboratively with other researchers and leaders within CHEIs. I therefore propose the creation of a Canadian Catholic Higher Education Research Collective with goals similar to that of the Network for Researchers in Catholic Education in the UK.

Broader implications of this research

It is my belief, however, that this research has potential implications beyond the Catholic education context. The balancing act I have identified may be experienced in any number of complex institutional contexts. The role of identity-carrier likely exists in other contexts as well. Finally, the need to create dialogical and reflexive spaces for individuals to discern how they can exercise agency with regard to their institutional identities may well translate to broader organizational venues. I, therefore, turn now to the theoretical implications of my research.

This research brings the perspectives of those working on the front-lines of CHEIs into the discourse on Catholic institutional identity. It focuses on their experiences in order to create an understanding of how institutional identity is created and maintained in these contexts. This grassroots approach has provided new insight on the question of Catholic identity in general. It has highlighted the dialogical and reflexive processes that necessarily undergird the constant negotiation of the balancing act. Catholic identity, as lived within CHEIs, is an act of co-creation on the part of committed individuals working within these institutions.

This understanding of institutional identity also interacts with the literature on organizational identity. Here, we move beyond Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition of organizational identity as a set of core, distinct and enduring characteristics. This research provides support for more relational understandings of organizational identity, particularly those put forward by critical realist researchers who focus on the interplay between structure and agency within organizations. However, this research pushes the boundary on the critical realist framework as well. While Archer (2003) focuses on causal power of reflexivity (as a PEP) to shape individual agency, this research also highlights the role of dialogue in the creation of identity-carriers. Archer's communicative reflexive engages in dialogue to shape his/her agential activity but my own research suggests that dialogue may

play an even broader role in shaping individual ability to discern how his/her own concerns connect or not with those of the institution.

This project has taken an iterative approach to generating knowledge from the outset. I have moved between the literature, the data, and my own reflexive process to first articulate my research questions then ethically enter the field. I have returned to the literature and to my respondents at various stages of the process in order to create and propose provisional theories about the structures/cultures that shape CHEIs and the processes through which people come to exercise agency with regard to the institutional identities of their workplaces. I have employed the methodology of critical grounded theory to guide this process and, therefore, see this work as only the beginning of further research 'loops' that will see further testing of these theories in the field. Indeed, CGT may be a particularly useful tool for practice-based research since it interweaves theory, reflection and practice in a systematic and intentional way. For this reason, I believe that this project makes a valuable contribution to higher education research by bringing the principles of critical grounded theory into this disciplinary context.

[Pathways for future research](#)

There are clear limitations to my research. However, these limitations can also be conceived of as pathways for further research. First, I was only able to conduct interviews in three different institutions. While these sites were chosen to the explicit purpose of sampling the three different institutional types – federated, affiliated and stand-alone – in another sense they were quite homogenous in their approach to negotiating Catholic identity. Each was working to maintain its connections with both the church and the academy, giving rise to the balancing act I have described. However, we can imagine that other institutions make different choices in this regard. Some may choose to be more explicitly aligned with the needs of the institutional church and less concerned with academic standing, others may be in a position where they are letting go of their Catholic heritage in order to fit in more easily with their university counterparts. Further research would need to be done to see how institutional identity is experienced in such institutions. What my research reveals is a particular dynamic that exists within CHEIs that still desire to be *both* Catholic and universities.

Second, the way I recruited participants led to a sample that is likely biased toward those who are already committed to and appreciative of their institution's identity and mission. I sought to include people that represented different roles, genders and lengths of service. I purposely sought to be open to a range of religious backgrounds and beliefs. However, by using a purposive rather than a snowballing sampling technique, I ended up with respondents who are already well integrated into their institutions. I have not heard the stories of those who may currently feel alienated from the institutional identities of their workplaces. Further research is needed to overcome these limitations. I would suggest two pathways that are evident to me at this point. First, it would be valuable to do research on the professional life-histories of those working within CHEIs. That way my proposed theory of the development of identity-carriers could be tested. Second, research that links Archer's (2003) model of reflexivity with the exercise of agency regarding institutional identity could also be fruitful. At this point, I have only been able to share my own reflexive process. I would be interested to hear the perspectives of other types of reflexives on how they choose to exercise agency within their workplaces.

Finally, there is the question of how these findings might apply to the wider higher education context beyond the boundaries of CHEIs. In Chapter 4, I made reference to Becher's (2001) work on academic tribes and territories. Given the intensity of how faculty experience the 'balancing act', future research could explore how the literature arising from Becher's model might intersect with the insights generated within this study.

Dissemination of research findings

I plan to share my findings in a number of different venues:

- A presentation at the faculty/staff retreat in my own institution;
- A detailed report to the institutions that were part of my research;
- A report to the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada;
- Articles submitted to the *Journal of Catholic Higher Education*;
- Articles submitted to journals relating to organizational behaviour and critical realism. A starting point may be a presentation of my research as a case study in the development of CGT in the study of higher education;

- Papers presented at conferences sponsored by both the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (in the United States) and the Network for Researchers in Catholic Education (in the United Kingdom).

It is my sincere hope that this research will contribute to the wider dialogue on Catholic identity within CHEIs as well as the discourse on organizational identity in general.

Conclusion

I have been honoured to hear the stories of those I interviewed as part of this research project. They allowed me to enter into their professional and personal worlds and trusted me with their experiences. Their stories have shaped my understanding of how institutional identity is negotiated within CHEIs and how individuals exercise agency in its regard. They have helped me discern a theoretically informed practice in my role of mission officer and pointed me in the direction of further research. I will remain ever grateful for their willingness to allow me to tread on the 'sacred ground' of their lives.

Institutional identity within CHEIs is a work in progress. It is a negotiated and co-created reality. But, contrary to those who would ring the death knells on Catholic higher education, the stories of those I interviewed reveal that this mode of education delivery still inspires deep dedication and commitment. True, this is a time of transition. New ways of carrying identity are being developed and, sometimes, these processes remain tentative. However, there is ample evidence of a willingness to continue negotiating the balancing act, a balancing act that seeks to remain true to these institutions' academic and ecclesial traditions and continues to respond to the needs of the world today.

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APPENDIX A:
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research project title

Imagining Catholic higher education: Canadian perspectives

Invitation

You are being invited to participate in a research project that explores how people working in Catholic colleges and universities in Canada experience the institutional identity of their workplace. This research is part of my doctoral studies in higher education at the University of Liverpool. This information sheet outlines my research project in greater detail. Please read it carefully to discern whether you would like to participate. Feel free to discuss it with family and friends and to contact me if you have any further questions.

What is the purpose of this study?

Through this research, I hope to learn how individuals engage with the Catholic identity and mission of [insert name of institution] and institutions like it. I am interested in hearing a variety of stories of people who play different roles within Catholic colleges. In the long run, I hope to contribute to our understanding of how institutions create their identities and to make Catholic colleges better places to work.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen to take part because you represent a distinct voice within your institution. The role you play is important within your organization and I would like to hear how you see it interacting with the mission and Catholic identity of [insert name of institution]. This study seeks to hear the voices of a diverse group of people within your institution so I will try to hear from both men and women and from people who have served your college for different lengths of time. In the case where more than one person representing the same characteristics volunteers to take part in this study, the first person to volunteer has been chosen.

Do I have to take part?

No, you do not have to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to take part in this study, I will contact you to arrange a time to interview you either in person on [insert date] or via Skype. This interview will take place at a mutually agreed location to ensure privacy and will be approximately 1 hour in length. During that time, I will ask you to sign a consent form and then ask you a series of open-ended questions about your work at [insert name of institution]. You are free to decline to answer any of the questions I ask as well as to stop the interview process at any time. I will ask your permission to audio tape the interview so that I can later transcribe it. I will be the only one who has access to the original audio recordings. As I transcribe your interview, I will remove any identifying characteristics to ensure that you remain anonymous. Finally, if you like, I will send you a copy of the transcript to ensure that it is accurate and that I have removed any identifying characteristics to your satisfaction.

Who has given permission for this research to take place?

I have been given per permission by your university's administration to conduct this research at [insert name of institution]. In order to ensure that I have considered all possible ethical issues (such as ensuring confidentiality and anonymity), I have gained ethical approval from the University of Liverpool and from each of the colleges included in this study.

Expenses

Your college administration has agreed that these interviews can take place during your regular working hours. Therefore, no expenses should be incurred by you if you take part in this study and no reimbursement is due for taking part in this study.

Are there any risks in taking part?

There is a chance that we may discuss your personal religious beliefs. Some people might find this uncomfortable. I will not ask you any questions about your personal religious beliefs but these may come up as we discuss the Catholic identity of your workplace. Please know that your personal beliefs will be treated with the upmost respect, that there are no incorrect answers, and that your responses will be anonymized in order to protect your identity. Should you find any part of the interview process troubling, you will also have

access to University Counselling services. These services can be accessed at [insert relevant contact information].

Are there any benefits in taking part?

Taking part in this research will give you an opportunity to share your experience of working in a Catholic college. The findings of this study will help shape Catholic higher education in Canada by creating a better understanding of institutional identity and mission. It is my hope that this research will make Catholic colleges and universities better places to work.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let me know and I will try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. My contact information is listed below. If I am not able to resolve the problem to your satisfaction, you can contact either my supervisor, Dr. Anne Qualter, or the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool (their contact details are listed below). When you contact the Research Participant Advocate, please provide the name of the study, the name of the researcher involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

Will my participation be kept confidential?

In all cases, your name will be anonymized and your privacy safeguarded. No one within your institution or elsewhere will be informed of your participation in this study. The identity of your institution will also be protected using pseudonyms. You will be invited to review your transcripts for accuracy and anonymity. I will store the data I collect for at least 5 years in a secure location.

In the unlikely case that the research reveals criminal or unethical activity that necessitates a duty to report, then I will follow appropriate ethical procedures in keeping with [insert name of institution] regulations.

What will happen to the results of this study?

The results of this study will be included in my doctoral thesis. I will also create a final report that will be shared with the leadership of Catholic colleges and universities in Canada. I also hope to publish my findings in relevant academic journals.

What will happen if I want to stop taking part?

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at:

Gertrude Rompré
1437 College Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N 0W6
gertrude.rompre@online.liverpool.ac.uk / 306-966-8929 (w) / 306-221-0070 (c)

My doctoral supervisor can be reached at:

Dr. Anne Qualter
Senior Lecturer, Centre for Lifelong Learning
University of Liverpool
a.qualter@liverpool.ac.uk
0151 794-3280 (w)

The contact details of the Research Participant Advocate at the University of Liverpool are:

001-612-312-1210 (USA number)
Email address liverpooethics@ohcampus.com

Please keep/print a copy of the Participant Information Sheet for your reference.



Gertrude Rompré, researcher

**APPENDIX B:
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

Title of Research **Imagining identity in Catholic higher education:**
Project: **Canadian perspectives**
Researcher(s): **Gertrude Rompré**

**Please
initial
box**

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated [insert date] for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I understand that I can, at any time, ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.

4. I understand that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not be possible to identify me in any publications.

5. I understand and agree that my participation will be audio recorded and I am aware of and consent to your use of these recordings in order to create transcripts of this interview.

6. I understand that I must not take part if I am a student of [insert name of] College.

7. I would like to review a copy of the transcript of this interview to ensure accuracy and anonymity.

8. I would like a copy of the final report relating to this research.

9. I agree to take part in the above study.

APPENDIX C:

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE



Dear Gertrude Rompre		
I am pleased to inform you that the EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC) has approved your application for ethical approval for your study. Details and conditions of the approval can be found below.		
Sub-Committee:	EdD. Virtual Programme Research Ethics Committee (VPREC)	
Review type:	Expedited	
PI:		
School:	Lifelong Learning	
Title:	Imagining identity in Catholic higher education: Canadian perspectives	
First Reviewer:	Dr.Lucilla Crosta	
Second Reviewer:	Dr.Marco Ferreira	
Other members of the Committee	Dr. Martin Gough, Dr. Morag Gray, Dr. Kathleen Kelm, Dr. Janet Hanson, Dr. Victoria O' Donnell	
Date of Approval:	12 th January 2017	

The application was APPROVED subject to the following conditions:			
Conditions			
1	Mandatory	M: All serious adverse events must be reported to the VPREC within 24 hours of their occurrence, via the EdD Thesis Primary Supervisor.	
<p>This approval applies for the duration of the research. If it is proposed to extend the duration of the study as specified in the application form, the Sub-Committee should be notified. If it is proposed to make an amendment to the research, you should notify the Sub-Committee by following the Notice of Amendment procedure outlined at http://www.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/researchethics/notice%20of%20amendment.doc.</p> <p>Where your research includes elements that are not conducted in the UK, approval to proceed is further conditional upon a thorough risk assessment of the site and local permission to carry out the research, including, where such a body exists, local research ethics committee approval. No documentation of local permission is required (a) if the researcher will simply be asking organizations to distribute research invitations on the researcher’s behalf, or (b) if the researcher is using only public means to identify/contact participants. When medical, educational, or business records are analysed or used to identify potential research participants, the site needs to explicitly approve access to data for research purposes (even if the researcher normally has access to that data to perform his or her job).</p>			
Please note that the approval to proceed depends also on research proposal approval.			

Kind regards,
 Lucilla Crosta
 Chair, EdD. VPREC

APPENDIX D:
PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear [insert college name] Community:

I am currently a doctoral student at the University of Liverpool with an interest in how Catholic colleges in Canada maintain and create institutional identity. I am particularly interested in how individuals experience the Catholic identity of their workplaces. In order to learn more about the processes that shape Catholic identity at [your college], I am inviting people to be interviewed by me on this topic either in person [insert dates here] or via Skype.

Please know that this research has the support of [your college president] and will follow the strictest ethical standards. Your participation is entirely voluntary and I will protect your anonymity in this research. I will also give you the opportunity to review your comments before they are reported.

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me at gertrude.rompre@online.liverpool.ac.uk. Please share with me your preferred email address, the role you play at the college, and the length of your service there. This information will help me ensure that people with a wide variety of experiences will be able to take part in this study. Please note, however, that if you are currently a student at [name college], you are not eligible to participate in this study.

It is my hope that this interview will constitute an opportunity for you to reflect on your own role and reasons for working at a Catholic college. Your participation will help create a better understanding of how people experience that Catholic nature of their workplace and, in the long run, help improve institutional processes dealing with Catholic mission and identity. In short, I believe that your participation will help create Catholic institutions where all individuals find fulfilment in their work.

Thank you, in advance, for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Gertrude Rompré

**APPENDIX E:
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Introduction:

- Introduce myself and the purpose of this research
- Review Participant Information Sheet
- Explain the interview process (e.g. length of time, semi-structured, etc.)
- Ask if there are any further questions
- Ask participant to sign the consent form which includes permission to audio record the session
- Remind participants that they are free to decline to answer any of the questions that I pose and that they are free to withdraw from the interview at any time
- Define institutional identity as derived from the work of Albert and Whetten (1985): features of an institution that are core, distinctive and enduring.

Questions:

I'm going to start by asking you a few questions about yourself and the role you play at the college:

1. How long have you been employed at XXX?
2. Where did you work before you came to XXX?
3. What is your role here?
4. What initially attracted you to apply for a job at XXX?
5. What is it like for you to work at a Catholic college?
6. Do you think that the fact that this is a Catholic college makes a difference to you and to your job?

I'm going to move now to questions that relate to the institutional identity of your college:

1. Now that you have been here for X years, what would you say are the key defining characteristics of the college?
2. Do you think that there is anything unique about your college because it is Catholic? If so, how would you describe these unique characteristics? Have these characteristics stayed the same or changed over time?

3. What would you say is the mission and purpose of your college? Does your college do anything to ensure that faculty and staff understand its mission and purpose? If so, what?
 4. What would you say has had the most impact on your own understanding of the mission and purpose of the college?
 5. What would you say are the core values of the college?
 6. What sorts of things does the college do (behaviours) that are particular to its identity as an institution?
 7. How do you personally experience the institutional identity (mission, purpose, values and behaviours) of the college?
 8. Who would you say is responsible for creating and maintaining the institutional identity of your college?
 9. Does your role contribute to creating and maintaining the institutional identity of XXX? If so, how? How do you feel about that?
 10. How would you describe the relationship between your own personal identity and the institutional identity of your college? Does the fact that this is a Catholic college impact that relationship?
 11. In your experience, why might some people choose to engage more than others with the Catholic identity of the college? Is there something that the college could or even should do to encourage people to contribute?
 12. Is there anything else that you would like to add?
- Thank participants for their time. If they have asked to see a copy of their transcript to ensure accuracy and anonymity, let them know when to expect this from me. Acknowledge their contribution and invite them to contact me if they have any further questions or concerns.
 - Note date, time, setting and respondent code of the interview.

**APPENDIX F:
RESPONDENT REVIEW LETTER**

Dear [insert name],

I am writing to update you on my research, *Imagining Catholic higher education: Canadian perspectives*, and to ask for one more favour. I wonder if you might comment on my initial findings to ensure that I am reporting these as accurately as possible.

I have listed below, in no particular order, statements that represent emerging themes within the data. They do not represent the views of every individual I interviewed but they do recur across the transcripts. Would you be willing to read through these statements to see if they reflect your own experience or not?

I think that the easiest way to do so would be to **highlight the comments** below that *broadly reflect* your own experience and simply return this email to me. If there are any statements that you find particularly problematic, please feel free to comment on these.

Finally, if I don't hear back from you before Nov. 15 (I recognize that this is a busy time), I will presume that you find these statements reasonably accurate and will proceed with my analysis on that basis.

Here are the themes:

- We are more than an institution. We are a learning community.
- Our community is shaped by its relationship with other institutions, primarily the Roman Catholic Church and/or the university.
- Our dual identity – as a university and Catholic – is both a cause for celebration and a source of tension.
- We do not impose our beliefs on our students but create the conditions that foster an exploration of faith and gospel values.
- There are people who serve as identity-carriers within our institutions. These individuals may or may not be members of the religious community who founded our college/university.

- Our presidents and campus ministers often take the lead in fostering Catholic identity and mission in our institution. However, we believe that we all have a role to play in creating and maintaining our Catholic identity and mission.
- Our institutions are not perfect. Some people feel excluded and sometimes there is a climate of suspicion or distrust.
- Our institutions sometimes experience watershed moments that help us understand our identity.
- Participating in institutional processes helps individuals engage our Catholic identity and mission.
- We are wary of attempts to nail down our identity too precisely for fear of making it too narrow.
- Our Catholic identity is a factor when we make decisions as an institution.
- We are small, welcoming communities.
- We are actively working to find ways to respond to the Calls to Action of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* and to engage Indigenous communities.
- We have experienced compassion in our workplace.
- Sometimes we need to build trust before we can talk about our Catholic identity.
- Our physical space/location shapes how we express our Catholic identity.
- Dialogue across diversity is a key component of who we are.
- Sometimes as institutions we push the boundaries of current understandings of Catholicism.
- We desire to educate the whole person – mind, body and soul.
- We believe that our openness to faith/spirituality allows for broader conversations in our classrooms.
- It is difficult to communicate our identity to the wider community. People sometimes think that we are a seminary or exclusively for Catholics.
- Many of us see our work as a vocation.
- We can tell we are a Catholic institution by the fact that we have access to liturgy, worship space and campus ministry.

- We have a desire to serve the community and foster social justice.
- We are a meeting place for diverse ideas, beliefs and people.
- We are united in our care for students.

Thank you for helping further our understanding Catholic higher education in Canada. I remain grateful for having had the opportunity to interview you last [insert month] as part of this project. I look forward to our paths crossing again in the future.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bertrude Rompié".