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The wedding complex: The social and occupational organization of a rite of passage

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THE WEDDING COMPLEX: THE SOCIAL
AND OCCUPATIONAL ORGANIZATION
OF A RITE OF PASSAGE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Sociology
and the
Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Trudy Knicely Henson
July 1974
Accepted for the faculty of the College of Graduate Studies
of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of a thesis is not due solely to the efforts of one person. Throughout such a project a number of people provide invaluable support and assistance, and this thesis is no exception.

I would like to thank Dr. Wayne Wheeler for his guidance, time, and patience. But most of all I would like to thank him for the moral support he provided and which enabled me to undertake and complete the task.

I would also like to thank Dr. William Clute and Dr. Robert Butler for their time and cooperation as members of my thesis committee.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the men and women--bridal consultants, formal wear consultants, florists, and photographers—who so freely gave of their time and knowledge during the interview stage of the research. None of these people had anything to gain by being interviewed, and yet each person who was contacted cooperated fully. Obviously, without their cooperation this project could never have been completed.

To all these people and to many others who provided support, encouragement, and time, thank you.
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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

The wedding as a rite of passage plays an important part in contemporary American society. The planning, staging, and recording phases of a formal wedding directly involve a number of people. The research for this thesis focuses on four of the occupational groups—bridal consultants, formal wear consultants, florists, and photographers—normally involved in the three phases of a formal wedding. Utilizing participant observation and interview techniques I gathered data relating to the duties, training, and regulation of each occupational group as well as the attitudes of representative members of each group toward their work, other members of their own occupation, the bridal couple, and each of the other occupational groups studied.

This research has two goals. The first is to describe the social organization resulting when the four occupational groups and the bride and groom come together in the wedding complex. The second is to analyze each occupational group for characteristics of a profession and, as a consequence, to determine whether any of the groups are professions or are becoming professionalized.

The pages which follow deal with the data gathered in the field and its analysis. Chapter II outlines my rationale for choosing the subject of the wedding complex and includes a description of the formal wedding, its planning and preparation. The latter initiates the reader
into the intricacies of undertaking such a rite.

Chapter III is devoted to research techniques and strategies. It includes a definition of the wedding complex and its components, a description of the sample, and a discussion of the research techniques and how they were effected.

One response of the community to the wedding rite—a Bridal Fair—is described in Chapter IV. The motivation behind the production of a Fair, its organization, and a description of its make-up are followed by an evaluation of the functions of such a phenomenon and its implications for the wedding complex.

Chapter V presents the data gathered from the research. Data for each of the four occupational components is used to develop a picture of that component—training procedures, duties, relationships with other segments of the wedding complex, and members' attitudes toward themselves and the other components.

The data presented in Chapter V are analyzed in Chapter VI in terms of the first goal of the research, examining the social organization of the wedding complex. The most prevalent organization pattern and the two alternatives which emerge are diagramed and discussed.

In order that the reader may comprehend the particular analysis of each component presented in Chapter VIII, Chapter VII is a review of the concept of profession. It includes the ideal type profession to which each component is compared and some comments concerning the professionalization process.
Using information and analysis from Chapter V as the base, Chapter VIII compares each component to Greenwood's (1957) ideal type profession. The description of the wedding complex found in Chapter VI serves to illuminate the relations of complex members with each other and with its nexus, the bride and groom. The nature of such relationships has an important bearing on the position of a particular component vis-a-vis a nonprofession-profession continuum. One dimension of the ideal type profession involves determination of the nature of the relationship between the practitioner and those seeking his services—the component-nexus relationship. A non-profession is characterized by a nonprofessional-customer relationship and a profession by a professional-client relationship. In relations with other components it may be significant to determine the degree of autonomy a component commands in regard to work relationships with other components.

Finally, Chapter IX summarizes the data and analysis of the wedding complex, evaluates the ideal type concept of profession, and presents conclusions.
Chapter II
THE FORMAL WEDDING: OVERVIEW

Introduction

In the course of a lifetime, any individual makes a number of transitions from one role or life-phase to another. These transitions may go unnoticed or they may be formally acknowledged by the individual and other members of the society through rites of passage, ceremonies symbolizing the changes in personal status and role (Van Gennep, 1960: 1-13). Anthropologists have long recognized the importance of these rites for various groups and/or societies and have discussed them at length. As a result, one thing seems clear: rites of passage play more important parts in some societies than in others, with preliterate societies seemingly more dominated by those which are more formally defined than urban industrialized or highly civilized societies (Van Gennep, 1960: 1-3).

In contemporary American society, advanced in civilization and industrialization, the number and kind of rites in which an individual is likely to be involved varies with such factors as religion (bar mitzvahs, christenings), social class (debutante parties, fraternity or sorority initiations), and educational level (graduation from high school, college, graduate school, etc.) to mention but a few. There seem to be few major rites of passage observed by American society as a whole. One which is generally acknowledged, however, is the wedding
ceremony. Its principal participants, the bride and groom, make up two per cent of the total population of the United States in any one year (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1971). Nationally the average amount expended on the wedding-as-rite is $1750. This amount does not include outlays for wedding-related purchases such as gifts and items purchased by the couple for their first household. That, on the average, amounts to another $7,500. By 1975 the U.S. Census Bureau projects that marriages per year will reach the 2,500,000 level (Bridal Fair, Inc., 1971). This in itself presents an impressive picture of the impact of weddings-as-rites on the economy of the nation and of the number of persons directly effected by the rite.

Despite the obvious importance of the wedding in American society, there has been little research by social scientists on the wedding and the various groups of persons and their occupations involved. The subject has been left almost entirely to journalists writing special interest articles on wedding traditions for women's

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1 Much of the information in this paragraph was provided by Ron Brodkey, National Sales Manager for Bridal Fair, Inc. and is based on data from several market research studies. The studies were commissioned by such groups as Modern Bride. The most widely cited of the studies was conducted by the Sindlinger research organization. Although Mr. Brodkey has a vested interest in presenting a positive image of Bridal Fair, the statistics presented in our interview were those used in promotional materials aimed at potential exhibitors for the Fairs. Since these exhibitors are also business persons who are familiar with the market it is reasonable to assume that the information presented to them is reliable. For a more detailed discussion of Bridal Fair, its goals and organization, see Chapter IV.

2 From the Sindlinger Study, a market research project sponsored by Modern Bride. Reported in Bridal Fair, 1971.
magazines, etiquette authorities, and the editors of such magazines as *Modern Bride* and *Bride's Magazine*. An example of popularized writing on the subject is Marcia Seligson's *The Eternal Bliss Machine* (1973). Her reasons for writing her expose are best summarized by her comment in the book's Introduction that "...there is something hilarious about weddings...", and they are "...funny and grotesque and wildly absurd" (Seligson, 1973: xi-xii). Despite frequent use of the word "sociological" throughout the book, her intention seems to have been to write an amusing critique of the American way of wedding, rather than a serious objective study of a social phenomenon.

With this general introduction and before going any further, a look at the formal wedding is in order. What decisions must be made? Who is involved? How much time is needed for planning and completing the rite?

The Formal Wedding Briefly Described

Assuming a proposal of marriage has been made and accepted and a date for the wedding has been established, plans must be made for the actual ceremony. According to those bridal consultants interviewed in the course of my research, planning should start at least six months before the wedding date. Most suggested that a year would be preferable. At the beginning a decision must be made concerning the scale of the wedding. This includes an approximate budget, the number of participants in the wedding party, and the guest list.

After these decisions have been made, the couple or more often
the bride, can begin to search for the bridal gown and bridal attendants' costumes. This step is often first for several reasons. First, most bridal shops do not carry stock in full ranges of styles, colors, and sizes. Instead they work with a line of sample styles in one or two middle-range sizes. After selections are made, the dresses are individually ordered from the manufacturer for each bride and attendant. Depending on the time of year, the dresses must be ordered two to three months in advance to insure arrival in time for alterations, etc before the ceremony. Christmas, June, and August appear to be the three most popular wedding periods, so in planning a ceremony for those times three months is needed for delivery of special clothing from manufacturers. Second, if the bride plans to have a bridal portrait made in her gown to display at the wedding reception, the photographer's sitting should be five to six weeks before the wedding. This obviously means that the dress must be ordered far enough in advance for it to be delivered, altered, and/or pressed before the sitting with an additional five weeks before the wedding for development of proofs, choice of pose by the bride, and production of the finished portrait. Third, the choice of color scheme and design of bouquets and floral arrangements and men's formal wear usually depends on the final selection of the color and style of the bride's and attendants' gowns. Even though the bride may have a color and style in mind, she may change her mind when she finds what is available or, at the very least, will find that there are many shades of green, blue, pink, and the like from which to choose. Her choice
of color shade may well determine the color of formal shirts and
tuxedos for the males and variety or color of flowers for attendants
and decorations.

A final factor in making the selection of the bride's gown first
is its impact on the total budget. Although there may be a wide cost
range allowed, bridal gowns involve a wide range of prices. For
example, during the participant observation stage of my research, the
least expensive gown and veil combination I encountered was one costing
$80. Because I specified a low budget wedding when shopping, I was
not shown more expensive gowns, but a survey of bridal magazines which
picture and price ready-made styles generally available across the
country reveals that the price for a bride's gown can easily reach
$600 or more and veils are often separately priced from approximately
$20 for a ready-made version to well over $100 for an original.
Having the veil specially made does not appear to be unusual even for
less expensive dresses. The rule of thumb is that if the bride chooses
a less expensive dress there will be more money for flowers and
photographs, but if her selection costs several hundred dollars or
more there will be less money for flowers and photographs. The
wedding dress, thus, has considerable ramifications on not only style
and color scheme for the ceremony but also on lavishness of decorations
and number of photographs for the ceremony itself.

After the color scheme and clothing style are established,
clothing for the groom and other male members of the wedding party
may then be selected and the appropriate number of outfits reserved
for the date of the wedding. This is most often accomplished through a rental establishment specializing in formal clothing for men. Because most shops handle only one or two brand names of formal wear and a limited number of styles and colors—After Six, Palm Beach, and Lord West being the major distributors—a comparison of two or three establishments will probably be undertaken to locate the style desired. Decisions must be made about color of the tuxedo and the color and style of shirt. Most shops rent all the outer apparel, referred to as formal wear, needed by the male contingent, including shoes or stylish boots, cufflinks, suspenders, and so forth. The cost for each outfit will vary depending on style—classic or high fashion, straight leg or flare pant, et cetera—but there appears to be little price differentiation from shop to shop with the approximate range being $21 to $35. Formal wear for weddings accounts for 40 per cent of the total formal wear business each year (Brodkey, 1973). Once the formal wear decisions are made, usually by both bride and groom, and the date is booked with the shop all that remains to be done in this area is to see that each male in the wedding party is measured and that the clothes are picked up the day before the wedding and returned the day after.

Although this step could conceivably come later on, the bride will usually try to make all apparel arrangements at approximately the same time while styles and colors are uppermost in her mind. Also, the majority of formal wear consultants in this study preferred two months advance booking, especially in busy seasons. Because most clothing establishments own all their rental merchandise plenty of time must be allowed to measure each male attendant to insure that a particular style or color is not over committed for particular periods or dates.
With apparel decisions completed the next one will usually be selection of a photographer to take the formal bridal portrait and the wedding "candids", as those pictures, both posed and unposed, to be taken on the wedding day itself are termed. Since most brides know little about the technical and artistic aspects of photography, price will often play a major role in selection of the photographer. At this juncture, too, as with the bridal gown, there is a wide range of prices from which to choose. If the bride chooses to hire a full-time photographer working out of some sort of studio, the minimum she can usually expect to pay for a portrait and small album of twelve 8X10 color photographs is $100. Because many brides with formal weddings want more than twelve photographs, $100 is a low amount. Other package deals are available from most photography studios, range from $110 to $240. In addition, many studios charge a sitting fee of about $25 for the bride's formal portrait and this price rises with the size and choice of natural color or oil. Beyond these, additional photographic prints, a parents' album or two, and a choice of a variety of album covers for the photographs increase the prices. In at least one instance, an additional fee was required if the photographer was required to stay more than four hours and one respondent mentioned a special fee for moving from wedding to reception if the two were not in the same location.

Aside from price lists, the future bride is usually shown samples of photographs which the photographer has taken at previous weddings and the studio walls usually abound with formal bridal portraits.
From these she can get an indication of the kind of pictures she might expect. Armed with this information she will engage a photographer in her price range who is also available the day of her wedding. If she plans to have a portrait made she must also arrange for a date for that far enough in advance to have the finished product to display at the wedding reception or, at the very least, in time to get black and white glossy prints for the newspaper reports of the wedding. In order to have the sitting in her wedding apparel she will also have to arrange to transport the gown and veil to the photographer's studio and back without damage.

With clothing and photographer ordered or reserved, the bride is ready to choose a florist and arrange for decorating the wedding locale. Among florists in the sample, prices were fairly uniform, so the bride will normally choose the florist on other than cost criteria. One florist reported that his experience was that a bride will engage the same florist her mother uses for other occasions. Another florist suggested that most women, by the time they arrange their own wedding, have participated in or attended other weddings and have seen how certain florists have performed. Brides thus are inclined to choose the florist for their wedding whom they judge as having done well at someone else's wedding. A third possibility is to narrow the choices down to the florist nearest the wedding location. A fourth basis for choice, based on my own observation and experience, is the general attitude the florist displays when the bride initially seeks information. Some florists show more concern than others for making certain
that all the details have been remembered, for suggesting alternatives, and finally, for pleasing the bride. In some cases, a fifth consideration may be the most important. Without exception, the florists interviewed said they do not service weddings on certain holidays. If the wedding is to be held Mother's Day weekend, Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, or Valentine's Day, the bride's major concern might well be finding a florist who will accept her wedding. One respondent conceded that they would handle such a wedding if the family were long-time customers and another said she would see that the wedding had flowers if the bride had been turned down everywhere else.

After the florist has been chosen, regardless of criteria, the final decorating decisions remain. Together the bride and florist must work out variety and color of flowers, their placement, and whether or not there will be candles—lighted or unlighted—which require renting candelabra. The candelabra will in turn require further decisions about whether they will be decorated with ribbon; or ribbon and greenery; or ribbon, greenery and flowers. Also to be considered are such matters as to how the family seating will be marked (ribbon, flowers, et cetera), whether a kneeling bench is needed and if so, whether it should be decorated, further, whether an aisle runner is available or the florist is to provide one, who will have corsages, what kind of boutonniere for the men, what style bouquet the bridesmaids shall carry, and so on through numerous details.

At this juncture, a large number of people are already directly involved in the wedding rite: bride and groom, two sets of parents,
bridesmaids, groomsmen, at least one bridal consultant and one formal wear consultant, a florist, and a photographer and their associates. Before the marriage ceremony is completed there will be friends and relatives to serve punch, preside over the guest book, and cut the cake, a caterer, the minister, an official to issue the marriage license, a printer for wedding invitations, and many others directly or indirectly effected by and having input into the single wedding ceremony.

The Research Introduced

The preceding summary provides the reader with an indication of the scope of a wedding in terms of its financial outlay and the number of people involved. Obviously, these persons are in interaction with each other and that interaction takes place over a period of time much longer than the actual rite. For many of those involved—bridal consultant, formal wear consultant, florist, and photographer, for example—the rite itself is secondary to the activity of planning and preparation which it stimulates. None of the people in these four groups of persons is normally included in the five collectivities personally and intimately interested in the union represented by the actual rite itself (Van Gennep, 1960: 118-9). They are not members of the sex groups as represented by bridesmaids and groomsmen, nor of the patrilineal or matrilineal descent groups. Neither are they members of either of the two kin groups or members of groups such as fraternities or occupational associations to which the bridal couple or their
parents belong. At best, they might belong to Van Gennep's category of persons who are the local group consisting of village or quarter of the city, but even this, in a complex society, does not necessarily result in personal-affective interest in the marriage. At best, personal involvement of these four categories of persons in the result of the rite is likely to be limited to their general social values regarding the general value of the family and the morality of a legally recognized union.

If the idea is accepted that a large number of people without personal commitment to the actual wedding rite are involved in preparing for and recording the event, the question then arises as to whether they have received any attention from social scientists. The answer appears to be "no". Textbooks dealing with marriage and the family typically include courtship prior to the rite and the marriage afterward with a possible brief section of two to four pages dealing with a comparison of ritual traditions in two or more societies (Bell, 1971). For whatever the reason, be it lack of interest, oversight, or a feeling that the subject is unimportant, social scientists have not included these planning and service components in their studies of the family. These, as mentioned previously, have been left to the popular press and editors of such periodicals as Bride's Magazine and Modern Bride and to marketing researchers who develop such phenomena as Bridal Fairs. (See Chapter IV)

Perhaps this lack of examination is an oversight or socially fostered ignorance. Most of the respondents in this study indicated
that the groom in American society plays little part in the preparation for the wedding. Since men do make up the majority of social scientists and therefore of those researching and publishing in the social sciences, their very lack of experience and involvement with these groups in this context can be seen to diminish consciousness of the part bridal and formal wear consultants, photographers, and florists play in planning and carrying out the wedding rite.

Because I have had experience and involvement with bridal and formal wear consultants, florists, and photographers while planning my own wedding and because I am interested in them and do think they are important to the understanding of society, I have chosen to study them. Obviously there are a number of directions from which to approach the subjects, from their effect on the ceremonial aspects of culture to an in-depth study of each group in the manner of Becker, et al., and their treatment of the medical profession in Boys in White. By choosing, as I have, to study the organization within and among the groups and the position of each group in regard to a nonprofession-profession continuum, I will have finally covered many of these possibilities in general. Thus enough insight may be generated to suggest the focus of further studies of these occupational complexes and their part in contemporary society.

The object of this project is to study four work groups of persons who are involved in the planning and servicing of the wedding ceremony and which are included in most formal weddings. The first step will be to examine the organization and interaction aspect of
the groups, or complex components. I will handle this in three stages. First, I will briefly sketch the internal organization of each component. Then I will examine the interaction between each component and the nexus of the complex, the bridal couple. Finally, I will discuss the organization among the four components. This will of necessity be a general examination since an in-depth study of any one of these areas could obviously constitute a major project in itself.

The second and larger phase of this research involves examining each component with respect to the ideal type of a profession as described by Greenwood (1957). The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether or not these wedding-related occupations can be considered professions and, if not currently professions, whether they are moving toward professionalization. The rationale for this particular approach is two fold. First, and more important, is an interest in the positions of these people who play such important roles in the wedding complex. How do they view those who seek their skill? And how are they, or should they be, viewed in turn? The perspective of profession, marginal profession, and nonprofession seems more conducive than any other for answering these two questions. Second, and possibly more important to the discipline of sociology or at least that segment interested in occupations and professions, is that use of this approach might add something to the previous work in the area. As Pavalko (1972: 2) suggested, "A very useful exercise might be to use the [professional] model developed by Greenwood (1957) to assess the 'professional status' of a variety of occupations...."
Chapter III

GRADUATE STUDENT AND BRIDE;
SAMPLE, STRATEGIES, AND TECHNIQUES

In the previous chapter, I outlined reasons for choosing to study the general area of weddings and four components of wedding-related organizations in particular. In this chapter I shall first describe the sample upon which this research is based and how it was chosen and then discuss the research methods used, including a rationale and evaluation for each method.

The Wedding Complex and Its Components

As has already been mentioned, the four categories of occupations in the wedding complex I chose to examine are bridal consultants, formal wear consultants, florists, and photographers. The choice of this particular combination was based on an initial assumption that these are the groups included in planning most formal weddings. With my research concluded I find that the original assumption was correct. During the initial stage\(^1\) of the research the questions most often asked by the respondents were "Have you ordered your dress?", "Have you reserved formal wear?", "Who is doing your flowers?", and "Have you booked a photographer?" The only other decision about which I was

\(^1\)My status during the initial, or participant observation, stage was that of bride-to-be just beginning to plan my wedding.
frequently asked, concerned the choice of location (church, et cetera) for the ceremony. Several bridal consultants supplied me with planning and etiquette booklets distributed to brides-to-be by the bridal stores. These four categories were mentioned in each booklet as major decision areas.

For the sake of clarity and simplicity, the four components will be referred to in one of two ways for the remainder of the discussion. When speaking of the entire group of four components the term "wedding complex" will be used. Complex by definition implies a relationship of two or more parts. As the discussion in Chapter VI will reveal, on one level the four components may be related to a greater or lesser extent in any number of different kinds of situation. On another level, that of a particular wedding, at least one representative from each component is part of a relationship formed by the common goal of planning and presenting the wedding. In this case the bride and groom serve as the nexus of the complex. When fewer than all four of the components are under discussion the components themselves will be named as they have been previously: bridal consultants, formal wear consultants, florists, photographers.

The Sample

The sample for this study was developed component by component. I began by noting all the Omaha bridal shops listed in the telephone
This initial list included eight shops. I soon learned that one of these had gone out of business, leaving seven. Of these, two were part of the same department store chain. One was located in the main store and the second in a shopping center. My first impression was that the bridal department in these two cases was not run by the store itself but by an outside interest which leased the space. When I learned later that this was not the fact and that the store operated both shops using one buyer, I decided to continue using the two. This gave me a chance to compare two shops which one would expect to be much alike in policies and orientation to the public. Of the remaining five, two were located in large department stores, one in a small shop largely devoted to women's ready-to-wear clothing, one was a small bridal shop which carried only outer apparel for the females in the wedding party, and a last one was a complete wedding shop which offered not only the bride's and attendants' gowns, but also formal wear, a florist, and a photographer. In the period since the research began at least three new bridal shops have opened in the Omaha area. Because one of these new shops, another of the complete

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2 One bridal department and one formal wear shop were eliminated from the study because I had visited them while planning my own wedding just prior to the decision to do this study.

3 From this particular shop I had hoped to include the representatives for the other three components also. However, I was not allowed to talk with either the florist or photographer but was informed that I would work through the bridal consultant instead. She also acted as formal wear consultant.
service type offering clothing for both male and female members of the wedding party and florist's and photographer's services, encompasses a branch of a formal wear shop included in the initial sample for the second phase of the research resulting in data from a total of eight bridal consultants in the final analysis.

Each time I approached a bridal consultant in the initial or participant observation stage of research I asked her if she could recommend a formal wear shop, a florist, and a photographer. Several consultants furnished names. These then made up the nucleus of the remaining three components which were supplemented by telephone directory listings. The initial list of formal wear establishments included seven shops, all that were then listed in the telephone directory plus one which had recently opened. Of these seven, five were strictly given over to formal wear. The other two were departments within larger stores. All seven clothing shops were visited during participant observation. Two were dropped from the sample before the second phase of the research. In one of the department store areas I was unable to find anyone to wait on me despite numerous visits and a direct request for assistance. In the second instance, a formal wear specialty shop, I found that the type of shop was well represented in my sample and both stages of research suggested that these shops were very much alike. I therefore decided to eliminate one shop from the sample and determined it would be this particular shop because it was not mentioned by respondents in this or other components. The final sample included five formal wear representatives.
The initial sample of florists also included referrals and those selected from the telephone directory. In the latter instance, an overwhelming number were listed so choices were based on advertisements in the Yellow Pages. Only those florists making reference to wedding service by picturing a bride or advertising that they specialized in weddings were chosen. I began with a list of six florists. One independent shop in this original group was dropped because upon initial contact, the wedding designer said he would be on vacation on the date in question. He referred me to another florist who was not on the original list so I substituted this one for the other in my sample. A second shop in South Omaha was also dropped. When told that "my wedding" was to be held on a Sunday the clerk informed me that they did not handle Sunday weddings because they are closed on that day. In this case I also did not have access to the wedding designer because she was on vacation the day I made initial contact. Since I would not have research material for that shop from the first phase I decided to eliminate it from the sample. My final florist sample included five shops. Three of these were independent entrepreneurs. The remaining two were located in large department stores but were independent enterprises whose ties with the store were in the form of leased space arrangements. The managers of these department store based, independent shops keep separate records, hire their own employees, and have shop policies not under the control of the larger store.

For the fourth and final component—photographers—a sample was
chosen in the same way as that of the florists. I began with a short list of referrals from the other component representatives and added several names from the telephone directory based on advertising of wedding portraits and photographs. The initial sample included seven photographic studios. All seven were used for the entire study and no additional sources were added. Of the seven all had independent studio locations. One photographer also was affiliated with a major department store where he had an additional leased space studio. Since this research was completed this particular photographer has severed ties with the department store and become affiliated with a newly opened bridal shop which offers complete service. Another of the photographic enterprises studied was owned by the same department store but was separately located and had no visible ties with the store. It has moved into the first photographer’s leased space and is now openly connected with the parent store.

In all components, I planned to include respondents located in various parts of the city. As it developed, however, rather than being scattered over the entire area, the members of each component tend to be in one of two locations— in or near downtown along the main westward arteries or in west Omaha shopping centers. I do not think this is due to a bias in my sample since for bridal and formal wear consultants I included all those listed in the Omaha telephone directory and the photographers and florists I chose were recommended by other respondents or advertised wedding services. Of these only one, the florist shop which was dropped, was located away from these
two areas. Obviously, there are florists and photographers in north and south Omaha but for whatever reason they do not choose to advertise wedding-connected services.

Strategies and Techniques

The arrangement of sections for this chapter does not necessarily indicate the order in which they evolved in actual practice, rather it is a result of logical relationships which will make the whole picture easier to comprehend. However, to avoid an erroneous impression that the research took form in the sequence of presentation, I should suggest, as previously implied, that the choice of general categories was made first, after which research techniques were tentatively chosen.

Selection of respondents for the initial component, bridal consultants, was made and as the first, or participant observation stage of the research was being carried out, respondents were selected for the other components. Each component was researched in its own time and for each successive component some respondents were added as the result of referrals from the preceding group. The project was thus a simultaneous development of sample and research method rather than any preordered sequence.

The research for this study was done in two phases. The first involved use of the participant observation technique and the second was an unstructured interview. During the participant observation phase, which took place during April, May, and June, 1973, I
represented myself to the various respondents as a bride-to-be whose wedding was scheduled for August 26, 1973, a Sunday, at 1:30 in the afternoon. In each case I simply walked into the shop and said I had just started planning and did not know exactly what was involved or what I wanted. As a general policy I visited in the morning or early afternoon on a weekday, avoiding Friday afternoons, evenings, and weekends when the shops would be most crowded or busy preparing for weddings. In this way I felt there would be less chance of harming the shop by occupying the person's time while another "real" customer waited or left because she could not get service. Second, I chose the times when business was slow to afford the respondents an unhurried situation in which to deal with me. Third, I sought uniformity from situation to situation to minimize variables which might be interpreted as differences in treatment but which might also be explained by time of day, week, or preparations waiting to be made for a wedding.

I also sought to control extraneous variables by dressing as much the same from day-to-day as possible, hopefully eliminating different reactions as a result of my differing appearance. In each case I wore a conservatively styled summer dress, low heeled shoes, and little jewelry and tried to have my hair neatly arranged. Besides a handbag I also carried a small notebook for noting prices in the presence of the respondents and research notes once I was out of their sight.

The major portion of my approach was consistent for each group
and true in most respects. I did not volunteer information but when asked I used my correct name and address and reported that I attended school at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Since I actually was engaged at the beginning of the research, and later recently married, I also had a ready-made set of answers to such questions as "Who are you marrying?", "What does he do?", "Where is he from?", and "How many bridesmaids will you have?" Since I was a graduate student I always mentioned that I did not have a lot of money to work with when asked, but never set an amount. The only fact which changed from time to time was the actual location where the wedding was to take place. Bridal consultants and photographers were told that I had not decided which of two churches we would choose, but that we were planning to make a decision the following week. Because the florists needed a general description of the setting in order to make estimates of cost and offer suggestions they were told the wedding would be in a friend's home. When pressed for details I described a home I have visited near the University. Formal wear consultants did not ask the location. In general, I tried to convey the image of a conservative middle-class bride who wanted a traditional wedding.

Aside from the matters of appearance, introduction, and time of

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4 I was planning my wedding but it was scheduled for May 28 and was to take place in Virginia. Because the research was being conducted in April and May, much too late to actually be planning a May wedding, August 12 was given as my wedding date. Because florists, photographers, and formal wear consultants service only local weddings, Omaha was cited as the location of the wedding rather than Virginia. Aside from these two adjustments, the wedding I was planning with the respondents was actually the form of my own wedding, an inexpensive, formal wedding.
day which were kept as constant as possible in the total complex, I also tried to be consistent within each component. In visiting bridal departments I chose to try on three different dresses as a beginning. After the initial three the consultant usually suggested several more styles. After trying those, I would express interest in one dress and ask her to suggest bridesmaids' gowns which would coordinate. Since I began by saying I had just started looking, it was easy to end each visit by implying that I was interested in what she had shown me but that I wanted to shop one or two more places before making my decision.\(^5\)

After bridal consultants, I made inquiries of formal wear consultants. For this category I began by giving the date of the wedding and asking to see what tuxedo styles were available and which could be recommended. The consultant's first questions usually concerned the color scheme and time of day of the wedding. In each case I answered that it would be an afternoon wedding and that the bridesmaids were wearing mint green dresses. In every case I was shown similarly styled formal tuxedos with white jacket and black pants and advised that mint green formal shirts would be a nice touch.

In the instance of photographers, the important questions concerned date, time, and place. In each case I was given sample wedding albums to browse through. After carefully examining the samples I asked for some indication of prices. The length of time spent in each studio varied with the details of pricing and number of options.

\(^5\)For a time prior to entering graduate school I worked as a fashion buyer for a department store. This background provided a basis for orientation during the bridal consultant phase of the research.
The location aspect of my approach, as previously mentioned, varied for the florist component. Again, the first questions asked by this group were date, time, and location. Having established that the florist shop was not already booked for that particular time the respondent next wanted to know what, if any, preferences I had in flowers. In each case I indicated that I liked yellow daisies, a fairly inexpensive flower. The florists then led me through a maze of questions including number of bouquets needed, type of decorations for reception table, amount of decoration for the area in which vows would be exchanged, and the like. As in the other components, after noting suggestions and cost estimates, I indicated that I wanted to inquire at one or two more places for comparison, but that I was pleased with what I had learned there.

My rationale for including a participant observation phase of research involved two of the characteristics of a profession—professional authority and a regulative code of ethics (Greenwood, 1957: 47-51). These two areas involve, among other things, the treatment of persons seeking professional services. According to Greenwood's discussion, a professional is interested in his client's well being and in doing a good job before he is interested in monetary reward. This kind of behavior is prescribed by a profession's formal and informal code of ethics which is aimed at keeping prices within reason and performances at high caliber. The professional authority views the person seeking services as a client who should acquiesce to the professional's judgement because the professional is an expert
while the client lacks the knowledge of what is best for his own needs. A nonprofessional, on the other hand, has a customer who knows what he wants, how things should be handled, and shops or explores for what he believes best for himself. The distinction hinges on knowledge available to the person seeking service and his ability to evaluate performance.

With these factors in mind, there seemed to me to be three possible techniques for obtaining information concerning treatment of persons seeking the services of members of the wedding complex. One method would have been to ask people who had used a particular service of the various segments of the complex how they were treated and whether they felt they could evaluate the performances on any criteria other than overall satisfaction. This option was discarded because of the difficulty of building a sample and the amount of time involved in interviewing representative persons. A second method would have been to ask the complex members to describe their own behavior. This approach had one obvious drawback. If it were used exclusively, I would have no way of knowing whether actual behavior coincided with the impression respondents wished to give in an interview situation. A third possibility involved participant observation in which I could judge for myself how the customer/client was treated. In this way, I would also have some constant from which to judge all members in my sample. As a result, I decided to use participant observation as one phase of my research and ultimately to include questions concerning ethics and treatment of the customer/client in an interview schedule.
used with wedding complex members in the second phase.

After having completed both phases of the research, it is possible to say that the inclusion of the participant observation phase was most beneficial to the research. It furnished insight into how the customer/client is treated, and it also provided a feel for the sample and background information that was highly useful in developing the interview schedule and in the actual interviewing. Had I done only the interview, I do not believe I would have been able to form as comprehensive a picture as I ultimately did with the participant observation background.

As one might suspect, the actual treatment of the customer and the verbal representations of behavior given during the interview phase were not always consistent. As an example, during the participant observation stage one bridal shop appeared rather chaotic. One salesperson began assisting me in trying on gowns and then simply disappeared without explanation, leaving me in a dressing room waiting for a veil to try with one of the dresses. A second consultant finally came to my aid but she also continually entered and withdrew from the activity. Because I thought there might have been extenuating circumstances for her behavior I persuaded a friend to repeat this particular visit two months later with me accompanying her as the maid of honor. This time my second consultant attended us for the entire visit but her behavior was much the same as it had been on my initial visit. During the interview phase, however, this same consultant stressed the idea that she tried to be gracious and patient and that she enjoyed
working with people and advising brides on styles, etiquette and other relevant matters. This in spite of the fact that in my own experience I had twice seen her display little patience or graciousness and offer little if any opportunity for a customer to seek advice.

The second phase of the project involved an interview with each member of my sample and was completed in September, October, and early November of 1973. Between the first and second phases, I developed an interview schedule which includes questions which reflect on each of the five characteristics of professions described by Greenwood (1957: 45-54) and involving organizational features. The final form of the interview schedule consisted of twenty-eight questions dealing with training, organization within the component and within the complex, ethics, and attitudes. (See Appendix 2 for interview schedule)

My interview plan called for answers to each question as a minimum response with probes to encourage the respondent to elaborate at any point. When I felt additional information was needed, I temporarily departed from the schedule to explore further points of interest.  

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I also originally planned to utilize Richard Hall's (1968; Snizek, 1972) professionalism scale as another measure of professionalism. After the first interview, one with a bridal consultant, I realized that the scale was of little value if the group had no formal organization or occupational publication and little interaction among members. I then decided to use the scale only for the photographer component which meets these criteria. Two such attempts were made to use the scale in that category and both were unsatisfactory. After having the respondent read a shortened form of Hall's instructions, I verbally repeated the instructions and asked if there were any questions. Even with that preparation both respondents continually asked me how they should score particular items based on what they had told me during the interview. I replied that it should be scored so as to
Once the interview schedule was completed and the busy wedding month of August was over, I proceeded with the second phase of research. Again I worked category by category through the components of the complex. Approximately one week before I planned to visit each establishment, I sent a letter of introduction to each person I had contacted in the initial phase of research. (See Appendix 1)

Several deviations from this procedure were necessary. In the instance of one florist shop I had not worked with anyone in particular so I addressed the letter to the manager. In the photographer component I best represent the actual situation. Both respondents seemed very uncomfortable with the scale and would often verbally qualify a scoring or mark it "not applicable" or "don't know." Because of this apparent inapplicability and definite resistences and because the scale added time to the over-all procedure and seemed to compell me to rush the interview, I discontinued its use. The problem appeared to be twofold. First the scale would, I think, be more valuable in research involving occupations which have already been found to possess the characteristics of professions. My particular project is involved with groups whose position is uncertain. Second, because the respondents, both of whom seemed to be well-thought-of in their occupation and who are well-established, were uncomfortable and unfamiliar with the scale, the possibility exists that this tool is of a type with which a respondent should have prior general experience if it is to be used effectively. Those more commonly thought of as professionals including such groups as doctors, lawyers, and teachers have had extensive college and graduate experience in environments where questionnaires, tests, and scales are frequently used for any number of purposes. Thus the members of such groups are familiar with these devices and the mechanics of using them. Obviously there are a number of other possible explanations for the respondents' behavior including background of these particular persons, a desire to terminate the interview as quickly as possible, lack of clarity in the instructions and more, but whatever the reasons, their reactions resulted in the scale's use being discontinued.
had originally spoken with a receptionist in five of the seven studios. For this group, I addressed the letter to the photographer rather than the receptionist. The letter indicated who I was, that I was involved in research for a course at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and that I would drop in sometime in the near future for an interview. It also indicated that the respondent could set up an appointment with me for a later date if the time of my visit were inconvenient. One bridal consultant and four photographers did schedule specific appointments for another day at the time I initially called.

Again I tried to keep my appearance as constant from place to place as possible. I wore a dress each time and carried my papers in a combination clip board and pocket binder. By this time I had changed my hair style, had a new job, and was married and used my married name. Only one member of the sample remembered seeing me before and inquired whether I had been in the shop previously. Several others asked how I had gotten their names for addressing the letters. In all such cases I admitted to having been there as a bride-to-be but explained that we had decided to get married out of state for family reasons and this ended inquiries about why I had not used their particular services.

As in the first phase I visited on weekdays—usually Tuesday or Thursday afternoon. Not one member of the sample refused an interview, in fact most seemed quite eager to tell me whatever I wanted to know. In two cases, the person I had originally talked with was not available.
One had left her job and the other was only available part-time. In
the first case I interviewed the person who had replaced the
original respondent. In the second, the head consultant offered to
be interviewed and was accepted.

The interview length varied from person to person depending on
a number of factors. First I informed each respondent at the beginning
that he/she should feel free to interrupt the interview if needed.
This was necessary because in many cases the respondent was the only
person on duty or because only he could handle particular business
matters. One interview ran over an hour due to interruptions. Second,
the respondents' answers varied in length on the questions and
occasionally they added information that was not relevant. Others an­
swered each question in a brief concise manner. As a result the
interviews ran from fifteen minutes to one hour and ten minutes with
approximately one half hour being the average length.

Based on the participant observation phase of the research I
had identified several respondents in each component who I felt would
provide key interviews. This was largely indicated by treatment of
me during the first phase, size of operation, reputation, and length
of career. In each component I left these interviews until last and
built my knowledge and insight for the component as much as possible
before conducting the "key" interviews. In this way, any new questions
which arose during the first few interviews could be clarified by the
later ones.

I decided to use the interview technique because I know of no
better way to find out how these persons were trained and how they view their work and others involved in the wedding complex than to ask them. A personal interview rather than a mail questionnaire was used because I wanted the opportunity to probe and expand where necessary and because the response rate would be higher. Now that the research is complete, I believe I made the best choice. The only point which might have improved the product has to do with my own background knowledge. I should perhaps have gathered more background than I did on each occupation before beginning. Had I done so, however, I might also have developed assumptions which were erroneous as a result of encountering material designed for other than social scientific ends, e.g. to further self interests of the group.

Having reviewed the selection of the sample and the methodology employed, Chapter IV will deal with a new phenomenon in wedding planning and service, the Bridal Fair. The organization, promotion, and functions of such an event will be reviewed before continuing to Chapter V, in which a summary of the research data for each individual component of the wedding complex is presented.
Chapter IV

THE BRIDAL FAIR: THE CONTEMPORARY

COMMUNITY PREPARES FOR A RITE OF PASSAGE

For the past eight years, on weekends between January 15 and April 1, a peculiarly wedding-oriented phenomenon has been taking place in some eighty-five cities in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. The phenomenon, which in Omaha in 1973 drew approximately 2,500 mothers of brides, future brides, and female friends, is called a Bridal Fair. What is a Bridal Fair? In promotional material directed at potential exhibitors, Bridal Fair executives describe it in the following manner:

It is a plan that brings under one roof during one weekend a year a substantial percentage of about-to-be married girls living in a metro area.

The girls come to see and hear (1) an hour long bridal and trousseau fashion show; (2) a panel of experts that advises them on the medical, financial, wedding etiquette, spiritual, homemaking, etc., problems of the young bride; (3) the music of their generation.

The girls also come to win prizes, eat cake, and browse through the exhibits of dozens of major retailers who are there to show their wares.

Above all—from the advertiser's viewpoint—BRIDAL FAIR is a unique, tested plan that couples intensive, on-the-air advertising with a profitable "trade show" for brides-to-be. (Bridal Fair, Inc., 1971)

In short, Bridal Fair is a marketing vehicle for local merchandisers and a sales promotion for the radio station which purchases the
right to sponsor it. It is also one response of the vast complex of services surrounding the decision of one man and one woman to marry each other. Their decision activates the complex.

The organization of the Fair is simple. Bridal Fair, Inc. is a marketing corporation. It sells the rights to produce a Fair to a metropolitan radio station, preferably a "contemporary" station with a rock-music format. The station then becomes the public sponsor of the Fair and sells exhibit space and Fair-related advertising spot announcements on the radio station to interested merchandisers. The spaces or booths at the Fair may be 8X10 or 10X10 in size and the average package costs the merchandiser $1750. (Brodkey, 1973) The promotional material presented to prospective exhibitors emphasizes that young couples today make most of their major purchases three or more months before their wedding so that by the time the marriage announcement appears in the newspaper the couple is already out of the market for new purchases. Bridal Fair is offered as a method of reaching these consumers before they make their purchases. (See Figures 1 and 2) The 1973 Omaha Fair included such exhibitors as bridal shops, formal wear rental agencies, a photographer, an insurance company, an apartment complex, an automobile sales agency, a caterer, and a travel agency.

In order to attend the Fair, one of two shows on Saturday and two on Sunday, a bride must fill out an application for an invitation. (See Figure 3) The application method not only allows officials to distribute attendance over the four shows but provides age and mailing
29% of all living room furniture
31% of all bedroom furniture.
22% of linen and bedding.
Over three-quarters of diamond rings.
17% of all television sets.
45% of glassware.
About one-third of electric housewares.
40% of sterling silver.

That's the volume of these major industries that stem from the Bridal Market.

How big is the Bridal Market? The Wall Street Journal puts it at $10 billion annually.

One of the most comprehensive recent studies sets the initial expenditures for household goods at approximately $7250 for each new family.

Recent research has pinpointed the Bridal Market's impact on dozens of items — 16% of lamp sales, 40% of china, 11% of refrigerators, 15% vacuum cleaners. But there are still only vague estimates on its specific pressure on more than 20 major businesses and industries.

Apparel, banking, grocery retailing, moving and storage, travel, insurance, employment, rental housing, automotive retailing feel the huge impact of more than 2,000,000 newly-formed households each year.

And the impact promises to be greater — much greater.

For the next 15 years, the number of marriages will be larger each year than it is today, and the proportionate share of market represented by these new households will soar.

Close to two-thirds of their purchases have been made before they say "I Do".

Today's affluent young adults don't begin their lives together among orange-crate tables and borrowed beds.

Usually, both are employed. Their parents are financially able to assist.

There is no reason to put off purchasing the furniture, the housewares, the second car (so she can work at a better job!) leasing the apartment, planning a two week honeymoon, etc. There is little reason to economize on the wedding, the reception, the photographer, the flowers.

And these buying decisions are being made almost from the instant that the decision to be married is made — months before the couple becomes a vital statistic by applying for a license.

Seven times as many brides acquire electric broilers, toasters, blenders and mixers before marriage as after.

And, three times as many buy a refrigerator, twice as many a television set, a dryer, or wall-to-wall carpeting.

At least three times as many buy their furniture before marriage as after they say "I do".

The vital period to influence the bride emerges — in the most thorough study of the subject — as the three months before the marriage ceremony.

FIGURE 1: Bridal Fair Promotional Material
Distributed to Potential Exhibitors--
The Market
And, here are the "Four Opportunities to Sell the Affluent, About-To-Be-Marrieds"

Opportunity #1:
Traffic produced in your stores by the registration. Many stores participating in BRIDAL FAIRS counted registrations in the hundreds. You are free to examine the questionnaires they fill out and can begin using the leads immediately.

Opportunity #2:
The chance to talk face-to-face with the bride-to-be (and her check-writing mother) during the BRIDAL FAIR as they visit your display. And they go to every display; the BRIDAL FAIR Super Hope Chest coupon book, which gives them a chance to win a prize from every advertiser, insures that.

Opportunity #3:
The best book of prospects your salesmen ever worked on — the list of the registrants, coded according to their buying plans — which all participating advertisers receive several weeks after the BRIDAL FAIR. It shows when a call-back would be profitable and where to find both the prospective bride and groom.

Opportunity #4:
In addition to the three opportunities above, every BRIDAL FAIR participant receives an on air spot campaign to advertise their products and services.

FIGURE 2: Bridal Fair Promotional Material
Distributed to Potential Exhibitors—Opportunities Offered the Exhibitor
BRIDAL FAIR®

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM AND DEPOSIT HERE

To enable us to tailor the program and the entire BRIDAL FAIR® to the needs and tastes of the audience, please help by providing the following:

NAME OF BRIDE TO BE:
(FIRST) ___________________________ (LAST) ___________________________

ADDRESS: ___________________________________________________________

(CITY) ___________________________ (STATE) ___________________________

ZIP) ___________ (AGE) ___________ (PHONE) ___________________________

NAME OF FUTURE HUSBAND:
(FIRST) ___________________________ (LAST) ___________________________

ADDRESS: ___________________________________________________________

(CITY) ___________________________ (STATE) ___________________________

ZIP) ___________ (AGE) ___________ (PHONE) ___________________________

Have you received engagement ring? Yes ☐ No ☐

Furnished Apartment ☐ Unfurnished Apartment ☐

Where will you live? Own Home ☐ Mobile Home ☐

(check one) Work 1 ☐ After you marry will you: Go to school 2 ☐ Homemaker 3 ☐

Mode of Honeymoon Transportation: Drive ☐ Fly ☐

Have you arranged for the following: Yes ☐ No ☐

Wedding Photographer ☐ Florist ☐ Invitations ☐ Caterer ☐ Formal Wear ☐

Have you purchased? Yes ☐ No ☐

Wedding Gown ☐ Registered Silver/China ☐ Carpet ☐ Drapes ☐ Television ☐

Stereo ☐ Sewing Machine ☐ Refrigerator ☐ Bedroom Furniture ☐ Living Room Furniture ☐

Do you have? Yes ☐ No ☐

Revolving Charge Account ☐ Checking Account ☐ Savings Account ☐

(*)Please allow two weeks for invitation to be mailed.

*Reg. mark belonging to BRIDAL FAIR, Inc.

Thanks for your cooperation. We'll be able to show you more of what you will be most interested in as a result of your help.
WLAV

and Prominent (your city) Businessmen

Cordially Invite You

and one female guest

to Attend The Annual

Bridal Fair

Sunday, March 1st

at 6:00 p.m.

Scottish Rite Auditorium

(city and state)

Prizes

Present This Invitation for Admission

FIGURE 4: An Invitation to a Bridal Fair
information on both bride and groom, the wedding date, and details concerning what major purchases have or have not been made already as well. The bride then receives an invitation to the Fair which must be presented at the door in order to gain admission. (See Figure 4)

Once in the door, the bride is given a stack of coupons (one for each exhibitor) which she fills out with her name, address, telephone number and wedding date and deposits at the exhibit booths to qualify for a prize drawing later in the Fair. She may win a wedding dress, new shoes, an expense-paid trip to some exotic spot, a wedding cake, or some other item. For the first part of her time at the Fair, the bride is allowed to wander from booth to booth examining wares and collecting brochures to share with the groom later. No males, aside from exhibitors or officials, are allowed to attend a Bridal Fair. The second phase of the Fair involves a panel of "experts" giving advice and answering questions pertinent to the wedding. The panel for Omaha's 1973 Fair included a minister, a gynecologist, a travel consultant, and a banker. The third segment is a fashion show, with background music provided by a locally known, popular band. The store which presents the fashion show and the florist who provides the flowers both pay for the privilege. Fashions run the gamut from sports wear for the honeymoon to bridal gowns.

After three hours or so of exhibits, panel discussion, and fashion show the audience is "hustled out" so that the Fair area can be swept and prepared for the next show. From then on, until her
wedding day, the bride can expect to receive frequent mailed reminders of the Fair in the form of brochures and letters of congratulations with "special offers" attached from any or all of the exhibitors who know from her invitation application that she has not yet registered her silver pattern, found an apartment, planned a honeymoon, or purchased drapes or living room furniture.

The Bridal Fair offers brides, especially those just beginning to plan their weddings, an awareness of the multitude of decisions facing the couple prior to, or immediately after their marriage. One cannot attend a Fair and come away with the impression that a wedding involves only a white gown and flowers. The emphasis is on consumerism. While complete service bridal shops will help plan one's entire wedding, Bridal Fair appears aimed at planning not only the wedding but one's lifestyle after the ceremony and for years to come as well. Booths which make up the Fair exhibits offer a range of services and products from honeymoon reservations and first apartment leases through furniture which may last a decade or more. One insurance company represented at Omaha's 1973 Fair offered a baby blanket to all those brides who registered at their booth, perhaps anticipating not only providing the couple with the usual life, health, automobile, and property insurance, but also adding educational, life, and health insurance for their children in the future.

Bridal Fair provides a useful service. It provides the bride and her mother, the major planners of the wedding, with an indication of the enormity of the task ahead and a fund of resources in the form of
businesses specializing in various services, all in one location. The panel discussion does provide the bride access to experts in several fields who are willing to answer questions. And, for the bride who has not begun the process of selecting her gown, the fashion show offers a preview of what styles are available to her. The Bridal Fair consolidates many services in one place at one time.

At the same time, one must remember that Bridal Fair's prime interest is not the couple's happiness or wedded satisfaction, but the economic advantage of those businesses which exhibit at the Fair, the radio station which promotes it, and ultimately the corporation which developed and markets Bridal Fairs. In some ways it exploits a nearly universal situation. Weddings are expensive, and many parents are prepared to spend considerable money to make the event a memorable one. The Bridal Fair concept encourages parents and the couple to spend even more. Luxury cars, luxury clothes, and luxury honeymoons are well represented at a Bridal Fair. The theme of a Fair is not helpful advice concerning budgeting and cost-cutting but encouragement to extravagance. From the point of view of the businesses which exhibit at the Fair it does enable them to become acquainted with prospective consumers and to develop a mailing list, often before their competitors are even aware that a particular couple is entering the market. A businessman decides whether this is enough to justify the expense involved.

Bridal Fair represents the preparation of a large variety of components of a wedding complex for the rite of passage. The data in
Chapter V represents the response to the rite of four specific components directly involved in planning the ceremony itself—bridal consultants, formal wear consultants, florists, and photographers.
Chapter V
THE INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS OF
THE WEDDING COMPLEX

Before attempting to analyze the data collected from the four components of the wedding complex in terms of organization and professionalism, the information collected during both stages of the research will be summarized to provide a picture of each occupational group in the complex.

Bridal Consultants

The bridal consultant component in the sample consisted of eight respondents. All but one of the respondents represent business establishments in which participant observation had been carried out. The shop in which the eighth respondent is a consultant was not in existence at the time the participant observation research was being conducted.

To be a bridal consultant involves helping the bride select her wedding gown, the dresses for her attendants, and to coordinate the colors and styles of clothing for both the male and female members of the wedding party. Among the respondents in the sample, the aid to the bride involved a variety of activities: zipping dresses while the bride is trying them on, suggesting the appropriate veil for a certain dress, coordinating bridesmaids' dresses with the bridal gown,
designing a step-by-step procedure for the bride to follow in planning her wedding, and organizing the wedding from invitations to photography at the wedding rite. One of the consultants, an exception to the norm, will also design and make an original gown and attend the wedding to help with details, as well. The usual bridal consultant, however, deals only with clothing for the female members of the wedding with little or no input regarding flowers, photography, or formal wear for males. Five of the eight were limited to this kind of activity.

In this component the mean length of time as a consultant was seven years, with a range of eight months to sixteen years. Half the respondents had been consultants for three years or less, but seven of eight expected to continue in their occupation indefinitely. The eighth respondent said she planned to go back to college and that she had only taken the job to earn enough money to return to school.

Entry into this particular occupation was relatively easy for the respondents. Most of them had been working as salespeople in other departments of retail stores and were transferred to the bridal department for one reason or another. The only respondent who did not fit this typical pattern had always wanted to be a bridal consultant and was considering opening her own store when a friend asked her to be the consultant and buyer for his newly established bridal shop.

Six of the eight respondents had no training beyond that received on the job. One woman, a consultant in a franchise bridal shop, had received a one-week training course required by the franchise
headquarters. This consisted of lessons in bookkeeping, marketing, styles, fabrics, and the like. Another had approximately eleven years of college training in design and a degree in haute couture plus retail experience before becoming a consultant. Most respondents felt that other bridal consultants had similar training and seven agreed that there are no special requirements for becoming a bridal consultant and no licensing or certification procedures. Without hesitation, however, all felt that they possessed special skills and knowledge which was required in their work. These included a number of different aspects from such technical matters as deadlines for ordering and delivery periods to an esthetic sense for coordinating fabric textures of attendants' gowns to the texture of the bridal gown and fitting the most flattering dress style to an individual bride. The consultant for the franchise store, the Perfect Day Bridal Shop, replied that she was required to pass a written test upon completion of her one week training period and was then certified by the franchise. When asked whether or not bridal consultants operate under a code of ethics, all agreed that there is no formal written code. Several mentioned an informal personal code or, in the case of shops within department stores, store policy. Only two of the women felt there was any need for certification or a code of ethics. They felt the occupation should be regulated in terms of the consultant's personality and knowledge so that the bride can depend on receiving knowledgeable advice.

Regarding organization within the occupation, and social as well as occupational interaction for the members, there seems to be little.
There are no occupational associations known to any of the consultants interviewed and only three of them said they have friends who are also consultants. In all cases the friends are other consultants in the same shop. One respondent mentioned that she had expected to interact extensively with bridal consultants throughout the city when she first entered the occupation, but that she soon found there was competition and not cooperation among the consultants and no one seemed to want to develop any kind of group wherein they could share ideas and information and help each other.

In terms of a relationship with the bride, especially after she decides to buy her dress from their shop and will therefore be seen on a fairly regular basis until the wedding, the majority of consultants responded that they try to establish a relatively personal relationship with the bride because they are interested in providing "good" service, that which takes into account the individual person's needs and desires. To do this they try to learn each bride's name and use it when talking or referring to her. In most cases the word "bride" is used when the name is not known. Several consultants mentioned that it is not unusual for a bride to stop in to see them afterward to show them wedding pictures and, in a few cases, to maintain a casual contact long after the wedding as children are born and grow up.

In keeping with the idea of providing individualized service to the bride, the consultants as a whole stressed the idea of doing what the bride wants done. All of the respondents said they honor whatever
requests they have, even if they do not personally approve, unless there is not enough time in which to obtain an item. None could ever remember refusing a request, except to attend the wedding to act as director, for any reason other than time. Nor do they refuse anyone's business. The only exception was a consultant who said she would refuse the business if there were evidence that the person could not pay for the gown. When asked if they ever attempt to raise the price limit a bride has set for her gown, seven replied "no". Most feel that it would be unfair to the bride and that she will be unhappy with them later if they do, because only the bride knows how much she can afford to spend and any more than that is often a hardship.

In the final phase of the interview each respondent was given a list of six factors related to occupational satisfaction and each was asked to mark those she felt were important to her enjoyment of her work. The following table indicates their choices.

TABLE 1: Occupational Satisfaction Factors for Bridal Consultants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th># Positive Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>money</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative opportunity</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prestige of occupation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to give advice</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decision independence</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working with people</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The right to give advice to those who need it and working with people are positive benefits to all the respondents. From the markings and from verbal comments it can be implied that as a group they do not feel the occupation has much prestige and, although during the interview several mentioned that they have to make enough money to support themselves, only two indicated that the money factor contributed to occupational satisfaction. Most also felt that they did have some creative opportunity in their work. Only half checked independence in making decisions as a satisfaction factor. These four were also the only four in management/buyer positions as well as being consultants.

Overall, the answers given by the bridal consultants to the interview questions are borne out by the researcher's observations during the first, or participant observation phase of research. As a whole they seem concerned with satisfying the bride and gave individualized treatment. There was only one exception (see Chapter III). In that particular instance the consultant seemed rushed and preoccupied both during the initial visit of stage one and during the second visit during the same stage.¹

Formal Wear Consultants

Formal wear consultants advise the bridal couple on styles and

¹A second participant observer was used in this case because the consultant's behavior was so out of the ordinary that there was a possibility of extenuating circumstances. However, her behavior was much the same in both instances. Chapter III reviews this instance in detail.
colors of formal wear, tuxedos and accessories, for the groom and his attendants. As with the bridal consultant, they handle a variety of tasks ranging from helping the groom into a tuxedo jacket during the decision making stage to making temporary alterations in sleeve length to advising which style will likely be best on a short, rotund groom. However, unlike the bridal consultant who orders a new dress for every customer, the formal wear consultant rents tuxedos from stock, often completely store owned, so he must also supervise how many items are going out and coming back in and be certain that he has the necessary outfits for each member of the wedding party at the appointed time.

The five formal wear consultants in this sample had been in the occupation an average of five and one half years, the range being nine months to twelve years, and all planned to continue indefinitely. Two drifted into formal wear from other men's ready-to-wear departments, one wanted a clothing job after college and found a job in formal wear through an employment agency. Another answered a newspaper advertisement for a manager's position and found it involved managing a formal wear shop. This respondent was also the most enthusiastic of all the respondents about the future of formal wear, having risen from store manager to owner of two rental shops in five years. The fifth consultant was a basketball coach and had been persuaded by a friend who was already in the occupation to give up athletics and try the formal wear field.

The ease of entering the occupation is exemplified by the training received by the respondents. Four had only on-the-job training and
the fifth received one week of training in a formal course offered
by one of the major tuxedo wholesale firms. The course included
sessions on sewing for alterations, color coordination, wedding
etiquette, and the handling of typical rental problems. They were in
agreement that most formal wear consultants receive on-the-job train­
ing and that special courses are fairly unusual. Again, as with the
bridal consultants, the majority felt that they had acquired special
knowledge needed for their work and to insure customer satisfaction.

There was general agreement that there are no licensing or
certification procedures within the occupation and no outside control.
Only one of the four thought there should be any regulation. This
exception felt that the members should work together to police them­
selves in order to weed out unsound business practices and unscrupulous
practitioners who promise formal wear and then are unable to produce it
or work with worn out merchandise. All five replied that they operate
under a code of ethics, but when questioned, it was found that these
codes are personal ethics or, in the case of a department store, store
policy.

Formal wear consultants do have an occupational association.
Three of the five belong to the Menswear Retailers' Association which,
at the time the research was conducted, was in the process of forming
a branch organization to be called the American Formal Wear Association.
One of the respondents was serving on the organizational committee of
the new group which will have an official but voluntary code of ethics.
As for social collegial relationships, however, only one respondent has
a close friend who is also a formal wear consultant. Three others mentioned that they are on "friendly terms" with other consultants. In the course of the research, an informal network of borrowing and lending was discovered within this group. For example, if one shop needs a shirt color or an extra tuxedo for a particular wedding, the consultant can borrow it from another shop at a lower rental rate than would be charged the customer.

In regard to the relationship with the bridal couple, again an attitude of service was expressed. Three respondents said they try to use the name of the individual whenever possible in referring or talking to him. The other two use the term "customer" when referring to the bride or groom in question. One consultant said he will refuse to supply certain requests if they are "way out or dumb", but the other four said they honor all requests that are possible, assuming the item is available, but they added that they suggest more appropriate alternatives if a request is in bad taste. None of the five has ever refused anyone service but one said he would if a person were extremely belligerent or rude. One consultant said he tries to raise the price limit set by the couple, "After all, I am a salesman." The other four said they do not try to pressure customers into choosing a style that is above their budget.

The following table indicates which factors the respondents feel contribute to their occupational satisfaction. One respondent rank ordered the factors. His responses are indicated by the number in parenthesis. Creative opportunity and working with people are
unanimous choices with ability to give advice a close second. Again, prestige and money are relatively unimportant to this group.

TABLE 2: Occupational Satisfaction Factors for Formal Wear Consultants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th># Positive Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>money</td>
<td>2 (6) =3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative opportunity</td>
<td>4 (2) =5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prestige of occupation</td>
<td>1 (4) =2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to give advice</td>
<td>3 (5) =4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independence in decisions</td>
<td>2 (3) =3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working with people</td>
<td>4 (1) =5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To an extent the participant observation research bore out the responses of those interviewed. Participant observation was probably least useful in this component since the researcher is a female and could not enter as fully into the interaction—trying on, measurement, and so forth—as a male researcher might have. However, all the respondents were pleasant and helpful when I approached them as a bride in the participant observation stage.

Florists

Included among the wedding related activities of florists are such procedures as providing cost estimates, advising the bride on availability of certain varieties of flowers for the time of year, suggesting items to be included in setting the scene (kneeler, pew markers, candelabra), designing floral arrangements, making bouquets,
and actually decorating the sites of the wedding and reception.

The five florists in the sample had been in the occupation an average of twenty-five years with a range of thirteen to forty-three years and all planned to remain in floral work. When asked how he would feel about a fellow florist who decided to leave the occupation for something else, one respondent said he did not see how anyone who had been a florist long could give it up. He also mentioned that he had known one man who tried, and even sold his store to another florist, but it was only a matter of months before he was back at the shop working for the new owner.

Three of the five had consciously chosen to become florists and had worked in the occupation until they could purchase their own shops. Of the other two, one was an ex-military man who turned his hobby into an occupation when he retired from the service and the other, while working in a florist shop in college, decided that florist work was easier than his pre-med program. Three members of the sample acquired their skills in apprenticeship situations. A fourth has a degree in floraculture from a major Midwestern university, and the fifth has attended several privately owned schools which provide florist training. All feel that they have special knowledge and skill as florists that the average person lacks. These include creativity necessary for design and knowledge of line, texture, color, and so forth. The general feeling, expressed one way or another by all these respondents, is that most older people in florist work had on-the-job training as apprentices while many younger ones are attending colleges for
floriculture degrees or taking courses of varying duration at private schools.

All the florists agreed that there are no special requirements, licensing, or certification for entering the occupation. Membership in at least one of the floral wire services\(^2\) is restricted, however. Florists' Transworld Delivery (FTD) requires that a member shop meet certain standards such as a certain number of delivery trucks and floral designers, a minimum amount of floor space, and a minimum inventory of fresh flowers in the storage cooler. Member shops are periodically checked for service by representatives of FTD who visit an area and pose as customers by calling for a floral arrangement to be delivered to them. The shop is evaluated on such criteria as speed of delivery, freshness of flowers, price and the like. Any shop which falls below FTD standards may lose its membership.\(^3\) FTD, then, as a trade association acts to regulate and certify a segment of the occupation and also provides its members with a code of ethics involving colleague-colleague relations and relations with the customer/client.

\(^2\)Wire services are national organizations of florist shops which provide customers with out-of-town delivery services of floral orders. If a person in one town wishes to have flowers delivered to another person in another town he may go to a local florist who is a member of a wire service, order the flowers, and pay for them. That florist then contacts another member shop in the town where the flowers are being sent and that florist delivers them. The payment is later transferred from the shop where the flowers were ordered to the florist who filled the order.

\(^3\)The other wire services mentioned by the respondents were Telefloral and Florafax. According to two members of the sample, neither of these services has membership standards of any importance.
Several florists mentioned that the Nebraska Florist Society, an occupational organization, is currently working on certification procedures for all florists in the state. This certification, as explained by one florist, is to be modeled after legislation in New Orleans, Louisiana, where florist shops must be licensed by local government officials—an effort to prevent floral supermarkets which offer a poor quality of flowers. Interestingly, all five respondents are members of both the Nebraska Florist Society and Florists' Transworld Delivery but when asked if there should be regulation or certification of florists or their shops, two said "no" two responded positively with the provision that it be voluntary, and only one said there already was regulation—that by FTD. When asked if they worked under a code of ethics, two replied "yes", personal codes; two said "yes", the FTD code; and one answered negatively.

Florists have a number of occupational organizations. All the respondents are members of the Nebraska Florist Society and the Society of American Florists. Four belong to United Florists of Omaha, and one each to Southern Florists' Society and Kansas Florists' Society. The American Florists' Society, as described by one respondent, is largely a lobby and pressure group which attempts to keep prices of flowers at a reasonable level for both the florists and the public. The other organizations hold meetings which may include short courses on record keeping, design, new ideas, introduction of new materials, and so forth.

All of the respondents answered positively when asked if they had
any good friends who were also florists. All seem to have friends in the occupation here in Omaha and most mentioned friends in other cities, as well. In addition, at least one person mentioned that several shops often have verbal cooperative agreements so that if, for instance, one shop runs short of a particular flower another can be contacted and will supply what is needed if it is available.

During both the participant observation and interview stages, the florists appeared to place priority on the bride's needs and wishes. In four of the five cases during participant observation, the florist spent time with me going over possibilities and plans and making suggestions. In the fifth shop, I was given a set of books containing illustrations of arrangements to look through and told to feel free to ask any questions, but the florist did not stay with me. All but one used my name and, when asked during the interview stage how they usually referred to a bride, all but one (the same one mentioned before) said that he prefers to use the bride's name and when it is not known refers to her as "the bride". One mentioned that among the employees a color is often used to refer to a wedding (e.g. the blue wedding or the orange wedding). The general feeling is that all requests will be honored if the particular items are available. The only exception was one florist who said he would not make bouquets of poinsettias for Christmas weddings because they wilt rapidly. All said they try to discourage certain things which they feel the bride will not really be happy with (e.g. black flowers) but that they do provide them if she insists.
As mentioned in a previous chapter, all members in the florist sample said they would refuse to handle weddings on certain holidays—Christmas, Mother's Day, and Valentine's Day—or if they were already booked to capacity, but this was the only reason cited for refusal to accept the wedding.

All respondents stated that they do not try to raise the cost limit the bride has placed on flowers. During participant observation I found this to be true in all but one case. This particular florist did not try to change my choice of flowers but did attempt several times to add a very expensive flower to the bouquets even after I told her I did not like the flower in question and did not want it. Addition of the flower to the bridal bouquet would have resulted in an approximately ten dollar increase in price.

In regard to factors of occupational satisfaction, one person rank ordered the list and the remaining four simply checked those factors they felt were important to them. The rank order numbers are shown in parentheses. Creative opportunity and working with people

<table>
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are considered important by all members of the sample with opportunity to give advice next most important. Prestige of the occupation is considered relatively unimportant by this group.

Photographers

A final component, photographers, included seven respondents who have been in the occupation an average of twenty-one years each, ranging from two months to thirty-five years. Five members of the sample have been photographers for seventeen years or more. All plan to continue their work in photography. Most of the photographers in this sample limit their work to the actual photo taking and hire others for accounting and to act as receptionists. In five of the seven studios visited during participant observation a receptionist answered questions, discussed prices and dates, and handled the other details prior to making an actual choice of photographer. In most cases I was told if I chose to have that studio do the photography I would then meet with the photographer to discuss what shots were especially desired and other details plus, of course, to have the portrait and other photographs taken.

The respondents entered photography in a variety of ways. Two became interested in photography as an occupation during their college years, one of them while working part-time for a photographer. Two others initially became interested in high school, one while working on a high school newspaper, and another studied art in college and was impressed by the permanence of photography. A sixth followed his father
and two uncles who were photographers. The remaining respondent was looking for a job working with people and not behind a desk and heard about an opening in a studio. She had an art background and several members of her family were photographers. The respondents' training varied also. Two had formal photography training in schools in the New York City area, one for two years and the other for six months. The remainder received on-the-job training as apprentices and most have supplemented that with short courses offered by occupational organizations. In general the sample expressed the belief that most photographers receive the majority of their training as apprentices and supplement this with short courses, workshops, and seminars offered by photography labs and occupational organizations with only a few attending photography schools. Without hesitation, all felt that they possess special skills and knowledge which is required in their work. This includes a number of different aspects such as technical knowledge, artistic ability, and knowledge of the mechanics of a wedding. One photographer felt that since weddings which utilize photographers are usually first marriages for both partners, the situation is similar to going to a doctor for an appendectomy. The couple is not expected to know what should be done and therefore must allow the trained specialist to do what he thinks best.

At the time the research was conducted there was no regulation, certification, or licensing for the occupation as a whole. The only evidence of an attempt to regulate members of this component is a code of ethics for the Professional Photographers of America, a
voluntary occupational organization. The code involves such areas as proper service, fair pricing, and responsibility. Several respondents also mentioned a movement within that organization to develop certification for photographers by 1980. One respondent who is working for such certification said it would involve evaluation of the individual’s personal character and credit rating as well as his technical ability and training and would have to be renewed every three years. The certification will be voluntary and will serve as the organization’s seal of approval and a notice to the public that an individual photographer has met certain standards. All but one of the respondents felt that there was a definite need for some regulation or certification process. A common complaint expressed by this group is that a few gypsy photographers and amateur, part-time photographers are giving the occupation a bad name by being irresponsible, over charging, and doing poor quality work. They seemed to think that regulation is necessary to protect career photographers and the public alike.

As in the florist component, photographers may belong to any of several occupational organizations. One respondent stated that because she had only been an apprentice for two months, she had not yet joined any organizations but planned to do so in the future. Of the remaining six, two belong to the Professional Photographers of America, two subscribe to its periodical but are not members, and another was a member in the past and plans to rejoin if the certification movement is successful. The seventh felt that the organization dues are too high. Four of the respondents belong to Professional Photographers
of Nebraska and four to the Greater Omaha Photographers.

Within the Professional Photographers of America a photographer can achieve two degree levels besides simple membership. The Master degree is earned by accumulating twenty-five Master points. These are awarded by a panel of photographers who judge photography submitted by an individual at the organization's annual meeting. Those persons who achieve the Master of Photography degree may then become members of the American Society of Photographers. Two members of the sample have attained the Master level. According to one Master, there were three hundred Master photographers in the United States at the time of the research. The second, and higher degree is that of Craftsman. Again the individual must obtain twenty-five merit points, this time based on his "contribution to the profession" in such areas as writing for publication, lecturing at workshops and seminars, and working to improve the occupation in general. One Master in the sample is also a Craftsman. One aim of the Professional Photographers of America in general and the Craftsman section in particular, as expressed by this individual, is to change the occupation from a self-centered business to a knowledge-sharing profession.

As for close ties with others within the occupation, five said they have friends with whom they socialize who are also portrait photographers. Another has only one close friend in the occupation and he is a commercial photographer rather than a portrait photographer. The seventh responded negatively.

In their relation with the bride all but one of the photographers
stated that they try to learn and use her name rather than an imper-sonal term such as "the bride". In most cases they all expressed a willingness to honor special requests of the bridal couple. Several mentioned that they would not take nude pictures or pictures that violated church rules, e.g. many churches have regulations against taking pictures during the actual ceremony. One Master photographer stated that he will not take pictures which are in poor taste or which he feels the couple will be unhappy with later. As he said, "We have expertise and should be able to use it." All seven agreed that they will accept anyone's wedding unless they are already booked for that particular day and time. Five respondents stated that they absolutely do not try to raise the limit set on the budget for photography. In all five cases there is really no way the photographer can know in advance how many prints the couple will buy, since selection is made after the wedding. In the remaining two cases, the couple is sold a picture package before the wedding. The package includes a set number of prints. The couple can choose to buy more than the package at an additional cost but they can not decrease the amount. These two photographers said they do try to raise the budget limit.

When asked to indicate which factors are important to their over-all occupational satisfaction, three respondents rank ordered the factors and four simply checked those they felt were important. From the table on the following page, one can see that creative opportunity and working with people are important factors for all the respondents. Opportunity to give advice appears to have been of little or no
importance to members of the sample.

TABLE 4: Occupational Satisfaction Factors for Photographers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I  II</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>money</td>
<td>3* 5</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creative opportunity</td>
<td>x 2 1</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prestige of occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability to give advice</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independence in decisions</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working with people</td>
<td>x 1 4</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* numbers indicate a rank order

This chapter has provided a general picture of all four facets of the wedding complex in terms such as training, admittance to the occupation, internal organization, and relationship with the bridal couple. Chapter VI will take up the question of organization and interaction among the various components and between individual components and the nexus of the complex, the bridal couple. Because it is important to the determination of professional status, discussion of organization within each component will be taken up in Chapter VIII where the data are analyzed in terms of profession theory.
Chapter VI

THE WEDDING COMPLEX AS SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In my original proposal for this research, I spoke of the existence of an organization of people—bridal consultant, florist, photographer, and wedding director—working with the bridal couple on the various aspects of the wedding. A part of the research has been to determine how these people are organized, what kind of interaction develops, whether or not there is a hierarchy of authority, whether all have equal access to the bridal couple, and so forth.

I found early in the research that at least one of my assumptions was incorrect. Originally I believed that a person allied with a bridal shop or church works with the bride to design the over-all wedding and coordinate the different areas such as flowers, pictures, and clothing. Based on this assumption, I envisioned a network of interaction with the bride and groom as the nexus working with a director who in turn pulls together an organization of bridal consultant, florist, and photographer.

\[\text{1} \text{This assumption was based on personal experience as a friend of several brides and as a fashion buyer on the East Coast where wedding directors, usually connected with a church or bridal shop, organize the entire wedding and also are present at the event to choreograph the rite from start to finish. One of the bridal consultants in this survey also mentioned the existence of such persons in her experience, again on the East Coast. This would suggest that at least the organizational findings presented here may not be applicable throughout the United States.}\]
Before completing the participant observation stage of the research with the bridal consultants, I realized that this was an incorrect assumption. Only one of the eight shops in this portion of the sample indicated that such a service was readily available. This particular case not only deviates from the remainder of the components in this respect, but also in most other characteristics. She also designs and makes individual gowns and her bridal shop is not a specialty shop, instead it is only a part of a small ladies apparel shop. Weddings appear to be a sideline for her. Only one other consultant indicated that such a service is ever available. This was in a "complete service" shop and when questioned about such service the consultant mentioned that the store owner sometimes does that sort of thing for special friends in special instances, implying that the service is not available to everyone. Of the remaining five stores, one had provided a director service in the past but has discontinued it because there are too many weddings and not enough personnel to handle them all. They found it more efficient to drop the service than to add employees. In another instance, the manager of a fairly new shop which had been in operation less than one year indicated that she might consider adding such a service in the future after the business becomes established and if brides indicate an interest in such a service. The other three shops do not have any service of this sort.

When the information that bridal shops in the Omaha area do not normally employ directors first became known, it was suggested that bridal directors are sometimes connected with churches. With this in
mind I asked each respondent in each component if he knew of any churches with wedding directors. Similar answers were given across components. Only two churches, according to the respondents, have persons who work with the bridal couple to arrange the wedding and attend to supervise the actual event. In a number of other churches there are persons described as "self-appointed supervisors" who open and lock the church and check to see that flowers are delivered, but who are not actually working with either the couple or any of the various persons in the wedding complex. Based on this information the component of wedding director was dropped from the research.

The picture of organization which finally develops from the data is of a temporary organization of four basic service groups with the bride and groom, but more often the bride only, serving as the nexus.

![Diagram](image)

**FIGURE 5:** Schematic Diagram of the Organizational Structure of a Wedding Complex
There appears to be little or no communication among the four groups themselves except indirectly as information from one is relayed by the bride to another member of the organization. E.g. fabric swatches from a bridal consultant are given to the bride who in turn takes the swatch to the formal wear consultant to coordinate tuxedos or to the florist to choose flowers and colors. This organization-interaction network would resemble a wagon wheel without a rim.

From the research, two alternative organizational networks emerge. The first is illustrated by the Bridal Emporium. This is a "complete service bridal shop" from which one can purchase flowers, gowns, formal wear, and photography in one stop under the guidance of a single bridal consultant. In this situation the bride chooses her gown and those of her attendants and the males' formal wear with the help of the consultant who is a "specialist" in these two areas. For these decisions, only the bride and consultant are involved. For flowers and photography a third person enters the scene. I was told that the bride might consult with the inhouse florist or photographer if necessary, but that the usual procedure is for the bride to discuss her wishes with the consultant who in turn will work with the florist or photographer.\(^2\)

\(^2\)The term used by the consultant herself.

\(^3\)The reasons given for this were that the florist is an Oriental lady who does not have complete command of English and who is also very busy with her floral design work. The photographer, I was told, does not wish to have his name known because his work is so good that if he is known he will be in excessive demand. When I broached this subject again during the interview stage of the research I was told it is against store policy to reveal the photographer's name. It should also be mentioned that, during the photographer portion of the research, I was told, in some cases voluntarily, in some after questioning, that
In this case the bride has direct contact with the bridal/formal wear consultant but may never meet the florist and may not meet the photographer until he actually takes the photographs, by which time necessary arrangements have already been made. This organization-interaction network might be diagramed as follows.

![Diagram of organizational structure]

**FIGURE 6:** Schematic Diagram of an Alternative Organizational Structure of a Wedding Complex: Bridal-Formal Wear Consultant as Secondary Nexus

A second alternative is illustrated by the Perfect Day Bridal Shop which is also of the "complete service" variety. Perfect Day differs in three important ways from the Bridal Emporium. The first difference is in physical layout of the store itself. At the Emporium one large room, the one first entered from the street, contains wedding accessories such as stationery, bridesmaid gifts, and ring pillows all displayed for sale. From there one proceeds, in the presence of the bridal consultant, to various other rooms for gowns, flowers and the like. Perfect Day, on the other hand, is built around one central room with only dressing rooms and work rooms closed off. Upon entering, the Emporium does not have a fulltime photographer but hires free lance photographers with varying degrees of skill to fill their bookings. This is generally frowned upon as unethical and bad business by those established photographers in my sample.
one is confronted by bridal and attendants' gowns immediately ahead. Areas to the right and left contain the florist shop, formal wear shop, and photographer's studio. All are open to view and take up a portion of the room, offering ready access for the bride, with or without the bridal consultant.

The institutional difference between the two is that while Bridal Emporium is owned by one person, Perfect Day involves separate owners for each shop or department. This in turn accounts for the third and possibly most important difference—that of the role played by the bridal consultant. While at the Bridal Emporium the consultant acts as liaison between the bride and the florist and photographer, the bridal consultant at Perfect Day operates in a different way. She is directly responsible for only the clothing for the bride and female attendants. In the floral, photography, and formal wear areas she acts as an advisor, working with the bride and the person responsible for the particular area. In this situation any of the other three areas involved may also interact with each other in a coordinating or planning capacity. This third alternative is, then, more like the organization pattern, with the bride as nexus, thought to be standard at the beginning of this research. The bridal consultant serves as an advisor and communication moves in all directions as illustrated by the diagram on the following page.
FIGURE 7: Schematic Diagram of an Alternative Organizational Structure of a Wedding Complex: Bridal Consultant as Advisor

It should be pointed out that the first organization described, in which the bride is the nexus and single common communicator in a temporary organization, is by far the most common arrangement (FIGURE 4). Much of the reason for this may be attributed to the physical separation of functions into specialty shops. By their very nature, bridal clothing stores are specialty shops in both stock or product and purpose. They sell only clothing and accessories for the bride, her mother, and female attendants for weddings. On the other hand, formal wear shops, florist shops, and photography studios specialize only in stock or product. The interview question which asked "Do you specialize in any one area?" (e.g. weddings) brought negative answers from all members of these three components. In addition to weddings, formal wear shops also rent clothing for proms and other formal events;
florists provide flowers for funerals, holidays, and any number of special and not-so-special days; and photographers, while they may specialize in portraits as opposed to industrial or commercial photography, also do baby, graduation, and family sittings plus other miscellaneous portrait work.

The "complete service" alternative arrangement with the two variations—single owner or multiple owners—appears to be a relatively new phenomenon in the Omaha area. At the beginning of this research only one, Bridal Emporium, existed in the geographic area covered by the study; by the interview stage, a second, Perfect Day, had been added; and at this writing a third has opened. Even with the complete service arrangement a bride is not obligated to purchase all her wedding needs in that one store although one may assume subtle pressures or conveniences encourage her to do so. She may choose to use only some of the store's services and obtain one, two, or even three of the remaining services from specialty shops outside the "complete service" operation resulting again in the predominant or "rimless wagon wheel" organizational network. For this reason the second and third alternatives may exist for very few people. It is possible, however, that if the centralization of specialties continues, the complete service shops may take over more functions of the wedding from the individual, geographically separated specialty shops. Several florists and photographers in the research sample voluntarily expressed the opinion that wedding business is more time consuming and therefore less profitable than other types of photography and floral work. This principle
is readily illustrated by the florists' refusal to service weddings on holidays that traditionally involve the giving of flowers—Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and Christmas—and are less time consuming and therefore more profitable than wedding business.

Before leaving the subject of the social organization of the wedding complex two possible future changes may be mentioned. First, a number of the subjects in all occupational components mentioned a trend that they report has only recently started—more involvement by the groom in wedding planning. While it is by no means a widespread practice, brides are occasionally bringing the groom along to plan flowers, discuss photography arrangements, and even to help choose the bridal gown, in addition to his traditional role in choosing formal wear. If this trend continues and gains acceptance—some bridal consultants especially are opposed to this on the grounds of tradition—the groom may stand with the bride as the nexus of the organization.

The second trend, while not actually encountered by this researcher, was mentioned by several of the respondents. In recent years, a number of new businesses have opened in various parts of the nation—Washington, D.C.; Houston, Texas; and Lincoln, Nebraska, to name a few. These businesses, owned and run by women, offer what might be called wedding coordinator services. For the purpose of this project it is sufficient only to mention that the coordinators are independent wedding directors who will handle the details of planning a wedding, from engagement announcement to honeymoon, for a fee—the instrumental equivalent of the position attached to the church in other places and times. If this
trend becomes widespread it could result, at least for those who can afford it, in an organizational pattern much like the one originally conceived—bride as nexus and director as gatekeeper to the organization.

In summary, the typical wedding complex involves the bride as the nexus of a temporary organization in which there is little or no communication among the specialty areas except as information is indirectly carried from one to the other by the bride. While other alternatives are provided by "complete service" bridal stores, their newness and small numbers as opposed to the numerous established specialty shops means that the complete service alternatives are used in totality by only a portion of the potential market at this time.

Chapter V describes each of the four components of the wedding complex in terms of duties, relationship to the nexus, attitudes toward the job, and so forth. Chapter VI presents the organization of the complex including each component and the nexus. These data provide a basis for comparing each of the components to an ideal type profession. Before moving to that analysis, however a brief discussion of the concept of profession is in order. Chapter VII presents Greenwood's (1957) ideal type profession and Caplow's (1954) and Wilensky's (1964) conceptualizations of the professionalization process.
Chapter VII
THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSION*

This research has two major foci. As originally proposed, one was to examine the organization of the wedding complex regarding patterns of interaction, structure and organization, and access of the various components to the bridal couple. With the discussion of this aspect completed in Chapter VI, attention may now be directed to the second focus, the determination of the status of each specialty component in the complex in terms of an ideal type of profession. Before actually analyzing the relevant data, a discussion of the profession model used to judge each occupation and of pertinent theoretical material is essential.

The model of a profession used to evaluate each of the four components in the wedding complex--bridal consultants, formal wear consultants, florists, and photographers--was developed by Ernest Greenwood (1957). This particular model includes five attributes seemingly possessed by all professions in greater or lesser degree. These attributes are: (1) systematic theory, (2) authority, (3) community sanction, (4) ethical codes, and (5) a culture.

According to Greenwood, professionals are presumed to perform

*In addition to those sources cited in the text, a number of others were read for background for this research. Some of them are Etzioni, 1969; Hughes, 1958; and McCormack, 1956.
operations which are so complicated as to require skills involving lengthy training periods. He cites as examples the skills required by a surgeon, a concert pianist, or a research physicist. Mastery of skills requiring long periods of training is not, however, enough to separate the professional from the nonprofessional, since many non-professionals such as tool-and-die workers, diamond-cutters, and cabinet-makers also utilize special skills in their work (Greenwood, 1957:46). The difference lies in the realization that the skills expected of a professional are supported by a body of theory, "...knowledge that has been organized into an internally consistent system." (Greenwood, 1957:46). This theory serves to unify a variety of concrete situations in which the professional utilizes his skills. It also provides him with a justification for using a particular skill in a particular situation. Also involved in the ideal of a theory base for operational skills is the manner in which knowledge of the theory is acquired and the amount of attention it is given.

While the nonprofessional may learn his nontheoretically based skills in an apprenticeship, on-the-job training situation, the professional either acquires his theoretical base prior to or simultaneous with learning the skill. In other words, the professional's training is both in skills and intellectual preparation. Greenwood (1957:47) feels that "orientation in theory can be achieved best through formal education in an academic setting." Thus the professions often have professional schools, many times found in universities, in which new
members of the profession are expected to receive their training.\(^1\) Once the theory base is acquired, the professionals, or at least a segment of them, spend a part of their activity in research-based theory construction, an exercise not generally associated with non-professionals. Some members of the profession may even devote the whole of their professional lives to the researcher-theoretician role. In summary, Greenwood (1957:47) generalizes, "...as an occupation moves toward professional status, apprenticeship training yields to formalized education, because the function of theory as a groundwork for practice acquires increasing importance."

A second component of the ideal-type profession analyzed by Greenwood is the concept of professional authority. This authority originally stems from the relatively vast store of knowledge of the professional about a particular aspect of life in comparison to a layperson's knowledge in the same area. Because he has chosen not to take the time to acquire the knowledge or because he is intellectually incapable of doing so, the layperson must trust the professional to use his knowledge to appraise and satisfy his (the layperson's) needs. A relationship in which the professional, by virtue of special theoretically based knowledge, dictates to the layperson in matters involving a particular aspect of life is a professional-client relationship. The client is not expected to be capable of judging what is best for

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\(^1\) Even those categories termed "freelance" professions by Greenwood--acting, painting, writing, et cetera--have some schools or institutes, often nontraditional in nature and not mandatory, in which persons aspiring to the profession may train.
him, rather that is left to the professional's judgement. Neither is the client expected to be capable of discriminating among competing forms of the same service. Ideally, for example, the client would not be expected to shop around for the best available brain surgeon to service him because he is not capable of discriminating levels of competence in brain surgery. As a result of this trust relationship, the professional is expected to hold his client's best interest above all else and refrain from exploitation.

The reverse of the client-professional relationship is that of the customer-nonprofessional relationship. In this situation, the customer is expected to be more aware of his needs and the most desirable way in which to satisfy them than the nonprofessional. Because of this he can be expected to shop around for the best supplier. Implied in this relationship is a lack of trust/dependency which in turn may mean that the nonprofessional is not expected to hold the customer's interest foremost and may seek to manipulate the customer to his (the nonprofessional's) own advantage--a "caveat emptor" situation. It should be mentioned, however, that such a policy is not always present in the customer-nonprofessional relationship but merely that it is the extreme opposite of the complete trust/dependency situation, also an extreme, of an ideal client-professional relationship.

This discussion of professional authority in the client-professional trust relationship is not meant to imply that professionals

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2 Perhaps it should also be mentioned that a given professional will be expected to play the layperson's role in areas other than those for which he has mastery. A professional is only a professional relative to certain specific facets of life.
are of higher virtue and more noble cloth than the nonprofessional in a relationship with a customer/client. In reality, it is as much to the professional's advantage to refrain from exploiting his client as it is in the client's interest. As Goode (1957:196) points out, "...exploitation would inevitably lower the prestige of the professional community and subject it to stricter lay controls." Exploitation, if discovered by the client would then serve to damage the entire professional community and would most certainly damage the individual professional in terms of lay community trust and, as we shall see later, in terms of his membership in the professional community.

The third attribute of a profession as discussed by Greenwood is community sanction. In essence community sanction amounts to a service monopoly for the profession agreed to informally by the lay community and formally supported by the community's police power. By reference to the specialized skills and knowledge required of a professional best to serve the community, the profession, with community approval, acquires control, in the form of accreditation, over training centers. Thus schools which, for whatever reason, can not obtain proper professional accreditation are doomed to failure or subject to legal sanction for such an offense as fraudulent licensing of graduates. On the same basis of special skill and knowledge the profession controls licensing of individuals as practitioners, again with community approval. Individuals who use their skills and knowledge without authorization by the professional community are also subject to legal prosecution for practicing medicine, law, or whatever the case may be, without a license.
In order to receive a license, the practitioner may be required to graduate from an authorized training center and possibly also to pass an examination administered by members of the profession. In these ways the established members serve as gatekeepers for the profession. The lay community accepts the practice because its members are convinced that they are not qualified judges of competence in the area in question.

Along with regulatory powers positively sanctioned by the larger community, a profession has a number of approved privileges. Some, such as the concept of privileged communication or confidentiality, are unique to certain professions, in this case notably medicine and law. Others are fairly common to professions in general. They include such privileges as those which allow the profession to set its own standards of performance and to evaluate individual performances in regard to those standards. Such privileges provide the profession with a great deal of autonomy.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, the individual professional who exploits his client is subject to loss of trust by the lay community and negative sanction by the professional community. It is this need for positive community sanction to enforce its powers and guarantee its privileges that motivates the professional community to control its members. If individual members were to go unchecked and unsanctioned by the professional community, the lay community might force its own regulation on the profession and deny it the right to regulate itself. So, as Goode (1957:196-97) points out, the
professional community must socialize its new members to acceptable behavior and exercise control over those who err for its own protection.

A nonprofessional, on the other hand, usually does not enjoy either control over who enters the occupation or how training occurs, if at all. Nor do nonprofessionals usually set their own standards of performance. Instead membership is relatively open to anyone and standards may be set formally by the government or informally by the paying customers and the profit motive.

The dependency on community support of its powers and privileges and therefore the need to control the behavior of its members leads logically to the establishment of formal and informal rules of conduct, or the fourth attribute of a profession—ethical codes. This code of ethics is usually found in two parts—formal and informal. The formal segment is the written code of ethics which every member of the profession accepts and, to which, in some professions, loyalty is sworn, e.g. Hippocratic Oath in medicine. According to Greenwood's discussion (1957:50) a profession's written code of ethics is usually explicit, systematic, binding and has a public service orientation with altruistic overtones. Among the nonprofessions when a code of ethics is found, it is usually of a more general nature and quite often compliance with it is of a voluntary nature rather than a requirement. These professional codes define a practitioner's behavior with relation to other people. Greenwood (1957:50) discusses these relationships as being one of two types, either client-professional or colleague-colleague relations.
Goode (1957:197-98), however, includes four categories of relationship covered by the codes. In addition to the two mentioned by Greenwood, Goode adds professional-unauthorized practitioner and lay community-professional relations. Each of the four categories has some measure of social control over the professional, according to Goode: the client through the possible rejection of the profession; colleagues through their control over prestige and advancement opportunities such as referrals, consultations, and promotional or job recommendations; the lay community through its legal agencies of the state; and the unauthorized practitioner by being able to offer services to clients who are not satisfied with what the profession offers.

Regardless of the difference in skills and knowledge from profession to profession and therefore specific items within codes, some generally accepted points are to be found. One of these essentials is what Parsons has called the element of universalism, which assumes that the professional will remain emotionally neutral to his clients and accept anyone as a client irrespective of such factors as sex, race, ethnicity, religion, age, or social status. A second element, involving colleague-colleague relations, stresses cooperative, equalitarian, supportive behavior. The members of the profession, according to this feature, are not competitors so they share new information and advances with one another. All members of the profession are equal and should treat each other as such and, in the face of criticism or challenge from clients or the lay community, the members of the profession will back each other rather than risk the
authority of the individual practitioner.

Informal ethics involve colleague-colleague practices such as referrals, consultations, recommendations and references and dictate the courtesy of the profession in such matters as reciprocity. Profession members who violate either the formal or informal code may find themselves in strained relationships with their colleagues at the very least and, especially in regard to the formal rules, may find themselves suspended or barred from professional membership by the controlling professional association.

A fifth and final attribute of the profession is the professional culture which is generated through the interaction of the social roles of members in the formal and informal groups characteristic of a profession (Greenwood, 1957:51-2). This concept of professional culture is much the same as Goode's concept of the professional community. The formal groups are generally of three types. The first consists of those organizations within which the professional operates and where he meets his clients: the hospital, law firm, or university. The second type includes organizations designed to supply the profession with new members and to expand its knowledge-base: medical and law schools, and research centers. The third type of group is the professional association which develops as a result of a consciousness-of-kind expression of the members and which is designed to further group aims and interests. Finally, among the formal groups, are informal clique groupings based on such criteria as specialty, ethnic, family or religious affiliations, work propinquity, and related factors.
The members with a professional culture share values, norms and professional symbols in common, a situation not found in nonprofessions. One of the values basic to professions is that their services are good for the society and that the society would be disadvantaged by their loss. A second is the commitment of the members to the concept of rationality or objectivity and a third, the value of professional authority.

The norms shared within a profession deal with behavior in regard to clients, colleagues, superiors, proteges and other interpersonal relations and with gaining admission to the profession and to the various formal and informal groups within the profession.

The symbols of the profession include such things as distinctive dress, insignias, history, folklore, argot, and its heroes, villians, and stereotypes. An obvious example of such a symbol is the doctor's stethoscope regarded as an indication of professional training by both client and doctor (Douglas, 1974).

Finally, the professional culture also includes the "career" concept, implying that the members have a particular calling to the profession and are therefore devoted to their work in and for itself and only secondarily because of monetary reward involved.

As previously suggested the members of a profession share the culture complete with the career orientation, values, norms, and symbols. The members and organizations continually reinforce the culture to one another in the work setting and in informal socializing. As new members seek to join a profession they must be acculturated so
that they too will internalize the values, norms, symbols, and career orientations so that the culture will be perpetuated from generation to generation.

The Process of Professionalization

Since, in this chapter, the object has been to present theoretical perspectives which can be utilized to examine each of the four wedding complex components to determine its standing in regard to a non-profession-profession continuum, Caplow's (1954:139-40) discussion of the four steps involved in the professionalization process is pertinent to the discussion. Caplow (1954:139) states that "the steps involved in professionalization are quite definite, and even the sequence is explicit...." According to his thesis the first step toward professional status is the establishment of a professional association. In addition, the association is closed in the sense that an individual must meet definite qualification criteria in order to become a member.

In the second step, the occupational name is changed. This change functions to lessen association with the previous occupational status and image and provides a title which can be monopolized by the group. Only those persons meeting membership standards may use the new title.

In the third step, the group develops and publicizes a code of ethics to which its members adhere. This code asserts that the service is needed by the society and defines the occupation's commitment to the public welfare. In addition, the code further develops rules for
eliminating undesirable practitioners.

The fourth and final stage is itself usually broken into phases. Over-all, the fourth step involves a movement to gain the support of public power for the new occupational barriers established by the association and code of ethics. As Caplow points out, this is usually accomplished one step at a time by first gaining support for the specialized title given those who meet the qualifications, through the final phase in which support is sought to make it a crime to provide the service without being an accepted member of the profession. Throughout this phase training facilities, at least partially controlled by the profession, are developed along with working relations with other professions and elaboration of the professional culture. Wilensky (1964:137-58) also discusses the process of professionalization through steps. In addition to the steps described by Caplow, Wilensky includes two phases prior to establishment of a professional association. The first is that persons begin to engage in the occupation fulltime rather than part-time and the second that training schools are established. From that point, the occupation establishes professional associations and completes the other steps described by Caplow.

A second kind of process point of view has been suggested by Bucher and Strauss (1961:325-34). Their concept of a profession involves "...loose amalgamations of segments pursuing different objectives in different manners and more or less delicately held together under a common name at a particular period in history" (Bucher and Strauss, 1961:326). While they recognize that models such
as Greenwood's allow some differences in individuals within the profession they do not feel that there is enough emphasis on change and conflict in models of that type. Their approach, therefore, emphasizes the differences to be found among segments within the profession as a whole and within specialties in a profession. They also point out that as a result of these differences in techniques, perspective, values, commitments, et cetera there is conflict among the various segments and that this conflict actually effects the organization of the profession.

Greenwood's ideal type and the process perspective of Wilensky and Caplow have been criticized by a number of writers. Roth (1974), Habenstein (1963), Benson (1973), Becker (1961), and Moore (1970) have all criticized sociologists for the use of models consisting of characteristics of professions. Roth directed his analysis of such an approach not only at sociologists in general, but also at Greenwood's ideal type which he evaluated point by point contending that it, like many others of its type, was based on unproven and even unexamined claims, often those made by professions or on-the-make professions themselves. Criticisms of process models such as those of Wilensky and Caplow have been made for many of the same faults as well as for implying an orderly progression from nonprofession to profession where one does not exist in reality (Roth, 1974; Goode, 1969).

Having outlined three basic theoretical perspectives on the concept profession--the ideal type involving characteristics of profession, the process model dealing with stages of movement from nonprofession to profession, and the process perspective emphasizing segmentation, conflict, and change--the next chapter will deal with an application of these perspectives vis-a-vis the data presented in Chapter V.
Chapter VIII

THE COMPONENTS OF THE WEDDING COMPLEX
AND MODELS OF PROFESSIONALISM

In this chapter the data summarized in Chapter V will be analyzed in terms of the ideal type construct and process perspective of professions discussed in Chapter VII. Once again, for the sake of clarity, each component in the wedding complex will be considered separately and in the same order as in previous chapters.

Bridal Consultants

In the case of bridal consultants, the majority have no systematic theoretical background that is discernible. For the most part, these women act as salespersons and have acquired their sales training in on-the-job situations, often in areas other than that associated with weddings. Their usual role is limited to selling brides' and bridesmaids' gowns. In the sample for this study there are few who go beyond selling to coordinating entire weddings. Of the three consultants who coordinate as well as sell, one received apprenticeship training and one had a one week franchise course which included a wide variety of subjects. Only one member of the sample—a third over-all coordinating consultant—has a theoretical background upon which to base her skills. She had roughly eleven years of design education at three major universities and a degree in haute couture. Initially, her bridal
shop handled no ready-made gowns, each was individually designed by the consultant.

In terms of professional authority, bridal consultants display little. The bride makes the final decision whether or not to buy a particular dress. She may be influenced by the consultant through suggestions, but in the end the bride either buys the dress or not. She and other members of the public are also considered capable of evaluating the consultant's performance—is she helpful, is the dress properly fitted, and so forth. There is a myth surrounding the selection of the bridal gown which seems to be accepted by many brides and is perpetuated by bridal magazines and by many of the consultants in the sample. This is that there is only one perfect gown for each bride and when she finds it she will know immediately that it is "her" dress. There will be no decision between two equally good possibilities, the bride will simply go from place to place until "the dress" is located. When occupational members accept that myth as true, there can be no question that the consultant dictates to the bride.

The larger community does not seem to grant bridal consultants any special rights or privileges that are not granted any other sales-person in retail establishments. There are no formal training schools

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1Recently in one of my introductory sociology classes at the College of Saint Mary the students were asked to visit a place they had never been before and describe their experience. One girl described finding her "perfect" dress. Her description of the event included the fact that she had gone from place to place and had seen many nice dresses but nothing that was "exactly right." Immediately upon entering the shop in question she saw "the dress" and as she wrote "fell in love with it even before [she] tried it on."
which all consultants are expected to attend and no licensing or certification procedures. Anyone with enough capital can open a bridal shop and call herself a bridal consultant. Only two members of the sample felt there was any reason for regulation.

Within a particular bridal shop there may exist an informal code directed at bride-consultant and colleague-colleague relations but there is no code established for the occupation as a whole. A consultant violating the informal code might find herself dismissed from one shop but it is highly unlikely that she would be barred from the occupation.

From the discussion in Chapter V, it should be obvious that there is no well-defined professional culture in existence for bridal consultants. There apparently are no generally accepted training centers and no occupational associations. In actuality, there is little uniformity even in the setting in which consultant meets bride. In one instance the bridal department may be a corner of a dress and sportswear department or store and the consultant may wait on trade in other departments. In another situation, the entire shop may be devoted to the bride and dressing rooms may be specially designed exclusively for trying on bridal gowns. The bridal shop may be a separate entity or only one department in an enormous department store.

Informally there is little or no interaction, business or social, among bridal consultants. There is enough competition among different enterprises that in most cases a bride is not even allowed to record the style numbers of a particular gown for fear she might order it
from another shop. The only value that all consultants seem to share is that the bride should have what she wants because it is her wedding.

Although all but one person in the sample planned to continue in the occupation indefinitely, it is hard to believe that any of the respondents feel a "calling" to be a bridal consultant in the sense that a minister or doctor might feel that he has been "called". Most appear to enjoy their work, especially working with people and giving advice, and the notion that they are not bridal consultants because it is a way to become wealthy is frequently expressed. Only two respondents reported that money is an important factor in their job satisfaction. However, despite their reported enjoyment of the occupation, only two of the consultants expressed a real enthusiasm for the work, the others seem resigned to the occupation rather than actively pursuing it as a career.

In terms of the professionalization steps described by Caplow (1954) and Wilensky (1964), bridal consultants, at least those in this sample, are only in the first phase of Wilensky's process--many of them work at the occupation fulltime. In the case of some franchise shops, a period of formal training is required but this is not the rule for the occupation as a whole.

Formal Wear Consultants

Formal wear consultants appear to be in much the same situation as bridal consultants in terms of having skills which are theoretically based. Their skills are also mainly in the area of sales and
have more often than not been acquired in on-the-job training. Formal training such as the one week courses offered by formal wear companies emphasize such areas as fitting, alterations, and fabrics. While anatomical and art theory might prove useful to these consultants, it is unlikely that any of them have such backgrounds. The one formal wear consultant who did mention a college degree had obtained it in business administration.

Although the consultant may try to learn the bride's or groom's name and may attempt to develop an individual relationship with each couple, it seems that the couple is viewed as a customer who knows, at least in general, what he wants and does not rely on the consultant's authority. As with the bridal gown, the couple will make their own decision whether or not to rent formal wear from a particular shop. The consultant may make suggestions and offer a more appropriate alternative but he does not dictate.

At present there are no formally stated controls over who may enter the occupation or over what, if any, training a consultant must have. The occupation does not carry any special rights or privileges for the larger community to sanction. Only one respondent felt there should be any form of regulation and he saw it as a voluntary situation to be established by the occupational association. As one respondent remarked, "Poor business weeds itself out. There's no need for regulation."

At the time of the research, a formal code of ethics was being drawn up in preparation for the establishment of an association for
formal wear consultants by an occupational association for menswear retailers. As envisioned by one member of the organizational committee, the code would be voluntary, as is membership in the association. There does seem to be an informal code of ethics in operation among certain members of the sample already. This code applies to colleague-colleague relations and the sub-leasing of formal wear among two or three shops carrying the same brands. When one shop is short in a particular style or size of clothing the consultant can call another shop and arrange to rent the item at a lower price than that charged the groom or attendants. As a result, both shops profit, but to a lesser extent than usual. As for ethics involving treatment of the bridal couple, each shop has its own informal practices.

Although there are traces of a professional culture in this component it does not appear well-developed. The setting for meeting and interacting with the bridal couple varies from an independent specialty shop situation to an area of the men's department of a large clothing store. There are a few training centers run by franchises or formal wear wholesalers but special training is not required and is not controlled by the occupation. Three of the five establishments in the sample belong to the Menswear Retailers Association and plan to join the American Formal Wear Association section of the MRA when it is formally established. Informally, only two have close social ties with others in the occupation, however, all but one cited friendly relations and a casual working relationship with other consultants.

The members of the sample seem to share a similar orientation
to the bridal couple—helpful, advising, and so forth—and most expressed the idea that formal wear is more complicated than a choice between a white dinner jacket and a black tuxedo. Several even mentioned that the couple often have to be educated to the variety of possible choices before they can begin to make a decision.

Again, although most seem to enjoy their work, plan to continue with it, and one was quite enthusiastic about it, none of the respondents seem to think of the occupation as a "calling". Much of their occupational satisfaction is a result of working with people, giving advice, and creative opportunity, as opposed to making a fortune. The existence of a career orientation of a life devoted to good works (Greenwood, 1957:53) is not evidenced in the data.

Again the phases of professionalization discussed by Wilensky (1964) and Caplow (1954) are not complete, however, the formal wear consultants do appear to be farther into the process than the bridal consultants. The respondents are fulltime formal wear consultants, all but one in a formal wear specialty shop, and there are schools which a consultant can attend, although usually voluntarily. A general occupational association has been established with organization of a specialty association in progress and the new association, while developing its organizational structure, seems also to be formulating a code of ethics. There is no evidence, however, which indicates a move for legal, public support of the code.
Florists

The skills utilized by florists are much more likely than those of the preceding components to be supported by a body of theory. Whether the florist is conscious of that theory or not is another question. As mentioned previously, one member of the sample has a college degree in floriculture so in his case, at least, one can acknowledge the existence of theory learned with skill. In most other cases the florists have either attended private floristry schools or at least taken part in workshops and seminars on the various aspects of the occupation. At the very least there seems to be some of the kind of theory used by such professions as painting and composing which Greenwood (1957:47) calls free-lance professions. One must have some aesthetic talent, some knowledge of design, color, composition, and textures, to be a successful florist. As with the wire service trade associations for rapid, national delivery of floral goods, floral arrangements are fairly standard for transmitting orders from place to place, e.g., a florist has originally created the arrangement and other florists must be able to recreate the same design from a picture and specifications.

In the matter of professional authority there appears to be a mix of a client-professional relation and a customer-nonprofessional relation. The bride can know what she wants to a point—a special flower or particular color or even a particular style of bouquet—but beyond that point the florist has authority. He knows whether or not daisies are available in August, what greenery or other flower can be best
combined, which flowers wilt rapidly, which drip staining juices which might damage a gown, which flower best compliments a Victorian style gown, and most of all how much the bride can buy on her budget. Although the nonflorist can evaluate the florist's work to a point, another florist with knowledge of flowers, design, costs, and the like is usually in a better position to do so.

Although the occupation as a whole is not subject to regulation and certification any more than are the bridal or formal wear consultants, a segment of it is subject to very strict control. Those shops which belong to Florists' Transworld Delivery must meet and maintain certain standards and quality. In turn, FTD's authority to regulate its members is protected by government regulations restricting fraudulent use of trademarks such as FTD's Mercury seal and initials. The use of the trademark implies a certain level of quality to members of the public even though they probably do not know how a shop becomes a member.

Florists' Transworld Delivery also provides its members with an operating code of ethics which concerns colleague relations as well as those with the public. If the code is violated the establishment may be dropped from membership. Members order flowers through other members or recommend other members when they themselves can not handle a particular order. They do not set up informal order relationships with nonmembers. One respondent mentioned that although his shop is associated with FTD, Telefloral, a voluntary wire service with little or no regulation, had asked it to become a representative of their
service. The florist told Telefloral that he would do so but only to the extent of receiving orders from other cities because, as a member of FTD, he is obliged to order from and through other FTD shops and would not call Telefloral members.

Florists also evidence more characteristics of a professional culture than do the previously discussed components of the wedding complex. The setting in which florist and public meet is much more uniform in appearance than that of the two consultant components. A florist shop is easily recognizable as such and in all five cases in the sample it is a separate entity from other sorts of business. In two cases in which the shop is located in a department store, one is physically set off by a partial wall and has its own entrance from outside as well as an entry through the larger store. In the other instance, the arrangement of displays makes quite clear at what point one enters the shop. In no case is the florist also selling other non-floral items such as suits or dresses.

Several large universities offer four year degrees in floraculture. A number of other private floristry schools also exist in addition to workshops and seminars sponsored by occupational associations. At this time, florists are not required to have any special training beyond apprenticeship. However, several respondents mentioned that the younger members of the occupation are likely to have had some formal training in floristry as well.

Florists have organized into occupational associations at a number of levels: national, state, and local. These organizations perform a
variety of services from lobbying and policing prices, to seminars, to members evaluating the work of each other. Although these associations are voluntary, all respondents belong minimally to the state and national organizations and all but one to the local group. In addition to the organizational ties, all respondents said that they have good friends in the occupation, often mentioning other Omaha florists while several named florists in other cities.

All sample members express certain similar values. One of the most prominent is the value of doing quality work as opposed to quantity, and another that floral design is a creative activity which takes time. Those who are FTD affiliates also share the service's emblem as a widely recognized symbol.

Previously it was mentioned that the florists in the sample have spent an average of twenty-five years in the occupation. No one interviewed had been a florist less than thirteen years and all show considerable enthusiasm about their work. Among this group, there seems to be a dedication to the beauty of flowers and plants and sharing of that beauty with others. Although it may strictly have been an inference by the researcher some, if not all the respondents feel a kind of "calling" for this particular occupation. It certainly consumes many more than eight hours of each florist's day. One had turned his hobby into a fulltime occupation. Another travels extensively giving demonstrations and conducting seminars and provides flowers for several local bridal style shows each year and helps to narrate the show itself. A third is past director of Florists' Transworld Delivery.
Florists work at their occupation fulltime. There are schools which they can attend for a formal education. They have a variety of occupational associations and for a segment of the whole there is a standard FTD code of ethics. Legal public support has been granted to the use of the FTD trademark and indirectly its regulations, and in some parts of the country, including Nebraska, laws either already regulate florist establishments or are being formulated for future legislation. In terms of the professionalization process at least a segment of the occupation seems to be moving toward professional status.

Photographers

Portrait photographers must have technical as well as artistic skills. There are bodies of theory behind each of these aspects but it is doubtful that most photographers are conscious of them. The photography courses and schools which exist are mostly of the technical or skill-oriented variety. Those portrait photographers who specialize in esthetically pleasing, individualized portraits as contrasted to the "standard, packaged" poses might be considered in the same category as Greenwood's free-lance professionals.

As with florists, there appears to be a mixed client-professional and customer-nonprofessional relationship concerning authority. The client/customer decides when photography is desired and may indicate a specific pose or picture. After the photographs are taken, the customer chooses those pictures he will buy. The photographer, however, controls the actual posing, lighting, and similar matters. When taking a formal
studio portrait, there may be such a variety of shots that in choosing the one pose to be finished, the client/customer makes the final decision. But in situations such as those at the wedding and reception where the activity is constantly changing and the bride and groom are otherwise occupied, the photographer must choose to take certain shots and miss others. In this situation he is exercising independent professional judgement, if only in a limited sense.

Here again the general public evaluates the photographer's talents and training. During the participant observation phase of this research each studio provided samples of the photographer's work for review as one criterion for selecting a particular photographer over another. In this sense, the occupational members themselves expect that the public will judge their work. On the other hand, the occupational associations offer opportunities to their members to have their work judged by fellow photographers. One studio visited during the research contained a wide variety of trophies accumulated by the photographer in such competitions. This suggests that while photographers realize that their work will be evaluated by the public to some extent, they still feel a need for evaluation by their colleagues, this being discerning of technical and artistic ability.

At the time of the research, photography did not enjoy any special rights or privileges which could be supported by the community. Training varied from a degree conferred by a photography school, to a college course or two in photography, to apprenticeship. There are no standards for training and no standards for admission to the occupation.
As stated, one of the major reasons that respondents gave for desiring regulation of some sort is to close the occupation to amateurs and part-time photographers. By 1980, the Professional Photographers of America plan to have a certification procedure available but there is no indication that any attempt will be made in the near future to gain public power for making certification by the organization mandatory for all practicing photographers.

The Professional Photographers of America (PPA) has a code of ethics which its members are asked to abide by, but as one respondent mentioned, the code is so vague and general that in reality the photographer uses his own personal standards. Informally, the photographers in the sample know each other (most belong to Greater Omaha Photographers) and know generally the quality of work and price range of other photographers. Although most say they have good friends in the occupation their good friends do not seem to be in Omaha or, as one sample member mentioned, are in a different type of photography. There also does not appear to be any sort of referral system among persons engaged in the occupation.

There are traces of a professional culture among photographers but it is not well-defined. There are few recognized centers for formal training. On the other hand the setting in which the bridal couple meets the photographer, his studio, is fairly standard and there are a number of occupational associations to which members of the sample belong. Informally, however, there seem to be few, if any cliques or examples of social ties. This might have been distorted by
sample size.

As for values, norms, and symbols held in common there does seem to be some consensus. Most respondents feel they are experts and do have artistic sense and that the work they do, especially wedding photography, is very important to the society. Several mentioned that once the wedding is over only the pictures remain to remind the couple of exactly what took place and who was involved. As a group, they also reacted in a similar way to the part-time or amateur photographer. Among the persons in the sample there is a kind of solidarity. Only one photographer openly down-graded another studio by name and that was because the studio hires amateurs and part-timers to cover weddings. Coincidentally, because both he and the other studio have the same family name, criticism of the other’s work is frequently directed at him although he has no ties with them. As for shared symbols, the camera serves that purpose—not a simple Kodak Instamatic, a symbol which includes the majority of Americans, but the very elaborate cameras characteristic of serious photographers.

One can not say that wedding photography is strictly a career in the sense of a life devoted to good works, but neither can it be considered solely a profit-oriented business. Although several respondents plainly stated that photography is a way to make a living, they are also in general agreement that money is only of secondary importance. They enjoy their work and have no intention of leaving it for something else. For all of them, creative opportunity and working with people are a major part of their over-all job satisfaction.
In terms of progress toward professionalization through the phases outlined by Caplow and Wilensky, photography has some fulltime and some part-time practitioners. There are few training schools, but a number of formal occupational associations. There is a voluntary code of ethics but little or nothing in the way of regulation or certification for which to seek public support.

Just what does all this mean in terms of defining the four components of the wedding complex as professions or nonprofessions? Having compared the data with the ideal type, Chapter IX will set forth conclusions and criticism of the theories and suggestions for future studies.
Chapter IX

THE WEDDING COMPLEX AND ITS OCCUPATIONAL COMPONENTS: CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The preceding chapters have discussed research procedures, the data concerning the planning of a wedding, the social organization of the wedding complex, the ideal type profession, the professionalization process, and the testing of the components of the wedding complex against professional type and process. In this final chapter, we bring these together with conclusions and predictions for the future of the four components in terms of professionalization.

The first aspect of this analysis included a description of the organization of the wedding complex involving the components of bridal consultant, formal wear consultant, florist, and photographer and the nexus of the complex, the bride and groom.

The data reveal that a social organization in which the bride is the nexus and the only member of the complex in communication with all other members is more frequent than any other. In this type of complex, the bride determines which particular individuals comprise the complex and interacts with each one separately. The components communicate with one another only indirectly through the bride.

A second characteristic of the dominant organizational structure is that the components are interchangeable from wedding to wedding. The complex, in relation to specific representatives of each component,
is not stable. Instead, a new complex with new personnel is developed by each bride. Although the complex involves the same components, individuals in these components change.

Along with the predominant complex organization two alternative, though similar, organizational structures appear from the data. Both are characteristic of bridal shops which offer complete wedding service and hinge on the role of the bridal consultant in the complex. The one pattern is characterized by a bridal consultant, who also handles formal wear, acting as a secondary nexus. The bride and consultant together plan the wedding. The bridal consultant then coordinates the activities of the other components. She has direct communication with each of the other components and acts as a liaison between the bride and those components. As a result the bride has only indirect communication with the florist and photographer.

The second alternative pattern includes the bridal consultant as a constant advisor to the bride. The two of them plan the wedding with optional input from other components. Both are in direct communication with the three remaining components and these components may, in turn, communicate directly with each other resulting in an open complex.

Unlike the predominant organizational pattern the specific representatives of each component are constant in the two alternative complex structures, only the nexus changes. As a result, some of the responsibility for organizing a wedding is assumed by the components rather than being borne entirely by the bride as it is in the prevailing pattern. Also there is a potential for reduction of the time a bride
spends on planning and coordination. Because all the components are found in the same physical location, the bride's travel time from component to component is reduced. Also, since the complex is stable, the components function as an experienced team, each knowing what his job entails and relying on the others to do their part. The bridal consultant in either role takes from the bride a portion of the coordinating responsibility, more as a liaison and somewhat less as an advisor. For a bride with minimal time to allocate for wedding planning, this assumption of part of the responsibility by the components gives these two structures an advantage over that in which the bride takes sole responsibility and coordinates activity in four separate physical locations. Despite this advantage, however, the organizational pattern characterized by the bride as sole coordinator is most prevalent.

The goal of the second aspect of this analysis has been to determine whether any of the four occupations in the complex can be considered a profession, a marginal profession, or whether they are nonprofessions. Having examined the data and having attempted to test each component against Greenwood's (1957) ideal type profession and Caplow's (1954) and Wilensky's (1964) professionalization process, one can conclude with Vollmer and Mills (1966:vii) that "...it is much more fruitful to ask 'how professionalized', or more specifically 'how professionalized in certain identifiable respects' a given occupation may be at some point in time." Obviously none of the four components fits entirely the sociological construct of profession as ideal type such as that described by Greenwood (1957) and Pavalko (1971). Just as obviously
some fit more nearly the model than do others.

Based on this research and an understanding of both the data and the theory, I would say that of the four occupational components of the wedding complex, photographers are more nearly professionalized than any of the others and bridal consultants are the least professionalized. Florists seem less professionalized than photographers, and formal wear consultants seem only slightly more, if at all, professionalized than bridal consultants.

A brief review of the previous chapter should serve to support the preceding contentions. In terms of the ideal type profession, the first characteristic is the possession of a systematic body of theory or skills supported by theory. In general it appears that neither bridal nor formal wear consultants possess much in the way of skills. In essence they serve as a middleman between the person with skill, the designer, and the bridal couple. Whatever degree of skill they may possess—sales, fitting, coordination—appears to have little or nothing in the way of a theoretical base.

Even though the members of these two occupations feel that they have special knowledge not shared by nonmembers, in most cases they acknowledge that it has been acquired largely through experience. This implies a trial-and-error method of learning rather than a drawing on theoretical knowledge and skill bases for action. For example, rather than being cognizant of the theory of complimentary colors and drawing on that knowledge in coordinating apparel, it is more likely that the individual consultant draws on a suggested color scheme provided by
clothing manufacturers or on previous experience with certain colors.

The evidence pertaining to florists and photographers is somewhat less clear. Had the research involved attending some of the short courses and seminars offered by various organizations in the two occupations, conclusions might more readily have been drawn. From the data at hand, however, it appears that there is some minimal theory base for the skills employed in these two occupations. While much of the expertise exhibited by persons in these occupations may well have been learned through trial-and-error experience, it seems likely that attendance at seminars and workshops has contributed somewhat to their knowledge. In this research, this aspect is perhaps the most poorly examined of the five characteristics of professions.

Both bridal and formal wear consultants also rank low on professional authority. In essence, these two components have a product which the bride and/or groom seek to purchase or rent. In most cases it is unlikely that the bride will enter a bridal shop and put the choice of bride's or attendants' gowns completely in the consultant's hands. The bridal or formal wear consultant may suggest, but certainly do not make exclusive determination of what is appropriate. The couple shops around until they find the product they evaluate as most suitable. While the bridal consultant may feel that the bride should choose a white lace gown instead of an antique silk one because the style is "more becoming", in the final analysis it is the bride who will make the choice. In the case of the bridal and formal wear consultants, then, there appears to be a customer-nonprofessional relationship.
The relationship between the couple and the florist and photographer is not nearly so clear cut and, in fact, seems to vary depending on the stage of preparation for the wedding. Initially the couple may shop for the services of either one. They will decide which florist will provide the flowers and which photographer will take the pictures but after the commitment, the photographer or florist begins to take over the decision making. The couple can not "try-on", except by reputation or having seen his work at other weddings or in other settings, the skills of either florist or photographer prior to the wedding. Eventually, the florist in his work room executes the arrangements and the photographer at the wedding arranges poses and uses his judgement in selecting candid shots, resulting in temporary client-professional type relationships. At most the couple chooses general floral arrangements, colors, and types of flowers from the florist in advance. In the photographer's case, the final transaction reverts to a customer-nonprofessional relationship. At that point the photographer—or perhaps, significantly, his receptionist—presents proofs of all the pictures taken and the couple then selects those of which they wish to purchase copies. This relationship is dependent on the preceding one, however, since the only choices offered the couple are those determined by the photographer through his previous, of-the-moment decisions.

In terms of the third characteristic, community sanction, all four occupations fail to meet the criteria. None of them controls training or admission for their particular occupation. Whether or not a given person, shop, or studio is qualified is currently largely
determined by the public and economic competition. Photography does, however, seem to be making a move toward gaining control of entrance to the occupation through proposed certification procedures. Informally, while evaluation on one level is by the community or consumer, photographers and florists also are subjected to peer group evaluation. A particular florist's design may be chosen by one of the wire services for inclusion in its catalogue and design competition may be held within the occupational association. Photographers frequently compete in showings judged by other photographers. Within the Professional Photographers of America, the photographer's work is judged for Master status and his dedication to the occupation for Craftsman status. Thus, based on this criterion it would seem that photographers are professionalizing and florists may be beginning a move in that direction.

At the time the research was conducted photographers were the only group with a formal written code of ethics, one which was voluntary and, according to several respondents, written in very general language. Although none of the other three occupations has an occupational code, the formal wear consultants are in the process of developing one which will be voluntary. Informally, there appears to be a helping network of subleasing formal wear and wholesaling flowers to others who are short of stock, supporting colleague-colleague relationships among formal wear consultants and florists. While photographers do not evidence a similar relationship they are, as a group, very discrete in regard to opinions and criticisms expressed about one another. Only one photographer was willing to name names, although several described
what they felt were unethical practices but refused to indicate who specifically was being criticized. It would appear that none of the groups is very close to professionalism in terms of an enforceable code although if the photographers do institute certification it will likely include adherence to occupational ethics.

The criterion of a professional culture is not exhibited by bridal consultants. They have no recognized training centers with standards for admission open to all aspiring to the occupation nor do they belong to occupational associations. Social ties exist only within a particular shop and there do not seem to be shared norms, values, or symbols specific to the occupation. Although most of the bridal consultants in the sample plan to continue in their present occupation, they do not seem to feel they have a "calling" in their jobs.

Formal wear consultants may attend brief training schools, usually sponsored by a manufacturer or wholesaler of formal wear and they are beginning their own occupational association complete with a voluntary code of ethics. Although close social ties are seldom reported there does seem to be some interaction among members of the group. As for shared norms, values, and symbols or a career orientation, the formal wear consultant, as the bridal consultant, does not appear to meet the criterion.

Florists may attend a variety of training schools and/or workshops although none are required. They also can and do belong to a number of occupational associations in addition to floral wire service organizations. Membership in FTD as contrasted to Telefloral or Florafax may
constitute an instance of the kind of segmentation described by Bucher and Strauss (1961). Further investigation would be useful in determining the precise situation. There also appears to be more social interaction than in the previously discussed occupations but whether or not cliques are involved would require further research in different settings, for example at association meetings or workshops.

Within the research sample a shared symbol is that of FTD membership but this is obviously not an occupational symbol for all florists. Similar norms expressed include not servicing weddings on certain holidays and those concerning floral etiquette for weddings. The only shared value that has been detected is a belief that flowers are esthetically important and enhance many occasions, especially weddings. Several of the respondents seem to feel a kind of calling for their work, although perhaps not in the same way a priest or medical doctor does. The long number of years devoted to floristry is one indication of this. Another was expressed by the florist who said he could not imagine a florist leaving the occupation. In terms of a professional culture, florists appear to exhibit the rudiments of this professional characteristic.

In the sense of a professional culture, photographers exhibit fewer criteria than do florists, at least in terms of the data gathered in this research. Training centers apparently play a smaller role in photography than they do in floristry, although attendance at workshops and seminars appears to be equally important for both.

Photographers may belong to a number of occupational associations
ranging from national to local. Within the occupation, some social ties are reported but again they are not close and existence of cliques was not revealed. Little in the way of shared values, norms, or symbols is evident with the possible exception being the attitude that photography is more than just using a camera, that it involves creativity as well, and that amateur and part-time photographers should not try to pass themselves off as "professionals". Judging from their comments, most of those photographers in the sample view photography as a career and enjoy their work as an end in itself. The impression is not given that they feel they are devoting themselves to "good works" as Greenwood defines a calling. Based on such indicators as furnishings in the studio, clothing worn by the photographers, traffic in and out of the studio, presence of a receptionist, and reputation, one can infer that some members of the sample are more prosperous than others but all appear happy and even enthusiastic about their work.

A brief look at the professionalization steps outlined by Caplow (1954) and Wilensky (1964) shows that members of all four components in the wedding complex are involved in their occupations on a fulltime basis and, although some training centers are available to anyone interested in any component except bridal consultants, few persons in any occupation take advantage of them. Florists and photographers have established associations and purveyors of formal wear are doing so. Photographers have an unenforceable code of ethics, formal wear is developing one, and florists and bridal consultants have none. None of the groups has legal public support, although Nebraska florists are
attempting to gain certain kinds and florists in some other areas of
the country already have some.

In summary, it appears that bridal and formal wear consultants
should be classified as nonprofessionals. Floristry and photography
may, however, be considered marginal professions possibly moving toward
professionalization. Both involve business enterprises and, at the
same time exhibit some characteristics of a profession. Pavalko
(1971:40-41) lumped together all fulltime photographers--portrait,
commercial, industrial, and media-related. His conclusion was that
photography is marginal because of minimal autonomy, business motives,
minimal training required, and heterogeneity. By focusing only on
portrait photography, heterogeneity and minimal autonomy may be disre-
garded. However, lack of training and the business motive contribute
to the marginal status portrait photographers hold. If a nonprofession-
profession continuum can be imagined, the following would illustrate
the situation with regard to the four occupational components of the
wedding complex as shown by this research.

FIGURE 8: Schematic Diagram of the Position of Wedding Complex
Components on a Nonprofession-Profession Continuum
It should, however, be kept in mind that professionalization is a process and that what was true at the time this research was conducted is subject to change. Habenstein (1970), Wilensky (1964) and others see a situation in which new professions are continually emerging and nonprofessions are gaining professional status. In the future there is a distinct possibility that some of these four components, especially florists and photographers, may more nearly hold the status of professions than they do now.

Future Research

Now that this research on the wedding complex and the four occupations which comprise it is complete, it is obvious that more extensive research into such areas as occupational associations, stratification within the occupation, segmentation, and so forth would result in a fuller picture of each occupation and its standing vis-a-vis professionalization.

One possible future research project would be a study of the interaction patterns in specific wedding complexes. The research for this thesis deals with the social organization of wedding complexes in general. By examining specific complexes, more data could be gathered concerning the amount and kind of interaction among the various components and the nexus. This would result in additional information regarding the degree of autonomy of each component, stratification within the complex, and so forth. Such a project might also include a comparison of specific complexes with different organizational
structures. A comparative study would provide more insight into the factors which differentiate the various forms of structures.

Another research possibility involves the organization of the wedding complex. Since there is some evidence that the prevalent pattern found in Omaha is not a national one, a comparative study of the complex from region to region might reveal segmentation, trends, or other theoretically valuable material. Within this is still another approach suggested by reading Seligson's *The Eternal Bliss Machine* (1973). Seligson details weddings within various social classes and ethnic groups. Her discussion indicated that there are some differences in wedding procedures and traditions from group to group. A comparative study of the wedding complex by social class and/or ethnic group would certainly turn up some scientifically informative material. Could it be that the upper-class bride is more likely to be catered to by a wedding director than her middle- or lower-class counterpart? Do there exist complexes in which the bridal consultant, formal wear consultant, florist, and photographer are relatively stable components for some ethnic populations while interchangeable bridal couple or nexus exists?

A third research possibility concerns the effect of the wedding complex on the bridal couple. The wedding is a major rite of passage in American society and, therefore, it can be expected to hold some degree of apprehension for the bride and groom. Based on this assumption the question arises whether the wedding complex decreases or increases that anxiety. Does the complex function as an emotional support or does it only intensify the apprehension by emphasizing the
importance of the rite?

Robert Habenstein (1970:99-121) has suggested another useful research plan for studying an occupation as a possible profession. First, one undertakes the task of finding an occupation to study, one which is professionalizing. This is accomplished with the aid of such publications as Census Classified Index of Occupations and Industries, the Dictionary of Job Titles, and the Occupational Outlook Handbook. Having chosen an occupation for study, the researcher begins to familiarize himself with the occupation by interacting with its practitioners, including persons at all levels of the occupation from official spokesmen to rank-and-file members as well as representatives of all segments of the occupation. In addition to talking with occupational members, Habenstein suggests that the researcher also attend association meetings where he can contact practitioners from the entire geographic area represented by the association, attend business sessions, and examine exhibits. Perusal of occupational publications and of records and literature of the group may provide additional valuable information. Finally, the public image of the occupation can be traced through output of the communication media. In a situation where time and money resources are not limited, an interesting and informative study might be built around his plan and used to examine any one of the four components of the wedding complex, but especially those of florist and photographer.

One final project, possibly more limited in scope, could involve a longitudinal study of the Professional Photographers of America and
their attempt to develop certification standards by focusing on such aspects as acceptance within the occupation, education of the public concerning the new procedure and its possible benefits, and whether or not there is an eventual push for legal sanction of the standards. This approach might utilize the professionalization process approaches discussed by Caplow (1954) and Wilensky (1964).

Theories of Social Organization and Professionalism

Social organization involves the ways that people organize themselves for interaction and includes the norms, values, roles, and beliefs which direct their interaction. This particular research has dealt with social organization on two levels, that of the components themselves and that of the wedding complex.

On the first level the research examines interaction within each component and seeks to discern some of the norms and values held in common by the members of the organizations. Chapters V and VIII describe the interaction, norms, and values apparent in the data.

On the second level, that of the wedding complex, the organization of the components into a network, a part of a larger economic network (Olsen, 1968:94-5), was examined. Chapter VI describes the various interaction patterns, roles, and norms which were uncovered by the research.

Either level of analysis could have been more completely examined, but many aspects were touched upon. The data give evidence of social
roles, social change, development of associations, social stratification and much more. The scope of this project as outlined in the original proposal did not, however, allow for such intensive investigation. Social organization did provide a useful and interesting perspective with which to examine the various components and the wedding complex.

While attempting to compare the data about occupations to the theoretical models of profession, I found that some criteria are easier to isolate than others and some aspects, especially Greenwood's ideal type profession seem to need further clarification.

An interpretation of Greenwood's (1957) characteristic of a profession, a systematic body of theory, places the emphasis on the existence of a theoretical base for skills with the implication that nonprofessions lack theoretical grounding. It appears that all or most occupations from nuclear physics to ditch digging involve skills which can be backed up with theory, however rudimentary it may be. The crucial point appears to be that the professional is cognizant of the theory, has learned it in a supervised, formal setting prior to or simultaneously with the skill, and more important, that he is likely to engage in written or verbal research-based theorizing. While some nonprofessionals may remain ignorant of the theory behind their skills throughout their lifetime, it seems only reasonable that others may acquire some cognizance, either through inductive reasoning or through interest which leads to study of the theory after developing the skill.

In regard to a second criterion, professional authority, it would seem that some occupational groups could be eliminated from a
professional status on the basis of one piece of information. In the standard lists of occupations classified as professions (Habenstein, 1970:102 and Pavalko, 1971 and 1972) one thing seems apparent. Those groups which are classed as professions are selling their talents. Groups which become involved with products which they had no hand in creating such as pharmacists (Habenstein, 1970:112 and McCormack, 1956) are relegated to marginal professional status. Further, those products created solely by the individual—e.g., painting, sculpture, photography—become subject to public evaluation when they are offered for sale. It would seem then that any occupation which involves selling a product which the person has had no hand in creating is unlikely to gain professional status.

Finally, the idea of a profession's being a calling—a life devoted to good works with the work being the end in itself—is rather unwieldy. First of all it proves difficult to measure. Since the idea of a "calling" suggests a kind of conversion experience, a subjective experience, the only way to establish its presence is by asking the subject to confirm or deny it either with attitude scales or interview questions. That in turn may lead, at best, to imprecise data. If, as Greenwood's discussion argues, one purpose of the training period is acculturation of the neophyte into the professional culture—its values, norms, symbols, and so forth—then to be accepted into the profession, one must internalize its values, since deviants are screened out by licensing and certification procedures (Greenwood, 1957:53-54). This implies that members of a profession have been resocialized and as a
result, each member is likely to internalize the norms and values involving the altruism of the occupation. From the perspective of the professional culture and code of ethics and the need to impress the public with the profession's concern for its welfare above all else, it only stands to reason that successful socialization will result in occupational members denying any higher goal such as wealth, prestige, or power over devotion to good works.

Conclusions

Chapter I briefly presented the two goals of this research, description of the social organization of the wedding complex and comparison of the occupational components of the complex with an ideal type profession.

The first goal was realized and resulted in the three diagrams found in Chapter VI. However, one particular interview and my own previous experiences in another region of the United States, specifically the East Coast, suggest that the predominant pattern which appears in this research may not hold nationwide. For this reason and pending further research the findings of this study should not be viewed as conclusive. They do represent the organizational patterns existing in Omaha, but their generalizability to the entire United States remains to be shown.

The second goal, comparison of the four complex components to Greenwood's ideal type profession and determination of whether or not each component is or is becoming a profession has been accomplished to
a degree. A more comprehensive, in-depth examination will be required to determine the extent of professionalization more exactly. The data accumulated by this research does, however, provide an indication of the position of each component vis-a-vis professionalization. It is apparent that photography is a marginal profession and that there is a possibility it will eventually become a profession. Floristry can also be considered a marginal profession for which there is a possibility of professionalization. It is not, however, advancing toward professional status as rapidly as photography. Finally, both bridal consultants and formal wear consultants must be classed as nonprofessionals. Although the formal wear consultants are establishing a specialized occupational association and developing a code of ethics, it appears unlikely that they will become professionals because of the nature of their work. At most they may eventually be characterized as a marginal profession. Bridal consultants do not appear to be making any movement out of the nonprofessional classification.
APPENDICES
Chris Smith
The Bridal Emporium
100 Jones St.
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am an instructor in Sociology at the College of Saint Mary and am doing a research project for a course I am taking at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

The subject of my project is weddings and the various groups involved with them. In order to get accurate information about the services you perform for the bridal couple, I would like to talk to you personally about your ideas.

In a few days I will drop by your shop. If you are unable to talk with me then we will arrange a more convenient time.

I will very much appreciate your assistance and I thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Trudy K. Henson
Appendix 2—Interview Schedule

Name__________________________

Affiliation ____________________

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been in this line of work? Do you expect to continue in it?

2. How did you get into this job?

3. What kind of work do you do? What does it include (duties)?

4. Did you have any training for this job? If so, what kind?

5. Do most people in this occupation have this training?

6. Must you meet any special requirements for this occupation? What?

7. Must some one in this occupation be licensed or certified in any way? (By whom?)

8. Is your work regulated or controlled in any way? By whom? How?

9. Do you think there should be regulation (certification or ethics)? Why?

10. Do you operate under a code of ethics or rules of conduct of any kind?

11. Do you belong to any occupation related organizations? What are they?
12. Are there any that you don't belong to? Why?

13. Are any of your good friends in this occupation?

14. Do you feel that you have any special knowledge that is required for your work that the average person lacks? If so, how did you gain this knowledge?

15. Do you specialize in any one area?

16. How would you feel about a (florist, photographer, etc.) who quit this work and got another kind of job?

17. When talking to those you work with, what term do you use to refer to those people who come to you to work on their weddings?

18. Do you usually work with both the bride and groom or just one of them?

19. Approximately how many contacts do you have with the average couple? (or one)

20. Do you ever have requests for items or arrangements which you will not honor? Why?

21. Under what circumstances would you refuse someone's business?

22. Do you ever attempt to raise the limit a bride has set on the (flowers, dress, etc.)? Why or why not?

23. Do you have any connection with (florists, photographers, etc.)

24. Do you ever work with them? How?
25. Do you ever have problems with (florists, photographers, bridal depts.)? What kind?

26. In churches which have wedding directors do you make final decisions or do you follow her directions?

27. Which of the following are important to you as far as occupational satisfaction is concerned? Are any more important than others?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>money</th>
<th>ability to give advice to those who need it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>creative opportunity</td>
<td>independence in making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prestige of your occupation</td>
<td>working with people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. Do you consider yourself a professional? Why or why not?
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