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THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION IN CONSTRUCTING A PROFESSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CHARTERED LIFE UNDERWRITERS

The University of Oklahoma PH.D. 1983

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION IN CONSTRUCTING A PROFESSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CHARTERED LIFE UNDERWRITERS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

JUDITH PEAVY ALEXANDER

Norman, Oklahoma

1983

THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION IN CONSTRUCTING A PROFESSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CHARTERED LIFE UNDERWRITERS

A DISSERTATION

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

By Frank W. Wright

R. S. Gilbert

D. Lawrence Wieder

Gary D. Sandefur

J. C. Swayer

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THE ROLE OF THE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION IN CONSTRUCTING A PROFESSION: A CASE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CHARTERED LIFE UNDERWRITERS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Literature abounds which indicates the United States is a professionalizing society. Most writers suggest that professionalization goes hand-in-hand with industrialization and those in the ranks of occupations considered professions will swell in the future. Considerable sociological attention has focused on this trend. Sociologists have engaged in defining a profession, examining the process of professionalization, probing the unique characteristics of occupations such as law and medicine which are widely accepted as professions, and studying the changes being effected in occupations seen as "emerging" professions. Among those emerging professions receiving attention have been a number in the business field, including business management, real estate sales, stock brokerage, and life insurance sales. It is on the occupation of life insurance

sales agent that this study will focus.

Previous works have examined in some detail the work role of the life insurance sales agent and the professionalization of life insurance selling (Taylor, 1958; 1959; Bain, 1959). Some of this work will be reviewed in the second chapter of this study. From an examination of these works and of the life insurance business, it becomes apparent that one of the major problems in discussing the relationship of the occupation life insurance sales agent to what has been conceptualized as a profession grows out of the very heterogeneous nature of the occupation. The job itself, selling life insurance, varies tremendously in content, from the selling of simple burial policies to the devising and selling of complex life insurance "plans" to handle the problems of large estates and business corporations. The background and training of those practicing the occupation are equally varied, from the poorly trained and often marginally employed debit man[1] to the highly educated and career-oriented estate planner[2]. It is this occupational diversity that makes answering questions concerning the pro-

---

[1]Taylor (1958) refers to the debit man as the "stepchild of the occupation". Walking door-to-door in blue-collar neighborhoods, the debit man collects small premiums each week on very small units of life insurance.

[2]Estate planners are life insurance agents, often working in concert with lawyers and accountants, who provide advice and sell forms of life insurance designed to handle tax problems of relatively large estates and businesses.

fessional status of life insurance agents problematic. The answerable question may be, "To what extent may some segments of the life insurance sales occupation be considered a profession?" It is because of this occupational diversity and the desire to address a question which is more nearly capable of being answered that this study will be narrow in focus. Instead of examining the professionalization of all life insurance sales agents, attention will be paid only to a limited segment of those in the occupation -- those who identify themselves as Chartered Life Underwriters. And rather than examining the professionalization process of this group in all aspects, attention is limited to studying the role of a single professional association, the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters.

The American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters is an association of life insurance agents and others in the life insurance field who have earned the designation Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU). The earning of this designation requires individuals, in addition to having sold life insurance for a specified number of years with a given amount of success, to complete successfully a series of examinations. These examinations cover ten subjects including life and health insurance; group insurance; pension planning; income, estate, and gift taxation; investments and family financial management; accounting and finance; economics; business insurance; and estate planning.

This program of examinations and the awarding of the CLU designation was the result of work in the 1920's by the National Association of Life Underwriters, a group interested in upgrading the occupation by offering a designation signifying a level of expertise similar to the CPA in accountancy. More about the origins of the designation will be discussed in the following chapter.

The designation was first awarded in 1928 and Chartered Life Underwriters began organizing into local associations in 1931. In 1945, a national organization and headquarters with a small staff were established in Philadelphia. Currently, eighty-two percent of CLUs are members of the Society with a total membership exceeding 25,000 in 230 local chapters. In discussing their founding, a publication of the American Society states:

> The roots of the American Society of CLU go back to 1928 when the first class of 22 CLUs graduated. Members of this class laid the foundation for what was to become the national organization of CLUs.
>
> The new CLUs saw that members of other professions such as law, medicine, and accounting met regularly with their peers to exchange ideas, to discuss new developments in their field, to continue their professional education, and to establish standards of ethical conduct. So the new CLUs decided to take the first steps toward forming a similar organization of CLUs (American Society of CLUs, undated memo).

Underlying this study is a view of professionalization as a reality-defining process in which the professional association plays a pivotal role. As Berger and Luckman

(1966:116) state, "Reality is socially defined. But the definitions are always embodied, that is, concrete individuals and groups of individuals serve as definers of reality." The professional association as a definer of reality constructs a definition of an occupation as a profession and works to get this definition accepted. Acceptance must be gained by those practicing the occupation and aspiring to practice it, by those in the general public, and by those in previously established professions. This study is directed at examining the role of the American Society of Charter Life Underwriters in just such a project.

The data utilized in detailing the role of the American Society of CLUs in constructing life insurance sales as a profession have been gathered through the qualitative analysis of historical documentary sources. Moore (1970:158) points out that whatever else a professional association does as a collectivity, it provides a formal means of communication among its constituents, and the actions and statements of the professional association provide a united front to those outside the profession. The American Society of CLUs produces a wide range of documents which have been analyzed. Most heavily utilized has been the quarterly journal, The CLU Journal. Additionally, a monthly newsletter (Query), two bimonthly publications (The Society Page and Assets) and miscellaneous related documents have also been examined.

Some Preliminary Definitional Issues

A first task of this study involves the exploration of the concepts profession, professionalization, and professional association. Each has received considerable sociological attention. The discussion that follows is not intended to arrive at definitive standards as to what constitutes a profession, a professionalization process, or a professional association. Rather, the intent is merely to review briefly how these concepts have been treated in the sociological literature. This study assumes that attempts by occupational groups to define themselves as professions are often self-conscious projects in which there is a prior awareness and concern with the meanings of these concepts, and attempts are made to direct their actions in light of this awareness. At times this may extend to an aspiring occupational group's hiring of a consultant to aid in the professionalization process. The American Nursing Association employed Robert Merton as a sociological consultant, and during his tenure Merton wrote several articles addressing the meaning of professionalism in nursing (Merton, 1958; 1960).

The Concept of Profession

The concept of profession has most often been approached in what may be identified as an ideal-typical

manner. This approach is exemplified by Hall (1969:70) who feels the term profession has come to have a rather specific meaning which allows determination of the degree to which a given occupation can be considered a profession. Greenwood (1966:10) suggests there is consensus that five elements constitute the distinguishing attributes of a profession. To be a profession, an occupation must possess 1) systematic theory, 2) authority, 3) community sanction, 4) ethical codes, and 5) a culture.

In suggesting that a profession is characterized by systematic theory, Greenwood is moving away from focusing on the profession as involving an element of superior skill. This, he feels, would be equally as applicable to diamond cutters and tool-and-die makers as to surgeons. Rather, the skills of the professional are derived from and supported by a systematic body of theory. Greenwood (1966:11) states:

> A profession's underlying body of theory is a system of abstract propositions that describe in general terms the classes of phenomena comprising the profession's focus of interest. Theory serves as a base in terms of which the professional rationalizes his operations in concrete situations. Acquisition of the professional skill requires a prior or simultaneous mastery of the theory underlying that skill.

Preparation for a profession is, therefore, both an intellectual and practical experience.

The idea of systematic theory is tied to Greenwood's second attribute, professional authority. It is the

professional's systematic theory in contrast to the layman's ignorance which is the basis for the professional authority. Hughes (1965:3) suggests that every profession considers itself the proper body to set the terms in which some aspect of society, life, or nature is to be considered, and to define the general lines or even the details of public policy concerning it. Professional authority holds that the motto in dealing with the profession should be credat emptor (let the buyer trust) as opposed to the caveat emptor (let the buyer beware) of the business world. The professional, possessor of a body of knowledge unavailable and incomprehensible to the layman, asks to be trusted. Only the professional can judge what services and actions need to be provided and only the professional can judge the success of such services and actions.

> In a professional relationship ... the professional dictates what is good or evil for the client, who has no choice but to accede to professional judgment. Here the premise is that, because he lacks the requisite theoretical background, the client cannot diagnose his own needs or discriminate among the range of possibilities for meeting them. Nor is the client considered able to evaluate the caliber of the professional services he receives (Greenwood, 1966:12).

This professional authority exists only to the extent that there is sanction of the community. Community sanction involves the conferring upon the profession a series of powers and privileges in a formal and informal manner. Included among those sanctions would be the profession's

control over its training centers, control over admission into the profession, rights to professional confidentiality, and relative immunity from community judgment on technical matters. Privilege is granted under the assumption that standards of professional performance are reached by consensus within the profession and are based on the existing body of theory.

Community sanction gives the profession a monopoly over the providing of a given service to the community -- to prescribe what is needed and to judge the performance of the professional in delivering it. The potential for abuse of such a monopoly is obvious. In order to control potential abuse, a profession normally has a regulative code of ethics which compels ethical behavior on the part of its members. These codes can be formal, in the case of a written code which is accepted and often repeated orally when one enters the profession (e.g., the Hippocratic Oath), as well as informal and unwritten codes. The professional code, as compared with the self-regulative codes of other occupations, is more explicit, systematic, and binding. Normally, it reflects altruistic overtones and a public service orientation (Greenwood, 1966:15). In spelling out the desired relationships between client-professional and colleague-colleague, the code sets up guidelines from which deviation may be both formally and informally sanctioned.

Every profession operates through a network of formal

and informal groups, including those groups in which the work takes place, those involved in education for the profession, and the professional association. Out of the interactions in these groups is developed a professional culture consisting of its values, norms, and symbols. The professional culture includes values expressing the worth of the service the profession extends to the community; norms which specify appropriate ways of acting in social situations; and symbols including insignias, emblems, distinctive dress, history, folklore, argots, heroes, villains, and its stereotypes of the professional, the client, and the layman (Greenwood, 1966:16). Central to the professional culture is the concept of the career. A professional has a career not a job. This implies the work of the professional is to be considered a calling.

Moore (1970:4-5) feels that attempts by one authority after another to identify the ideal-typical characteristics of professions as occupational categories give rise to a number of difficulties. First, the attributes identified by one authority are not always consistent with those identified by another authority, thus calling into question the professional status of an occupation which abides by one set of attributes but not the other. Second, the approach often produces a dichotomy in which some occupations are professions and others are not. This allows no flexibility for

viewing ranges of variation. Third, Moore feels that through examining characteristics of occupations, little emphasis is placed on the process by which occupations become professions, and the strategies used by occupations in pursuit of professional status.

The problem of dichotomizing occupations into professions and non-professions is solved, to some extent, by Goode (1960:903) through his suggestion that occupations should be thought as falling somewhere along a continuum of professionalism. This allows occupations to be placed along the continuum on some basis of how professionalized they are. Goode suggests that the core traits to be considered in placement are prolonged training in a body of abstract knowledge and a collectivity or service orientation. As an occupation moves along this continuum, Goode suggests it will acquire other features which are derived from these core characteristics. These features include the following:

1) The profession determines its own standards of education and training.

2) The student professional goes through a more far-reaching adult socialization experience than the learner in other occupations.

3) Professional practice is often legally recognized by some form of licensure.

4) Licensing and admission board are manned by members of the profession.

5) Most legislation concerned with the profession is shaped by the profession.

6) The occupations gain in income, power, and prestige ranking, and can demand higher caliber students.

7) The practitioner is relatively free of lay evaluation and control.

8) The norms of practice enforced by the profession are more stringent than legal control.

9) Members are more strongly identified and affiliated with the profession than are members of other occupations with theirs.

10) The profession is more likely to be a terminal occupation and members generally assert that if they had to do it over again, they would choose the same profession.

Goode (1957) has also analyzed the professions as a community. Goode considers the term community applicable to a profession because of the following characteristics which he identifies as being shared by communities and professions:

1) Its members are bound by a sense of identity.

2) Once in it, few leave, so that it is a terminal or continuing status for the most part.

3) Its members share values in common.

4) Its role definitions vis-a-vis both members and nonmembers are agreed upon and are the same for all members.

5) Within the areas of communal action, there is a common language, which is understood only partially by outsiders.

6) Its limits are reasonably clear, though they are not physical and geographical, but social.

7) The community has power over its members.

8) Though it does not produce the next generation biologically, it does so socially through its control over the selection of professional trainees, and through its training process the profession sends recruits through an adult socialization experience.

As an occupation begins to approach the pole of profession, it begins to take on the traits of a community. Goode also notes that this community continues over time through mechanisms of socialization and social control.

Using these various characteristics as guidelines, writers have commented upon the professional status of a wide-range of occupations. A. M. Carr-Saunders (1955) has added some complexity to this and identified four types of professions and would-be professions. The first of these is the old established professions such as medicine and law. These are accepted as having been founded on well-established bodies of knowledge. New professions are those based on bodies of scientific knowledge but with lessened emphasis on experience in practice. Exemplified by the professions of chemist, engineer, and natural/social scientist, the new

profession's primary occupational activity involves the development and application of its body of knowledge. Semi-professions are those in which use is made of technical skills. The semi-professions' knowledge base is derived from the experience of occupational practice. Nursing, pharmacy, and social work are classified by Carr-Saunders in this group. Occupations aspiring to professional status, would-be professions, are Carr-Saunders' final group. Consistency of technical practice and development of a body of practical theory is so simple in these occupations that little claim can be made to a theoretical base for the professions. Salesmanship is the example given by Carr-Saunders as a would-be profession.

The Concept of Professionalization

Professionalization may be understood as the process by which an occupation takes on the characteristics of a profession or moves along a continuum toward the professional pole. It should be realized, particularly for the perspective taken in this work, professionalization of an occupation may involve both a change in the nature of the occupation so that it more nearly is characterized or is believed to be characterized by the attributes previously mentioned, but also as an effort to have the occupation perceived in a new manner -- both by those practicing the occu-

pation and by those outside of the occupation. Additionally, Hughes (1965:4) points out that professionalization describes what happens to individuals going through a socialization process into the profession and to those already within the occupational group who, as the occupation attempts to professionalize, must come to view themselves as a different sort of actor.

Caplow (1951:139) points to specific steps that an occupation takes in sequence as it undergoes a process of professionalization. The first step is the establishment of a professional association. Next comes a change of name which serves to reduce the identification with previous occupational status and provides a title which can be monopolized. The development and promulgation of a code of ethics is the third step. The code asserts the social utility of the occupation and sets up a public welfare rationale. Additionally, it provides for eliminating the unqualified and unscrupulous and imposes limitation on internal competition. Prolonged political agitation is the fourth step. The primary aim of the agitation is to gain support of the public power for the maintenance of new occupational barriers, ranging from exclusive use to a certain title to the criminalization of performance of the profession's actions or services by non-members. At the same time as the prolonged political agitation is the development of

training facilities which are directly or indirectly controlled by the professional society, the establishment of privileges of confidentiality and inviolability through legal action, the elaboration of decorum found in the code, and establishment of working relationships with related professional groups.

The Professional Association

As pointed out in the discussion of Caplow's sequence of steps in the professionalization process, the formation of a professional association is an important initial step. Moore (1970:114) suggests that professional associations arise when people pursuing the same occupation or interest get together in local groups to discuss their common problems and interests. Out of these local groups arise national associations.

Moore (1970) sees the development of professional associations in a uniform, evolutionary manner. According to Moore, membership is initially based on self-identified interest or practice in a particular subject. Technical qualifications, at the earliest stage, are of minor importance. As the group achieves standing as representing an occupational specialty or intellectual discipline, there is normally increasing importance placed on technical criteria for membership. This increases the role of the professional

association as an authenticating agency for its practitioners. It is the professional association that takes the lead in subsequent steps in the professionalization process as outlined by Caplow (1951).

Strauss (1963) views the professional association as a special type of occupational association. Occupational associations range from the learned societies, existing only to advance knowledge, to the economically oriented unions. Strauss noted that occupational associations provide a means for social fraternization, occupational identification, raising the occupation's status in the community, furthering objectives of self-regulation and restriction of entry, and advancing the economic interests of members.

Perspectives on Professionalization

The introductory statements in this chapter pointed to the fact that the United States is seen as a professionalizing society. Both the numbers of occupations considered professions or aspiring to professional status and the numbers of people employed in such occupations are increasing rapidly. The trend toward an occupational structure with greater proportions of professions and professionals has been commented upon from a number of different perspectives. Three perspectives will be explored in the discussion which follows.

The first approach is that which is identified by Larson (1977) as the sociological ideal-type approach and may be placed within the larger theoretical orientation of functionalism. This approach most often emphasizes the relationship between the professions and the central social needs and values of society. Professionalization is linked to the general dimensions of modernization, including the advancement of science, emphasis on cognitive rationality, and the progressive differentiation and rationalization of the division of labor. Collins (1979:49) ties this view to the functionalist view of stratification which he characterizes as asserting that people obtain positions in the occupational structure by competing on a market for skills, and they are rewarded in proportion to the marginal return upon the products of their labor. The higher rewards accruing to those in occupations considered professions result from consensus on their greater contribution to the system.

The role of prolonged schooling and educational credentials seen in modern societies in general and in the professions in particular is due to the technological changes in modern societies. This change decreases the proportion of jobs requiring low skills and little knowledge and increases the proportion requiring high skills and complex bodies of knowledge. Thus, more formal schooling is needed to provide the training and to certify the competence of

those fulfilling the positions.

The relationship of the professions to basic values characterizing modern societies, particularly the United States, has been commented upon in some detail by Talcott Parsons (1954). Parsons questions why the professions are a continually expanding occupational grouping when the collectivity orientation upon which they are based appears to differ significantly from the self-orientation of business institutions which dominate the society. If this differentness were taken seriously, it would suggest the rise of professions shows a significant departure from the dominant value system of the society.

> The fact that the professions have reached a uniquely high level of development in the same society which is also characterized by a business economy suggests the contrast between business and professions which has mainly been stated in terms of the problem of self-interest, is not the whole story. Possibly there are elements common to both areas, indeed to our whole occupational system, which are at least as important to their functioning as is self-interest to business and disinterestedness to the profession (Parsons, 1954:36).

Parsons focuses on discussing elements common to both business and the professions. Common to both is an emphasis on rationality. Parsons points out that rationality is institutionalized and a part of the normative pattern. It is not a mode of orientation which is simply natural to individuals that they seek the best, most efficient way to reach specified ends. Functional specificity is the second modern

institutional pattern common to both professional and commercial spheres. This functional specificity is seen in three areas, including the structure of authority in both business and professions, the contractual relationships which specifically limit rights and obligations, and the pattern of administrative office. The third common pattern is universalism. Both the business and professional spheres are characterized by standards and criteria which are independent of particular social relationships to particular persons.

Parsons feels the dominant importance of disinterestedness as characterizing the professions has been over-emphasized. In noting the shared patterns of rationality, functional specificity, and universalism, Parsons downplays the differences of business and professional spheres. Additionally, Parsons explores the self versus collectivity-orientation issue. The difference here is not nearly so simple as assumed, and Parsons suggests that it should not be approached merely at the level of the motivation of actors as being either egoistic or altruistic. Rather, if one assumes both the professional and commercial individual have similar goals -- objective achievement and recognition -- and looks at the different definitions of success in the two spheres, some of the differences between the two decline.

> There is a sense in which, in both cases, the dominant goal may be said to be the same, "success". To

> this there would appear to be two main aspects. One is a satisfactory modicum of attainment of the technical goals of respective activities, such as increasing the size and improving the portion of the business firm for which the individual is in whole or in part responsible, or attaining a good proportion of cures or substantial improvement in the condition of patients. The other aspect is the attainment of high standing in one's occupational group "recognition" in Thomas' term. In business this will involve official position in the firm, income, and that rather intangible but none the less important thing, "reputation", as well as perhaps particular "honors" such as election to clubs and the like. In medicine it will similarly involve the size and character of practice, income, hospital, and possibly medical school appointments, honors, and again reputation. The essential goals in the two cases would appear to be substantially the same, objective achievement and recognition: the difference lies in the different paths to the similar goals, which are in turn determined by the differences in the respective occupational situation (Parsons, 1954:44).

In summary, this first approach to professionalization, an approach derived from the functionalist perspective, views the growing numbers of professions and professionals as being tied to societal modernization in which there is more differentiated and more specialized labor. Support for professionalization is also seen in the congruence of dominant value patterns institutionalized in society and in the professions.

The second perspective, identified by Larson (1977) as the market power approach, views professionalization as a process by which producers of special services seek to constitute and control a market for their perceived expertise. Suggested by conflict theory, this perspective views

the profession as being involved in translating one order of scarce resources, special knowledge and skills, into another, social and economic rewards.

This perspective can be seen in comments by Illich (1970) on the relationship between education and professions. Illich, seeing professions as embodying some of the central features of modern stratification systems, notes that the professional requirement of extraordinary educational training is less a basis of technical skill than a means by which the right to practice a particular form of work can be monopolized. This has the effect of limiting the ability of workers to acquire skills through on-the-job training.

Collins (1979) presents a perspective on professionalism reflective of the market power approach in his larger discussions contrasting the functionalist theory of stratification with his theory of "cultural markets". This theory holds that stratification is determined by the intersection of the material production process and the cultural economy, especially to the extent that culture is produced by specialized organizations independent of the everyday transactions that make up social life. The basis of Collins' explanation rests on his differentiation between productive and political labor. Productive labor is that which is responsible for the material production of wealth, and political labor is that which sets the conditions under which

the wealth is appropriated.

> This distinction between productive and political labor then, is crucial for understanding how organizations are shaped and, as a result, how people are stratified. This distinction separates the two major social classes: the working class engaged in productive labor, and the dominant class engaged in political labor. Both classes expend energy, but it is the subordinated class that produces wealth, whereas the dominant class determines its distribution (Collins, 1979:50).

Collins feels the structure of the modern occupational world may be characterized as a range of variations in the mixture of productive and political work. Some positions, such as the relatively unprotected laborer, are most directly involved in productive labor. Pure political labors are those engaged in by those of the ideological, financial, and governmental superstructure. In between are the upper ranges of the working class and the middle ranges of administrative class in which there is a mixture of political and productive labor.

Another central concept of Collins' explanation is positional property. A position is an object-like collection of behavior patterns reserved for particular individuals under particular conditions of tenure. Collins suggests that it is property in positions that is crucial in determining most class struggle and organization in everyday life.

> Social classes may be distinguished by the amount of property they possess, but the most important form of such "property" is not limited to the tradi-

> tional notion of material and financial possession. Rather it is how "positions" are shaped that constitutes the most immediate forms of property in the labor market, and it is by the shaping of such positions that income is distributed (Collins,1979:53).

Positional property is shaped through reality construction and alliance formation, both being the effect of culture. Culture is seen as a social resource.

Professions are viewed as cultural communities which utilize their resources to gain control over positional property. Political labor is very much involved in successful professionalization. Achievement of a monopoly over providing a given service and self-governing rights is accomplished through political action. Collins feels professional monopolies accompanied by state licensing long predate the development of any real technical skills by the professional.

The two perspectives thus far presented can be illuminated by applying them to explaining the profession of medicine. The ideal-typical approach derived from functionalism would view the privileged position of doctors as the outcome of a consensus in society over the value of their work. The selectivity of admission to medical school, the long years of training, and the rights of doctors to control the quality of practice are necessary because of the complex body of knowledge and extraordinary skills needed to practice medicine. Historically, the medical profession would be seen as arising in response to the growth of

knowledge and the need to ensure the public was correctly provided with the benefits of this expanding body of knowledge.

In contrast to that suggested in the preceding paragraph, the market power approach derived from conflict theory would view the priviledged position of doctors as the outcome of a political struggle in which the right to provide certain services became monopolized. The restricted entry to medical school, the long years of training, and the rights of doctors to control the profession are all ways in which this exploitation is ensured. Historically, the medical profession would be seen as arising from organized political efforts on the part of a small group as they attempted to exclude others from providing any services which would be identified as medical care. The profession of medicine would be seen as existing prior to any proven body of medical knowledge.

Larson's third perspective, the self-presentation of professions approach, is seen most clearly in the work of Freidson (1973). To Freidson, a profession is distinct from other occupations in that it has been given the right to control its own work. This privilege is justified by three claims. First, the claim is made that there is such an unusual degree of knowledge and skill involved in their work that nonprofessions are unable to evaluate or regulate it. Second, it is claimed that professions are responsible and

can be trusted to work without supervision. Third, the claim is made that the profession itself may be trusted to properly regulate action on occasions when an individual does not perform his work competently or ethically. A profession, according to Freidson, attains and maintains its autonomy by virtue of its relationship to some elite segment of society which has come to accept the special values of the profession's work.

Professionals live within ideologies of their own creation. They present these ideologies to the layman as the most valid definition of specific spheres of social reality. In regard to medicine, Friedson (1973:278) states that the notion of illness is a social creation, and the values and organized limits on the experience of its professional creators influence how and when it will be created, as well as some of its content. Professions and professionalization are thus seen as reality constructing projects.

> ... when an occupation arises to serve some need or demand on the part of the lay community and subsequently succeeds in becoming a profession, it gains the autonomy to become at least in part self-sustaining, equipped to turn back and shape, even create the need anew, defining, selecting, and organizing the way it is expressed in social life (Freidson, 1973:330).

It is not inconsistent with the view of professionalization presented here, and is actually suggested very directly by both the market-power and self-presentation

approaches that professionalization involves the construction of a reality of the occupation as a profession. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, professionalization in this study will be viewed as a reality defining process in which the professional association plays a central part. The professional association as a definer of reality constructs a definition of an occupation as profession and works to get this definition accepted by those within and without the occupation.

The Organization of the Dissertation

The first chapter has included a brief overview of the questions to be addressed in the dissertation; an examination of concepts central to the study including profession, professionalization, and professional association; and a discussion of three perspectives on professionalization. In the chapters to follow, many ideas introduced in this chapter will be utilized in order to highlight the role of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters in the construction of life insurance sales as a profession.

The second chapter of this study discusses a number of issues which provide a background upon which the role of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters in constructing a profession can be examined. It is felt that, although occupations attempting to professionalize may share numerous similarities, each professionalization project is

unique. This uniqueness grows out of the specific characteristics and histories of an occupation group. Topics dealt with in Chapter II include the history of life insurance, the forms of life insurance, the organization of the marketing of life insurance, the early attempts to professionalize insurance selling, the founding of the American College of Life Underwriters and the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters, and the structural and cultural constraints on professionalization of life insurance selling.

Chapters III and IV present the results of the qualitative analysis of historical documents. These two chapters are organized around the perspective suggesting successful professionalization requires the construction and acceptance of a reality. To have efficacy, this reality must be accepted by those practicing the occupation and those aspiring to practice it, by those in the general public, and by those in existing professions.

Chapter III illuminates the role of the American Society of CLU in constructing life insurance selling as a profession and having that reality accepted by those within the occupation. Particular attention is paid to the discussion of professional attributes within American Society publications. Chapter IV investigates the role of the American Society in convincing others of the CLU's status as professional. The discussion centers around various

public relations efforts of the Society aimed at the general public, as well as activities aimed at established professions, particularly lawyers and accountants.

A brief Chapter V concludes the dissertation. It contains a discussion of the American Society's activities as they are linked to specific structural and cultural aspects of the life insurance agent occupation. Comments are also made as to the success of the American Society's activities in convincing both its members and others of the professional status of those designated Chartered Life Underwriter.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

In the previous chapter, a number of different perspectives towards professions and professionalization was discussed. Put forth as the guiding perspective of this study was that occupations become perceived as professions when a reality of professional status is created, shared, and accepted by those both within and without the occupation. Freidson (1973:187) reflects this view when, in discussing the problematic aspects of defining professions in terms of specific attributes, he states:

> There are always occupations with such characteristics that are not granted the status of profession, and there are occupations granted the status which lack such characteristics. What the status reflects is society's belief that the occupation has such attributes and society's belief in the dignity and importance of its work.

This chapter provides background information about life insurance as a product, about the manner in which it is marketed, and about those who market it. This information is necessary to understand the character of attempts to pro-

fessionalize life insurance sales. It is argued that each professionalization project must be understood in light of the whole of the occupation and societal attitudes toward that occupation.

Brief History of Life Insurance

Stalson (1969:32) argues that the origins of life insurance are vague and undated but points out that the need for reimbursement for losses and costs incident to death was recognized from earliest times. In ancient Greece were benevolent societies known as Eianoi or Thiasoi which are generally recognized as the first evidence of personal insurance operating on the contribution principle. These societies were supported by contributions from members and developed into devices used by the lower and middle classes to pay burial expenses of members and meet the immediate cash needs of their survivors.

In Rome there evolved the Collegia of the soldiers and the Collegia Tenuiorum of the civilians. Soldiers participating in the Collegia were provided with funds for unexpected expenses, such as a costly transfer to a distant post, new equipment needed because of promotion, disability, old age pensions, burial, and living expenses for widows and children. The funds of the Collegia Tenuiorum were utilized in the burial expenses and post-burial necessities of the

non-military citizens (Mehr and Osler, 1961:669).

Some of the functions of guilds in medieval Europe were similar to those earliest forms of life insurance. In their beginnings, the guilds had as a primary purpose the relief of brethren and their families in times of distress. As guilds declined in importance, many of the relief functions were taken over by friendly societies. Of the friendly societies it is said:

> Without these societies the artisan class of Great Britain in the first quarter of the nineteenth century would have found it difficult to provide for even the simple necessity of burial. When the scientific laws of mortality were introduced into the life insurance business, the friendly societies became the framework on which the new life insurance companies were developed (Mehr and Osler, 1961:669).

It was in England that life insurance in its modern form was developed. Underwriters in England had long been involved in insuring ships and their cargo, and it was as an outgrowth of marine insurance that life insurance developed. The first recorded life insurance policy was issued in 1536 when a group of marine underwriters, while gathering at the Old Drury Ale House, suggested that the practice of marine underwriting be extended to the underwriting of the risk of human life, namely William Gybbons, a fellow drinking companion. For a premium of $80, Gybbons' life was insured for $2,000 for a period of one year. Gybbons died within the alloted time and the claim was paid but only after much litigation. In the years to follow, life insurance became

increasingly popular and life underwriting became an independent enterprise, freeing itself of its connections with marine insurance.

Early life insurance was not always in the form of friendly societies and used only for beneficent purposes. It was often associated with games of chance and gambling, both on one's own life as well as on the lives of others. For example, a man ready to embark on a sea journey would pay to one remaining behind a stipulated sum of money which would be the profit of the holder if the traveler failed to return. If the traveler returned, he was entitled to claim a sum larger than that which he deposited prior to the voyage. In 18th century England, under the guise of life insurance, persons would wager on the death of the king, the pope or other important persons.

The most famous example of life insurance as gambling is seen in the tontine. This plan was devised by Lorenzo Tonti, an Italian physician, as a way for the state to raise large sums of money. The first tontine was organized by the French government in the late 17th century. Individuals paid into a fund a single payment. Annually ten percent of the total amount collected was distributed as an annuity among the subscribers, who were divided into fourteen classes according to age with the high age classes receiving higher payments. Buley (1953:16) notes:

The distinguising feature of the tontine was that no

> ultimate repayment of the principal was provided for, the survivors of each class were to inherit the interest of deceased members. Since the whole annuity was constantly divided among fewer survivors, the income increased with advancing age; last survivors were handsomely rewarded.

In effect, one profited from the death of others, and one was gambling that he would outlive the other investors.

A much later form of gambling associated with life insurance is described by Mehr and Olser (1961:673-674) in their discussion of Elizur Wright, one of the outstanding personalities of life insurance in America. Wright, who was later to become insurance commissioner of Massachusetts, was an abolitionist who turned his crusading drive toward life insurance after a visit to England. At this time, surrender values of life insurance policies were rare -- surrender values being the amount paid to policyholders upon surrender of a policy before it becomes payable by death or maturity. It was common practice in England for old people who could no longer pay their premiums to offer their policies for sale. The buyer made himself the beneficiary of the policy and took over the premium obligations in the hope of eventually collecting more from the policy than he put into it. At auctions where old policies were sold, the insured would "mount the block" to be inspected by prospective buyers who were interested in speculating on how much longer the policyholder would live, and how much they should pay for the policy. This practice reminded Wright so much of American

slave auctions that it aroused his evangelical wrath and led to his crusading reforms of insurance in America.

Taylor (1958:38) argues that the gambling practices, in general, and the tontine, in particular, in spite of their abuses, contributed to the growth and development of life insurance. The games of chance and money-raising schemes associated with life insurance spread the idea of life insurance and created a general interest in the product. Also, the abuses of speculation eventually became so gross that legislation was passed to clean-up and improve life insurance practice, especially in the development of nonspeculative life insurance.

In Colonial America there was little interest in life insurance, although there was considerable interest in fire and marine insurance. Records show the opening of a public insurance office in Philadelphia in 1721. The office served as headquarters for marine insurers who on occasion wrote life insurance policies. The most commonly issued policy was one for six or twelve month terms or for the duration of a sea voyage, and purchasers were often merchants traveling to Europe or the West Indies. These short-term policies were only for extrahazardous adventures, and no coverage was provided for the average person against common risk.

Founded in 1759, the first life insurance company in the United States was the Presbyterian Minister's Fund which

insured the lives of Presbyterian ministers. Following this, a number of life insurance companies were chartered, yet they met with little success and often abandoned the business. At the close of the 18th century, only 160 life insurance policies were in force in the United States.

The life insurance business in the United States continued to be very small and weak. There were only 15 life insurance companies and an estimated five million dollars of life insurance in force in 1840. Yet after 1840, the industry experienced rapid growth, and by 1860 there were 43 companies with almost $205 million of life insurance in force. More will be said in the last section of this chapter about this dramatic take-off of life insurance in the United States when the work of Zel izer (1979) is discussed.

With the success and rapid growth of the life insurance business after the 1840's came serious problems. These problems were seen at the level of company organization and management, as well as at the level of the marketing of life insurance. Questions arose about the quality of company management, the responsible investment of premium income, and the amount of expenses incurred for salaries, lobbying, and generating new business. The general feeling was that policyholders and their beneficiaries were not properly safeguarded by existing laws regu-

lating life insurance. These questions led in 1905 to an investigation in the state of New York by the Armstrong Committee, so named because its head was State Senator William W. Armstrong. The committee found more problems than it expected. According to Mehr and Osler (1961:681), "chicanery, manipulation, unholy alliances, squandering of funds stalk like nightmares through the seven aging volumes of testimony and exhibits known as The Armstrong Report." Following their investigation, the Armstrong Committee made recommendations which eventually led to the New York Insurance Code of 1906 and similar legislation in states throughout the country. Writers suggest that the result of the investigation not only strengthened legislation but provided a general housecleaning in the life insurance business.

The initial effect of the Armstrong Investigation was to decrease the amount of life insurance in force, but this lasted for only a short time. Between 1900 and 1925, the number of companies in the United States increased by 363% and the amount of life insurance in force by 737%. Although World War I brought a dip in the growth of life insurance, the war is generally considered to be a stimulus to life insurance because of the creation of war risk insurance by the government. This introduced millions of soldiers to life insurance for the first time.

The Depression also brought a slight setback in the growth of life insurance. Initially, the effects of the

Depression were less on sales of new policies and more on loans and surrender calls on existing policies. As the Depression continued, loss of existing business through policy termination and surrender increased, and by 1933 new business had declined dramatically. In 1929, the total insurance in force in the country topped $100 billion. By 1933 it had fallen below that mark and continued to decline until 1935. The safety of investments of life insurance companies during the period was not seriously damaged. There were just a few life insurance company failures during the Depression and the total loss to policyholders was minimal (Mehr and Osler, 1961:683-685).

World War II brought no setback in life insurance. Once again life insurance was made available by the government to servicemen and this increased general interest in the product. The general prosperity after World War II led to further growth of the business. Life insurance continues to be a growth industry with each year bringing larger numbers of policies in force and greater amounts of coverage per family. By 1979 there were 407 million life insurance policies in force in the United States, and the average coverage per insured family was $44,000 (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1980:548).

Differentiation of the Product

The history of life insurance also involves a discussion of the differentiation of the product, life insurance. Although more will be said later about the increasingly complex forms of life insurance sold, at this time a brief introduction is presented describing basic forms of life insurance.

As the rather short history previously sketched points out, earliest forms of life insurance were simple policies designed to cover the expenses associated with burial. Occasionally, larger sums were available in order to help families with associated expenses. The earliest modern insurance policies, such as that purchased by Gybbons, was term insurance. A term policy is a contract which offers financial protection against the occurrence of death within a given period of time as stated in the policy. No protection or values in case of survival beyond the specified period is available. This is the way most fire and marine insurance is written, and it should be remembered that modern life insurance was an outgrowth of these forms. (Huebner and Black, 1982:66). A variation of the term policy, and one that is considerably more expensive is the endowment policy. An endowment policy is actually a savings fund protected by term insurance. It offers insurance protection against death for a specified period of time. If

the insured lives to the end of the endowment period, the policy pays the face amount in a lump sum or in installments. If the insured dies before the endowment date, the face amount is paid to a beneficiary (Huebner and Black, 1982:92).

Whole life insurance was a later development than term and endowment insurance. Whole life furnished protection for the whole of life regardless of how many years premium are to be paid. Premiums may be paid over a limited period, often twenty or thirty years, or they may be paid in one lump sum at the inception of the policy. This type of policy provides a savings element, the cash value, which permits the individual protection against premature death as well as loss of income through old age (Huebner and Black, 1982:77).

A final basic form of life insurance is the annuity, which has some similarities to the tontine schemes discussed earlier. An annuity has been called the "upside-down application of the life insurance principle". An annuity, in return for the insured's paying a specified capital sum in the beginning, pays the insured a series of payments for as long as he lives. Thus, under an annuity contract, the company stops paying upon the death of the insured; whereas, under other life insurance contracts, the company starts paying upon the death of the insured (Huebner and Black, 1982:100).

Even the most complex forms of life insurance are some combination of these three basic types.

Branches of the Life Insurance Business

The preceding discussion of term, whole life, and annuity covered the basic types of life insurance. In addition to understanding the life insurance business through the successive development of products, one may also look at the historical development of different branches of the life insurance business. The earliest branch was what is known as ordinary life. Ordinary life is insurance, either term, whole life, or annuity, that is purchased in amounts of $1000 or more with premiums paid to an office of the insuring company.

Industrial life, known in recent years as home service life, was introduced into the United States in 1875. The same kinds of policies as found in ordinary life are offered through industrial life, but the policies are issued in small amounts, usually less than $500, with premium collected at frequent intervals at the door of the insured. Originally, the premium interval was weekly, although a monthly, semi-annual, or annual premium industrial life is also issued. The term "industrial" originally developed because the insurance was intended to be sold to workers in industry, particularly those who were hourly wage workers.

It is the industrial life that is handled by the debit man, the lowest esteemed member of the insurance sales occupation. Industrial life is on the decline but still exists. The traditional customer for industrial life is now often covered through group insurance (Huebner and Black, 1982: 544-545).

Group life is a plan for covering a large number of people under one master policy. The first group policy in the United States was issued in 1911 when the Equitable Life Assurance Society of New York insured one hundred twenty-five employees of the Pantasote Leather Company. In group life, the employer is the policy owner and all contractual relationships are between him and the company. Premiums are paid by the employer or the employer and employee jointly. The group life insurance coverage is an increasingly popular fringe benefit offered by many employers.

The Organization of the Selling of Life Insurance

The earliest of American life insurance companies utilized very passive marketing techniques, having only small announcements and advertisement, if any at all. Policies were sold by mail or by direct interaction with the company and companies wrote insurance in limited geographical areas. No salesmen were hired, although contracts to represent the company were sometimes given to lawyers,

bankers and other prominent citizens who would be likely to come into contact with potential purchasers. Often attorneys and bankers who acted as loan representatives of the company sold insurance as a sideline. They merely offered life insurance to people who came to their office for other business (Zelizer, 1979:121). Renumeration to the seller consisted of a percentage of the first premium collected. This system bears some similarities to the manner in which fire and marine insurance has traditionally be sold. Within the insurance field today, fire and marine insurance agents have the reputation as "order takers" rather than "sellers" of insurance. Among those in the life insurance industry who relish the "selling" aspect of the job, the "order taking" characterization of the fire and casualty insurance agent holds very definite negative connotations.

The life insurance sales agent in the modern sense is a product of the growth and development of mutual companies (Zeliger, 1979:123). The earliest life insurance companies in America were stock companies who began business with a sizable capitalization and, often, had trust department producing income until life insurance sales developed. On the other hand, mutual companies were completely dependent upon premium payments for income and working capital. In the face of immediate need for premiums, an aggressive sales agent system was developed. Increasingly, life insurance

selling was a sole job for agents who contracted their services to the company and were paid on commission. By the 1850's, the sale of insurance through the agency system had been established.

In the agency system the company appoints a general agent to represent the company in a given geographical area. The general agent sells insurance, as well as recruits, hires, trains, and supervises a number of subagents. The subagents normally work on a commmission of sales with the general agent receiving a portion of the commission of his subagents' as well as the commission on his own sales. The agent's relationship to the company is less like that of employee than as an independent contractor.

The primary exception to the agency system is in the marketing of industrial life. The industrial life insurance agent, commonly called a debit man, is an employee of the company and is normally paid a salary. He is charged primarily with the duty of collecting premiums on the route assigned him, although he may sell new industrial and ordinary policies on which he receives a commission. As industrial life has become less common, the number of debit men has decresed, yet they still exist in sizable numbers. Group insurance is technically sold under the agency system, yet it would be more correct to describe the marketing of group as utilizing the services of the agency system merely because that system has been previously established.

According to Mehr and Osler (1961:305), group insurance is bought and not sold. Agents may initiate group cases, but the details are handled by salaried company representatives. Usually there is little agent-client relationship between either employer and agent or employee and agent.

Early Movement Toward Professionalization

It was through the development of the agency system for the marketing of life insurance that the occupational group "life insurance sales agent" arose. Bain (1959), in an attempt to develop a natural history of professionalization, has written a detailed account of the early organization of this occupational group and its efforts toward professionalization. Bain argues that the movement to professionalize life insurance selling began as an effort to take organized collective action to raise the status of the occupation, to increase the economic opportunities and income of its full-time members, and to enable its members to play their occupational role in a more satisfying manner.

The professionalization movement as described by Bain was marked by a number of distinct periods. The first period extended from around the Civil War when the agent marketing system first arose until 1905. Rather than a movement initiated by rank-and-file agents or those whose status was lowest among their contemporaries, early organi-

zation of agents was led by the more prominent, career-committed, and wealthy of the general agents. The first organization of agents was the Chicago Life Underwriters Association founded in 1869. Its goal was to protect agents from the malpractice of others and to influence legislation. Local and state association grew and finally evolved into a national association in 1890. The National Association of Life Underwriters has been the leading organization of life insurance agents since its inception. It was through efforts growing out of this association that the Chartered Life Underwriter designation was developed and the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters was formed.

Bain (1959:361-364) points to a number of conditions which were relevant to the beginning of the professionalization movement. These conditions are as follows:

1) There was in existence an established business, that of life insurance, and within this business, a specific, paid occupation, that of life insurance selling. There, thus, existed an aggregation of persons having in common the conditions and contingencies under which they pursued a common occupation, and thus possessed like interests.

2) Among members of the occupation, certain practices were followed which would become uneconomic should a sufficient number of members engage therein and/or should

there be a sufficient amount of competition for a given size of market.

3) Partly through the offices of a third party (the insurance press), a minimum base of communication, common identification, and consensus had been built, at least to the extent of creating a shared, overt recognition and definition of some common problems.

4) Members of the occupation sold a product and services which were expensive to purchase, which were vital and ego-involving to its purchasers, and which permitted some fitting of the product and service to varying individual needs and situations. Thus, both the economic and functional potentialities existed for supporting a consultative, professional type of practitioner-customer relationship.

5) The occupation was a white-collar occupation which served a predominantly middle and upper-class clientele. This tended to lead the members of this occupation to aspire to status commensurate with those served.

6) Members of the occupation were confronted with a status-income discrepancy or dilemma: low occupational status both within their own business and within the larger society in relation to the income which skilled agents were able to command. It is assumed that this discrepancy or dilemma intensified the desire for a higher status.

7) Members of both the business and the occupation

in question held a belief in the near-sacred beneficence of their product and service, life insurance. In view of the identification of professionalism with altruism which these persons held, it is assumed that this belief was a factor which influenced the implicit and explicit choice of professionalism as the means by which the status-income dilemma and other occupational problems could be solved.

These seven general conditions just described were accompanied by some rather specific practices which had become widespread among agents in a very competitive market -- twisting and rebating. Twisting is the giving of untrue information about existing policies owned by the insured in order to encourage the insured to drop these policies and take new ones. This practice is encouraged by the fact that the commissions on new policies are well in excess of those on renewals. Rebating is a practice whereby agents agree to pay a part of the policyholder's first years' premium or return a part of the first years' premium in an effort to persuade the prospect to purchase a policy. Bain (1959:358) remarks that this first period of professionalization, extending to about 1905, consisted largely of efforts to define and control these grossly uneconomic competitive practices.

A second period, extending from 1905 to 1919, saw changes in the professionalization movement. There was less

emphasis on controlling unethical and uneconomic practices and an increase in emphasis on agent training, more selective recruitment of agents, and defining and promoting more professional agent-customer relationships. This period spans the era of the adoption of a federal income tax and the increasing complexity of tax law. More complex uses of life insurance arose in response to these changes. The more complex uses included the coordination of insurance purchases with tax and inheritance laws so as to maximize the estate upon the death of the policyholder. Life insurance also began to be used to indemnify business partnerships and corporations against the loss of key personnel. These changes involved the sales of relatively large policies with large commissions to a high status clientele. Financial incentives for playing a more professional role were increased, and the need and the rewards for better agent training grew. Bain (1959:108) argues that much agitation for change occurred in this era, yet little actual implementation took place.

Actual implementation began in the third period, from 1919 to 1930. Efforts were made during this era to provide institutional supports for a more expert, counseling role for the life insurance sales agent. Bain suggests that some systematic knowledge, agent training programs and facilities, and the first working contacts with other semi-professions and professions came during this period. It was

during this period that the American Society of Charter Life Underwriters was formed. More about the history of this organization will be said in the next section.

The era from 1930 to 1940 contained little movement toward professionalizing life insurance sales. Bain (1959:241) actually suggests that a partial retrogression occurred as the National Association of Life Underwriters and other groups devoted proportionally less time and effort to the promotion of agent training and more to protect job opportunities of the career agent. This change can be seen as tied to the Depression, an era which caused companies, in an effort to increase declining sales, to engage in mass, unselective recruiting of new agents. This threatened the position of the full-time career agent. Emphasis continued to some extent on education, in part because increasing the educational requirements served to reduce part-time agents and the more poorly educated of the full-time agents.

The final period discussed by Bain was from 1940 onward. This period saw the revival of expansion in agent training programs, greater selectivity of entry into the occupation, and the redistribution of income and prestige to reward professional services and not mere volume of sales (Bain, 1959:358-59). Bain conlcuded his study in 1956, and actually provided little information about the period after 1940. The focus of this dissertation is largely on the

period beginning in 1946 after the establishment of a staff, office and journal for the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters.

The Founding of the American College and the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters

Stalson, reputed to be the premier historian of life insurance in America, commented upon the development of the American College of Life Underwriters, saying it was "the greatest development in life insurance selling in the present century, perhaps in the whole history of the business (Stalson, 1969:596)." Bain speaks in equally glowing terms saying, "Undoubtedly one of the most important single events related to professionalization which occurred during the entire movement was the creation in 1923 of the American College of Life Underwriters (Bain, 1959:211)." The American College was the result of a number of attempts that began in the early part of this century to provide better education and training for insurance sales agents.

As mentioned in the previous section, the period beginning in 1905 was characterized by increasing emphasis on agent education and training. At first there were mainly just discussions, but by 1916 the discussions had led to a number of different suggestions as to how to provide education and training opportunities to life insurance agents.

Most of this agitation came from the agents, and the companies did little to provide a satisfactory system of training for all agents. This was due primarily to the structure of the general agency system. Companies were largely cut off from agents, with companies looking to their general agents merely for volume of new business. It was left to the general agents to recruit and train soliciting agents (Stalson, 1969:593-94).

The earliest attempts at providing training were tied closely to the development of "scientific salesmanship." Scientific salesmanship was derived from a simplified form of behavioral psychology. Proposing a stimulus-response model of behavior, sales were seen as resulting when the appropriate form of selling stimulus was provided. This stimulus would always elicit the desired response, the buying of a policy. It may be argued that little progress in professionalizing insurance selling grew out of these ideas, but it did move the agent toward considering the needs of the client and, eventually, to a more consultive role in selling (Bain, 1959:184).

In 1915 a number of leaders of the National Association of Life Underwriters joined with leaders of companies both within and without the insurance field to obtain money for the Bureau of Salesmanship Research. Affiliated with the Carnegie Institute of Technology, the Bureau's goal was to investigate the proper method of employing and

training salesmen. In 1919 the first actual school of life insurance salesmanship was founded, the Carnegie School of Life Insurance. Also affiliated with Carnegie Tech, this school offered an eleven week residential course. Students learned several organized sales presentations, had actual experience in soliciting business, and were given examinations on the principles and functions of life insurance (Stalson, 1969:590). Although this first attempt at a residential school was initially considered a success and gave impetus to other forms of agent training, it quickly lost ground. The Carnegie School was transferred to the University of Pittsburg in 1923 and, after a year, became a proprietary traveling school. It ceased to exist in the 1930's.

The failure of the Carnegie School of Life Insurance was probably tied to the residential nature of the training. Bain argues that residential schools appear to fit quite poorly with the needs of life insurance training because of some specific characteristics of the occupation. For the most part, life insurance agents learn their skills after rather than before entering practice, and many who enter the occupation leave. There is a high rate of initial disqualification and turnover. Thus, the idea of offering residential training prior to entering the occupation seems ill-suited (Bain, 1959:206).

The American College of Life Underwriters may be perceived as better adapted to the needs of the life insurance agent occupation. The American College was the result of a suggestion made as early as 1914 at the National Association of Life Underwriters convention for a course of study and designation patterned after the CPA designation in accountancy. The actual creation of the American College bega n in 1923 when a general agent, Guy McLaughlin, proposed that an honorary designation be awarded life agents based upon experience requirements, or that there be created several designations of underwriter competency. The result of these suggestions was the founding of the American College of Life Underwriters in 1927.

The American College was sponsored and originally supported by the National Association of Life Underwiters, yet the college was a separate and independent organization chartered in the District of Columbia and headquartered on the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. As the organization is chartered, it may conduct classes for students in residence, although it has never done this. Rather the college serves as an examination board in the field of life underwriting, and it awards the CLU designation to those who meet its requirements and pass its examinations.

As originally specified, the requirements for the CLU designation were that the applicant be at least 21 years of age, of good moral character, and in the business for three

years prior to the awarding of the designation with requirements as to the volume and lapse rate of business written during those three years. A high school education was required and the applicant had to pass five written examinations covering subjects such as economics and principles of life insurance, economics, government, commercial law, taxes, wills, trusts, estates, investments, commercial credit corporation finance and banking. Standardized examinations were prepared at the American College and were given through the cooperation of accredited colleges across the country. Fees were charged to take the examination and to have the first degree awarded.

The first CLU examinations were given in 1928 at 14 examination centers. All five examinations were passed by 22 of the 66 candidates. The CLU designation was awarded to the successful candidates at the 1928 National Association of Life Underwriters' convention. In 1929, the professional association, the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters was formed. Relatively inactive in its early years, a more active period begain in 1945 with the establishment of an executive staff, a headquarters, and a journal.

Structural Constraints to Professionalizing the Life Insurance Agent

Each occupational group that attempts to be perceived

as a profession faces common as well as unique problems. It is the unique problems facing life insurance agents which will be discussed in the rest of this chapter. The first of these problems may be referred to as structural problems, problems related to the role of the life insurance agent and his work within the business. Three structural problems will be discussed as having a limiting impact on the ability of the occupation to be perceived as a profession.

The first structural problem revolves around the fact that the agent is first and foremost perceived to be a salesman. Insurance is sold; few people buy it voluntarily. It is the salesman role and its perception which creates the primary dilemma in professionalization. To the extent that professionals are to be in a counseling role, to do that which is best for the customer, the role of the agent as seller is a problem for most customers. Worrying about being sold something, the customer often withholds information which the insurance agent, as counselor, feels he needs. Bain (1959:364) suggests this creates a problem in the agent in which "the harder the agent sells, the less he can counsel, but unless he does sell, he will have no customer to counsel."

The agent's motivation is touched by this salesman/counselor dilemma. Financial and status rewards in the insurance business are tied most directly to volume of sales. Skillful financial and insurance counseling goes

unrewarded if sales volume does not result. Thus, the agent cannot afford to devote time to consulting with a prospect unless there is a good chance of making a sale. Additionally, one must guard against counseling one through analysis of needs and later seeing the individual purchase the suggested coverage elsewhere from a quick-moving, sales oriented competitor. Time spent in following up on current policyholders to see if settlement options and beneficiaries need to be changed fit well with the counseling role. Yet, if no new sales are derived, this is time taken away from selling, the role which is most rewarded by money and status.

The institutional work setting has a limiting impact on attempts to professionalize. The insurance agent is, for the most part, an employee of a business enterprise and has a subordinate status within the enterprise. He is viewed by the company as a salesman. The company tends to emphasize that role for the agent at the expense of the counseling, service role. The company, although supportive at times of increasing the training and status of the agent, is basically interested in the volume the agent produces and the company's making a profit.

A third structural factor in working against professionalization is the rapid turnover of life insurance agents. As mentioned in the first chapter, professions have been characterized as being careers, as being callings, in

which there is a feeling of commitment and little outflow from the occupation. Yet the insurance agent occupation is one in which there is a very high turnover. Bain (1959:370) notes that the "initial career commitment of the new agent and identification with the business is tentative, and is contingent upon his determining from the experience whether or not he will be able to sell successfully enough to remain in the business." This rapid turnover affects the ability of the occupational group to develop a group consciousness and to exercise group control over the agent.

Life Insurance, Social Structure and Culture

At the beginning of this chapter, it was stated that occupations become perceived as professions when a reality of professional status is created, shared, and accepted by those both within and without the occupation. The embodiment of specific characteristics by the occupation is less important than society's belief in the dignity and importance of the occupation's work. In light of this perspective, it is necessary to examine societal attitudes about life insurance and about those who market it. This final section of the chapter will explore life insurance as a social invention tied to modern, industrialized societies and life insurance as related to American cultural and religious beliefs.

Life insurance can be understood as a social invention of modern, industrialized societies with fairly high levels of division and specialization of labor and a money economy. Obviously, if the dead were discarded or buried simply, at home, by family members, there would be no need for money for burial expenses. The earliest forms of life insurance were utilized for providing burial expenses. Thus, specialized buryers and religious personnel had to be in existence and had to be paid for their services before the need for life insurance arose. As death and its handling have continued in a more specialized manner -- the funeral parlor, the funeral director, the commercial cemetary -- sums of money at death have become increasingly necessary.

The need for income for a family after one's death is also tied to modern societies. The changing family structure, from a multi-generational unit in which numerous adults contributed to its economic maintenance, including care for the aged members, to the small family unit of industrialized and urbanized societies, increases the need to compensate a family for the loss of a sole breadwinner. The former value of the extended family in providing this aid is commented upon by Palen (1979:308):

> Since high mortality rates were the norm until the modern era, the extended family ... provided a form of mutual insurance. If a father were disabled or killed in an accident or a mother died in childbirth

> (neither tragedy was particularly uncommon), there were other family members to support and rear the children. The extended family was based on the concept of sharing the inevitable risks, so that the death of a spouse did not mean the death of the family.

As the family changed, the need for life insurance was increasingly perceived. In speaking of the role of guilds in providing early forms of life insurance at the later stages of the Middle Ages, Stalson (1969:34) remarks:

> The need for economic aid at the death of the breadwinner was more clearly recognized during this period. The family in its modern form, a small and weak unit in the economic organization of society had come into being in the town life of the Middle Ages. The dependence of that family upon the earnings of its breadwinner was clear-cut and inescapable. Consequently, the duty of providing for dependents was more definitely acknowledged.

Modern emphasis on individual responsibility can be seen as linked to the invention of life insurance. Obviously, extreme individualism, everyone for himself, would not lead one to worry about the effects of one's death upon others, but an individuality tied to patriarchal, nuclear family structure, emphasizing the role of the adult male as the economic provider solely responsible for the family's welfare, is linked. Acknowledgement of the individual as responsible for the economic well-being of his dependents, even after death, is linked to the idea of life insurance.

Life insurance is also related to societies in which income for large numbers of the population is the result of wage labor. A person's basic way of living up to the re-

sponsibilities of taking care of oneself and one's dependents is through labor. Life insurance flourishes in countries with rising middle class populations. Even today, life insurance is less a product of the upper and lower class than of the middle class. The wealthy, those whose incomes are derived in large part from investments and whose deaths would have little impact on the income of surviving family members, are rarely large purchasers of life insurance, although increasingly, changes in tax and inheritance laws have caused the wealthy to be more interested in life insurance as a way of providing estate liquidity and avoiding certain tax problems. The poor often fall back upon the social insurance programs of the government. It remains the upper middle class professional and business executive whose incomes are derived mainly from salaries, commissions, and fees who are the most prized customers of the life insurance agent.

With high degrees of labor specialization, a money economy, and an increasing middle class, the United States would appear to be a country that would have a strong interest in life insurance as a social invention. And in fact, modern American society has embraced life insurance with the average insured family having $44,000 of life insurance coverage (Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1980:548). Yet as the history of the life insurance

is read, it is evident that there was little interest in the product in American until the 1840's when mutual companies with their agressive marketing techniques through the agency system developed. Zelizer (1979) offers an explanation as to why the development of the agency system was necessary for marketing life insurance when other forms of insurance, fire and marine, had been widely accepted in the United States with less aggressive marketing techniques. Her explanation rests on an examination of cultural attitudes and religious beliefs as they affected attitudes toward life insurance.

The development of life insurance in the 19th century involved a struggle between fundamentalist and more liberal religious views. These differing theological perspectives offered opposing view of life insurance. Among the more fundamentalist, life insurance was seen as a secular and sacrilegious device that competed against God in caring for the welfare of individuals. Remnants of this position are still seen among the Old Order Amish. Recently, a lawyer defending an Amish employer who refused to pay Social Security was quoted as saying, "What they are doing by putting money into the Social Security System is denying their belief that the future is determined by God (Social Security Sinful Court Told, 1981)."

The more liberal clergy were supportive of the life insurance industry. It should be remembered from the discussion of the history of life insurance that the first

insurance company in the United States was begun to insure Presbyterian ministers. Convinced of the theological correctness of man's taking a more active role in alleviating suffering in the world, the liberal clergy often became spokesmen in favor of the industry. Some ministers went so far as to preach for and against life insurance from the pulpit (Zelizer, 1979:150).

A second problem was cultural resistance to the establishment of monetary equivalents for important human relations and processes. This problem is seen most clearly in the concept of "human life value." Developed by Soloman Huebner, the earliest and most influential of academicians interested in life insurance, the concept suggests that one should determine the amount of life insurance one needs by viewing the purpose of life insurance as the indemnification of those to whom an individual feels an obligation against the loss of one's earning power at death (Huebner, 1921:68). This leads to questions such as, "What is a father worth to his family?" Zelizer (1979:150-151) notes:

> With life insurance, money and man, the sacred and the profane, were thrown together; the value of man became the measurable by money ... Life insurance threatened the sanctity of life by pricing it. ... Thus, the financial evaluation of a man's life introduced by the industry was initially rejected by many as a profanation which transformed the sacred event of death into a vulgar commodity.

A third cultural factor affecting the early resistance to life insurance involved attitudes toward risk and

speculation. As the history of life insurance suggests, it has long been involved with speculation. The tontine particularly pointed to the speculative, gambling nature of the industry. The instant wealth of survivors could be interpreted as similar to hitting one's number or winning a lottery. In 19th century America, consistent with the religious beliefs, the route to riches that was most acceptable included long, slow, arduous work accompanied by thrift and saving. Zelizer suggests that after 1870 the notions of economic risk and rational speculation grew more acceptable. The slower methods of achieving wealth lost some of their previous dominance and life insurance gained prominence and respectability (Zelizer, 1979:151).

These debates of the 19th century affected not only people's attitudes toward life insurance but also the attitude toward the agent who sold it. To the fundamentalist, the agent was in concert with the devil. To the liberal, the agent was a missionary spreading a gospel of man's active role in society. Even after this religious debate was settled in favor of life insurance, the taint continues. Life insurance is tied to death and dying; to accepting responsibility for others, to foregoing money in the present to help those in the future. As Stalson (1969:26) says of the insurance agent:

> ... he is traditionally an unwelcome person. The public has long since conceived an obstinate dislike

> for him; he is heir to a long-standing and strangely persistent disfavor. This may be owing to the fact that he reminds men of death which is certain to overtake them, or because he confronts them with their own selfishness as revealed in them by their unwillingness to sacrifice today's pleasures to secure the future well-being for their dependent families, or because he speaks of duties and the fierce hard facts of modern economic isolation.

One final statement in regard to life insurance and American cultural values suggests that we are now at a point where life insurance is an integral part of the good and correct death. In an issue of the American Behavioral Scientist devoted to discussions of life insurance, Parsons (1963) points out that the extenuation of life expectancy in modern industrial society results from the very broad development of active instrumental controls over the physical environment. Feeling the attitude in American society is one of bringing to bear every possible resource to prolong active and healthy life, Parsons comments that death is not acceptable unless it is inevitable. And if the inevitability of death is accepted, the strong cultural tendency is to mitigate the suffering associated with death to the greatest extent. Parsons notes that this attitude contrasts with earlier ones suggesting that suffering was inevitable, perhaps desirable.

In addition to cultural support for mitigating the suffering associated with death, Parsons comments there is an ideal-type death orientation in America which suggests that the "most acceptable death is that which comes at the

end of a full life in which the individual can be said to come somewhere near having maximized the opportunities given him by his capacities and situation (Parsons, 1963:64)."

Parson's suggestions about American attitudes toward death point to the desirability of life insurance in two ways. First, the mitigation of suffering extends beyond that of the person who dies. The suffering of those left behind should also be mitigated, and life insurance can serve this purpose. If money cannot mitigate the emotional suffering of the loss of a family member, it can lessen any economic suffering. Second, the acceptable death as the one of the individual has maximized opportunities suggests that the individual has not really maximized opportunities, has not really fulfilled obligations, if survivors are left destitute. Dying and placing financial obligation on surviving family members is negatively evaluated. One has not died the good death who has left a financially suffering family.

Conclusion

The main thrust of this chapter has been to provide a background out of which to consider the role of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters in constructing life insurance selling as a profession. The argument underlying this presentation is that each occupation has a unique pro-

fessionalization project to accomplish, and this project is shaped by and shapes the nature, history, and organization of the occupation.

CHAPTER III

CONVINCING THEMSELVES

This chapter and the chapter following describe the role of the American Society of Charter Life Underwriters in defining certain segments of the life insurance sales agent occupation as a profession. This chapter concerns the professional association's role in convincing those having the CLU designation of their professional status. The chapter which follows deals with the association as it works to convince others, both those in the general public and those in more established professions. As mentioned elsewhere in this study, professionalization is viewed as a reality defining process in which the professional association as a definer of reality constructs a definition of an occupation as a profession and works to get that definition accepted.

The discussion presented in these two chapters is based on an analysis of the publications of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters. For the most part, this analysis is qualitative, although some quantitative

data is presented. As mentioned in the first chapter, Moore (1970:158) points out that a professional association provides a formal means of communication among its members. The primary means of formal communication among CLUs are two publications, the quarterly CLU Journal and the bimonthly newsletter, The Society Page. Both of these publications are automatically sent to members of the American Society, and 82% of CLUs are members of the association (American Society of CLUs, undated memo). All issues of the CLU Journal from its inception through 1980 were examined. Attempts to find complete holdings of The Society Page were unsuccessful. An availability sample, composed primarily of those provided by the American Society in response to a request, was utilized.

Moore also notes that the actions and statements of the professional association provide a united front to those outside the profession. Within the CLU Journal and The Society Page appear discussions of the association's actions directed at those in the general public and those in other professions. Also, the American Society publishes two newsletters, Query and Assets, and a number of informational brochures aimed at those outside the professional association. Issues of Query and Assets examined were, for the most part, those provided by the American Society in response to requests. Several were also located by contact with local CLUs.

At times the relationship of these two chapters, what is discussed in one chapter as opposed to another, is somewhat arbitrary. This is due to a perspective suggesting that becoming convinced of one's status as a professional and having others become convinced is a simultaneous process. Certainly this would be suggested by Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self, in which one imagines how others evaluate him and through this process derives an image of himself. Identity as self-concept should be understood as bestowed by acts of social recognition. Those within the occupational group and those outside the occupation are necessary participants in this process.

The dual nature of this process -- convincing oneself as well as others -- brings to mind the line from "Whistle a Happy Tune" that goes "when we fool the people we fool, we fool ourselves as well." The word "fooling" may well be unfortunate because it implies a concerted attempt to put something over on the public. This should not, necessarily, be understood as the case. Goffman (1959:17), in discussing the individual's own belief in the impression of reality he attempts to engender in those with whom he interacts, notes this belief can range from sincere to cynical. The sincere person is one who is really convinced that the impression of reality he is staging is the real reality. Opposed to the sincere person is the cynic, one who is not at all taken in

and sees the falseness of the impression of reality offered. Goffman feels that the general tendency is to develop an inward belief in the role one is playing. Thus, the general tendency may very well be for the individual to believe in the reality, to be sincere, and to not be consciously engaged in "fooling" the public any more than he is consciously engaged in "fooling" himself.

A Note on Language

Most of the analysis which follows revolves around the communications of the American Society directed at its members and the public. But prior to discussing the content of these communications, it is necessary to comment on the language utilized in the communications.

When Berger and Luckman (1966:138) speak of secondary socialization, and it could be suggested that the process of coming to define oneself as a professional is a process of secondary socialization, they characterize the process as involving the acquisition of role-specific vocabularies including "the internalization of semantic fields which serve to structure interpretations and conduct." The importance of language in this process is further emphasized when Berger and Luckman (1966:133) state:

> Society, identity and reality are subjectively crystallized in the same process of internalization of language. Indeed, for reasons evident from the ... observations on language, language constitutes both

> the most important content and most important instrument of socialization.

In Greenwood's (1966) discussion of the attributes of a profession, he speaks of language as an aspect of the profession's culture. A specialized language serves to bind the membership together as well as separate them from non-members. Straus (1972) notes that any group of people that has any permanence develops a special language which represents its way of identifying those objects important for group actions. Gilham (1982:228) speaks of learning new names for familiar objects and activities as an aspect of recruit training into the Marine Corps, noting that the specialized vocabulary further distinguished the Marines from others and bound them into a brotherhood.

The publications of the American Society document this language, point to conflicts in vocabulary, and indicate changes in the language over its 35 years of publication. The discussion following deals with the language as it specifies: (1) what the individual within the occupation is called, (2) what the individual within the occupation does, (3) for whom the individual within the occupation does it, and (4) with what the individual within the occupation does it.

Of central importance in this question of language is what the individual who is engaged in the occupation is called.

> Every name implies a nomenclature, which in turn implies an assigned social location. To be given an identity involves being assigned a specific place in the world. As this identity is subjectively appropriated ... so is the world to which this identity points (Berger and Luckman, 1966:132).

Although reference to CLUs as the occupational group occurs in Society publications, this does not appear to be the preferred terminology. Rather, the name "professional life underwriter" or "professional life insurance agent" seems more popular. Naturally, using professional as an adjective implies that there are life underwriters and agents who are not "professional", a point which is necessary in light of the fact that the American Society is only involved in convincing themselves and the public of the professional status of some within the larger occupational grouping. In the earliest years of the CLU Journal, the terms "sales agent" and "salesman" rarely appear. When these terms appear, it is most commonly in articles written not by CLUs but by those in marketing positions at the level of the company. Trump (1951:242) is one of the few CLUs to speak of salesmen, but Trump is a marketing professor who also earned the CLU designation. Another early reference to "salesmen" comes in an article from MacLean (1961). But MacLean is an actuary, writing a laudatory article about "life insurance salesmen," in which it is suggested that the concept of life insurance salesman as professional, while commonplace today, was not always so taken for granted.

The decision as to what the individual within the occupation is to be called at least partially determines the terminology applied to what the occupation does. In keeping with language identifying the practitioner as a "professional life underwriter" or "professional life insurance agent," the language describing what is done falls into parallel ideas of "service" or "counsel." The occasional references which have increased in frequency in recent years to "salesmen" show a preference for "producing," "selling," or "professional selling." In the most recent years, reference to "marketing" and "professional marketing" occur. Occasionally, a medical model term slips in in which "professional life underwriters" will be spoken of as "diagnosing" needs.

There is less debate about for whom the individual within the occupation does something. General agreement focuses upon the term "client." In only the unusual case is seen a reference to "customers," probably only a handful of times in over 1000 articles appearing in the CLU Journal between 1946 and 1980.

Finally, there is considerable debate about what it is that the person within the occupation does something with. Often there is just reference to life insurance, but this appears to sidestep the issue. Obviously, the most likely thing to discuss is a "policy." But one actually finds a variety of terms used and "policy" is rarely seen.

More often one sees the discussion of a "service," "program," or "product." A discussion of this debate in terminology is seen in an article by Fuller (1957) entitled, "Life Insurance Companies Have No Product." Arguing the term "product" should not be used in speaking of life insurance, Fuller (1957:176-177) states,

> First, there is the nature of the business itself. Insurance is the largest non-governmental business on earth. It affects the lives and economic circumstances of practically every citizen. The philosophy of this gigantic business must be to have its own pattern and nomenclature arising from its very special mission created under special corporate charter on special statuses.
>
> Secondly, we criticize the use of the word "product" in connection with our business because we think it has largely been responsible for our following, much too long, a process of rationalizing our agency work with that of a marketing organization ...
>
> A complete life insurance program prepared by the agent may be the product of his energy, his skill, and his understanding, but it is no more a product in industrial terms than the diet prepared by a physician or the will an attorney writes. In fact, this is the proper analogy for the work of the agent ... we must place him with other professional people.

As the quotation shows, some writers in the CLU Journal are conscious of the importance of language associated with the occupational group and its activities. It appears they realize that a rose by any other name might not smell as sweet. Yet disagreements exist -- a common universe of discourse does not appear to exist within the CLU group even in the language most basic to the occupation.

Discussions of Professional Attributes

Although the general public may have a general idea as to what a profession is, sociologists and others interested in studying occupations have attending to its meaning and have pointed to a rather specific meaning. As was discussed in Chapter I, various sets of attributes have come to characterize a profession. The perspective of this study suggests that professionalization involves a self-conscious project which includes attempts, often led by the professional association, to create a correspondence between the occupation aspiring to professional status and the attributes generally assumed by the public and sociologists to define a profession.

The discussion in this section involves the role of the professional association in convincing its members of their professional status. This is done through the actual discussion of professional characteristics and the characteristics of the occupation in order to show an isomorphism between the two. As the attributes of a profession are exhibited and/or discussed the membership is made aware of their possession of them and/or exhorted to acquire and exhibit them.

This discussion will be organized around three characteristics of profession which are suggested by Larson (1977:x) in the following statement:

> The list of specific attributes which compose the ideal-type profession may vary, but there is substantial agreement about its general dimensions. The cognitive dimension is centered on the body of knowledge and the techniques which professionals apply in their work, and on the training necessary to master such knowledge and skills; the normative dimension covers the service orientation of professions, and their distinctive ethics, which justify the privilege of self-regulation granted them by society; the evaluative dimension implicity compares the professions to other occupations, underscoring the professions' singular characteristics of autonomy and prestige. The distinctiveness of the professions appear to be founded on the combination of these general dimensions.

The Cognitive Dimension -- A Body of Knowledge

The first of the characteristics mentioned by Larson is a cognitive dimension -- a body of knowledge. If the CLUs are professionals, they would see themselves and would be seen by others as having specialized knowledge, knowledge which, in turn, would be utilized in the service of the public and would bring them high status. What follows is a discussion of the various activities and aspects of the American Society which would tend to convince members of their possession of a body of knowledge.

The Origin of the Designation. Perhaps the clearest indicator to the CLU and to others of the possession of a body of knowledge is the attainment of the CLU designation itself. The existence of a designation awarded only upon completion of a series of examinations would tend to convince those within the occupation of their possession of a

body of knowledge.

The membership is reminded of the importance of the designation through articles published in the CLU Journal which deal with the history of the CLU designation, emphasizing the educational requirements for its awarding. The earliest discussion of the history of the designation is found in an article by Soloman Huebner and David McCahan (1947). Huebner, a legendary figure among CLUs who is often referred to as the "father of the CLU movement," was a faculty member at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and is credited with being one of the first academicians interested in life insurance. Huebner established the first Department of Insurance at Pennsylvania and was the first President of the American College of Life Underwriters, the organization which awards the CLU designation. McCahan, also an insurance educator, was Dean of the American College at the time the article was written.

Huebner and McCahan note the earliest years of the American College and the awarding of the CLU designation were particularly problematic -- an inflationary period during the 1920's when they say that people were too busy making money to emphasize education and training. Following this came the Depression.

> Under such conditions, the difficulty of inaugurating and maintaining a high professional education program can be easily imagined. Pressure was brought to bear on the college to lessen the stan-

> dards so that most life underwriters would qualify for membership (Huebner and McCahan, 1947:201).

Huebner and McCahan describe resistance to such pressure and relate how the first Board of Directors of the American College decided at the very outset to follow the hard course and to resist all attempts to make easy, or in any other way cheapen, the attainment of the CLU designation in comparison with the attainment of other professional designations. From the very beginnings of the designations, the objectives of the American College were to be:

> (1) maintenance of a high education standard, of collegiate grade, for the profession of life underwriting, which would embrace all the fields of knowledge essential to the rendering of expert advice and service to the insuring public.
>
> (2) the awarding of a worthwhile professional recognition (the CLU designation) to life underwriters who had properly qualified for the same by examination.
>
> (3) the encouragement and fostering of the training of students in institutions of higher learning for the career of professional life underwriting.
>
> (4) the cooperation with universities and colleges in general life insurance education for the layman (Huebner and McCahan, 1947:204-205).

Those who successfully complete the examination process are awarded their CLU designations in ceremonies which emphasize the collegiate-like nature of the experience. At the Annual Meeting/Forum of the American Society, those who have completed the requirements for the designation receive certificates and keys from the faculty of the American College who are dressed in full academic regalia.

The Examination Process. The mere existence of a designation which must be obtained through a series of examinations indicates to CLUs that they possess a body of knowledge. Through their publications, members are informed of this examination process, of changes in the content and format of the examinations, of the performance over the years of those taking the examinations, and of ways to prepare for the examinations. This tends to reemphasize the importance of the designation as well as pointing to an expanding body of knowledge -- as the examination content is changed.

In Huebner and McCahan (1947), a detailed account of the examination process appears. All CLU designations were to be awarded upon the completion of a series of five examinations, with the examinations uniformly conducted by the American College. The examinations were described as being "collegiate grade" based upon a program of study "collegiate in quality" embracing the field of knowledge essential to "enhance a life underwriter's capacity to be a client adviser." The eligibility to take the examinations was based on education prerequisities observed by accredited colleges and universities. Final award of the designation was based upon the passing of all the CLU examinations and the satisfactory completion of three years of business experience (Huebner and McCahan, 1947:215).

From the beginnings of the examination process until June, 1958, the examinations consisted of essay questions which were to be answered in a four-hour time span. Each of the five parts of the CLU curriculum was tested in this manner. Beginning in 1959, objective items were added and accounted for 50% of the examination. This change, described by Graebner (1958:375), was brought about because of "advances" in objective testing techniques.

Members are kept posted as to the changing level of difficulty of examinations. Graebner (1958:376) describes the level of difficulty as being the same as required by senior students in a "superior professional school of business administration." Questions used are prepared by a board made up of life underwriters and business school educators and are graded by a group of college teachers and life insurance practitioners. According to Graebner (1958: 382):

> In a very natural way the CLU examinations have become more difficult over the years. This is inevitable because of the necessary expansion of the curriculum caused by the increasing complexity of the work of a life underwriter. Mere mention of such fields as taxation, business uses of life insurance, health insurance, group insurance, pensions and deferred compensation plans, and social legislation, attest to the need for greater knowlege and improved skills in aiding clients to solve their financial security problems.

Changes in the subject matter on the test, CLUs learn, have also been due to the better educational backgrounds of those seeking the CLU designation. Gregg

(1956:259) writes:

> ... the typical CLU candidate has changed. In the early days, a large proportion of the candidates had not attended college ... Today, a great majority of the candidates have attended college.

In recent years, the CLU Journal does not have articles which deal in detail with the examination process, although information is given as to the number of passes and failures on examinations in articles discussing new study aids available through the American College. Through the years 70% to 75% of examinations attempted have been passed. This indicates to members that the level of difficulty of the examinations is high enough that a substantial number of failures occur. Rogers (1977:62) reports 12,000 failures among 46,000 examinations attempted in 1975.

The CLU Journal. Already in this discussion of convincing the membership of its possession of a body of knowledge, a number of articles from the CLU Journal have been referenced. The journal, itself, may be taken as an indicator of the CLU's body of knowledge. The existence of a journal points to a cumulative body of knowledge which needs to be shared, and as members of the association read the journal, they are made aware of this.

The CLU Journal is the primary publication of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters. It was first published in September, 1946, shortly after the

Society established a national office with an operating staff. It has been published on a quarterly basis continuously since that date. The CLU Journal contains a wealth of information on the association, its members, and its activities, as well as articles of substantive interest in the field of life insurance.

The founding of the Journal is described to members in an article by Mills (1961). At a May, 1944 meeting of a Special Executive Committee of the American Society, Mills notes that something "indeed historic" took place. The suggestion was made that the association publish a "magazine-like publication ... in keeping with professional standards." Subsequent meetings and discussions led, as recorded in the minutes and reported by Mills as occurring at precisely 9:23 a.m. on August 28, 1945, to the adoption of a motion that:

> The American Society undertake the publication of a highly professional journal on the quarterly basis, and that the first issue thereof be published as soon as possible during the current fiscal year. That the journal should reflect advanced thinking in the life insurance business and related fields (Mills, 1961:294).

The recounting of the origins of the journal in such a momentous way may well convince the membership of the importance of the journal to the association.

Mills also discusses the importance of quality, reporting that although the journal was launched in the face of thin financing, it had no humble beginning in terms of

its quality. According to Mills, it immediately became established as "one of the outstanding professional publications (Mills, 1961:294)."

The first article in the initial issue of the CLU Journal was written by Clifford H. Orr, then President of the American Society of CLUs. Introducing the journal to the members, Orr (1946:3) writes:

> Articles appearing in this, the Journal of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters will be of "library" quality. They will be written by authorities on subjects of vital interest to those who are making or expect to make life insurance underwriting a career.

The original format of the CLU Journal was very similar to the journals of academic disciplines. Its original size, approximately 6" by 9", is comparable to the American Sociological Review. Its paper was not slick, advertisements did not appear, and it contained only articles and notes about American Society sponsored activities. Additions to the original contents did occur when book reviews were introduced in 1948 (giving further evidence of a body of knowledge), and letters from readers began appearing in 1949.

The CLU Journal took on a new appearance in January, 1967. In what was the 20th anniversary issue, the journal became larger (approximately 8" by 11" and comparable in size to Time and Newsweek) and began accepting commercial advertisements. The first advertisements were for books

related to insurance, although later advertisements for charitable drives and commercial establishments appear. Initial reaction to this shift in format might be to assume it indicated a movement away from an emphasis on a "highly professional journal." Yet the new format is much more similar than the earlier one to the journals published by the American Medical Association, American Bar Association, and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. A comparison of recent editions of these publications show the CLU Journal to be the least commercialized in format. This may have less to say about the relative status of the journals as professional publications and more to say about their relative attractiveness to advertisers. With a circulation of only 45,000, the CLU Journal does not have the quantity of readers as does the ABA Journal (circulation 240,000), the Journal of the AMA (circulation 239,000) or the Journal of Accountancy (circulation 220,000) (Ayers Directory of Publications, 1980).

It was the intent of the journal to publish articles about topics other than selling. On the inside cover of each journal issue appears the following invitation to submit manuscripts:

> An original paper on one of the non-selling problems of the business -- which evidences research, has its facts properly authenticated, is well-written and thought-provoking -- will be given careful consideration by the Board.

Each issue of the journal usually contains six to ten articles. Accompanying each article is a brief biographical sketch of the author, emphasizing his educational background and occupational history. The only quantitative aspects of this study involved an analysis of the extent of CLU member participation in the publication of articles in the journal, the occupations of authors publishing in the journal, and the subjects of journal articles.

Table I shows the percentage of articles appearing in the journal that is authored by CLUs. As the percentages indicate, the majority of articles in each five-year period is never authored by holders of the CLU designation, although a trend toward greater CLU authorship is quite evident. From a low of 9.2% of articles in the first five years of publication, CLU authorship rose to 49.2% in the latest period, 1976-1980. This trend may suggest that the journal is changing from one in which non-CLUs provide information to CLUs to one in which increasing numbers of CLUs provide information for one another. This change may lead to a greater belief by CLUs of their possession of a body of knowledge and the expansion internally of this body of knowledge.

Based on the analysis of the biographical sketches, Table 2 shows the percentage distribution of authors by occupation at the time of the article's publication. Lawyers have consistently been the largest contributors to

TABLE I

Percentage of CLU Journal Articles Authored by CLUs

Years	% Authored By CLUs
1945 - 1950	9.2% (N=14)
1951 - 1955	27.1% (N=41)
1956 - 1960	29.2% (N=38)
1961 - 1965	39.3% (N=57)
1966 - 1970	38.5% (N=57)
1971 - 1975	40.3% (N=56)
1975 - 1980	49.2% (N=62)
Overall 1945 - 1980	32.9% (N=325)

TABLE 2

Percentage Distribution Of Occupations of CLU Journal

Article Authors

Occupations	1946-1950	1951 1955	1956-1960	1961-1965	1966-1970	1971-1975	1976-1980	Overall
CLUs (except those who are lawyers & professors)	5.5	17.7	26.0	22.5	22.1	16.6	21.7	19.1
CLU Lawyers	1.9	2.4	2.0	6.4	9.3	12.2	13.6	6.8
CLU Professors	.6	3.1	2.0	5.1	4.9	8.9	12.3	5.3
Lawyers	49.0	31.2	24.5	30.2	25.8	20.4	30.7	30.3
Actuaries	8.0	7.3	8.1	5.7	9.3	5.1	2.1	6.7
Economists	4.8	1.8	1.4	5.2	2.4	1.3	2.1	2.4
Officers of Insurance Companies	8.1	11.0	13.6	7.1	6.8	4.5	1.9	7.6
Officers of Insurance Related Organizations	5.0	4.3	10.2	3.9	2.5	2.6	.7	4.1
Other	8.5	8.4	4.8	4.2	5.9	8.6	2.1	5.7
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

the journal. In the early years of the CLU Journal, these lawyers were most often officers of insurance companies, with legal counsels being most common. In recent years the trend has been away from authorship by company-employed attorneys to those in private and group practice.

Authors with both law degrees and the CLU designation are increasingly common in the journal. The biographical sketches indicate the CLU designation comes later in the career/educational history of the authors. The CLU/lawyer is usually an insurance company employed lawyer who adds the CLU to existing credentials or a lawyer in private or group practice who obtains the designation in order to be a more competent "estate planner."

College professors, those with CLUs who are most commonly insurance professors, and those in other fields, are becoming a sizable group of contributors. This probably reflects the increasing pressure on faculty to publish, and the CLU Journal serves as a publishing vehicle. Those professors with the CLU designation appear to have obtained it after their other educational credentials and after employment in academic settings. It does appear that some supplement their incomes through selling insurance.

Table 3 presents the percentage distribution of articles appearing in the CLU Journal by topic. The categories shown are those created for this study, rather than

TABLE 3

Percentage Distribution of Topics of CLU Journal Articles

Occupations	1946-1950	1951 1955	1956-1960	1961-1965	1966-1970	1971-1975	1976-1980	Overall
Business Insurance including key-employees, buy-outs, pension plans	9.2	16.5	23.0	25.6	25.6	25.1	32.6	22.2
Taxation, IRS Rulings	9.2	11.9	9.3	13.8	15.6	16.5	15.1	13.0
Estate Planning	17.0	16.0	7.7	11.7	10.8	7.9	8.7	11.6
Professionalization including history of life insurance and chartered life underwriters, relations with other professionals	13.7	5.3	7.6	10.4	4.8	6.4	4.0	7.5
The policy as contract including descriptions of provisions of policy, settlement options loan policy	17.0	9.3	5.3	2.8	.7	4.3	1.6	6.0
Business subjects including basic accounting, finance and economics	3.3	4.0	2.3	2.1	2.7	.7	.8	2.3
State of the Economy	7.3	3.4	7.7	6.9	5.5	-	4.0	4.8
The internal workings and structure of insurance companies	6.0	6.6	5.3	2.1	6.8	12.3	3.2	6.2
Actuarial Information	2.6	2.0	.8	.7	.7	.7	-	1.1
Other	14.7	25.0	31.0	23.9	26.8	26.1	30.0	25.3

the indexing system of the journal. At times, rather arbitrary judgments had to be made as to the topic of the article since numerous articles dealt with several topics simultaneously. The three topics which account for the largest percentage of articles are business insurance, estate planning, and taxation. Both taxation and business insurance have become more frequent topics over the years. The business insurance articles often deal with ways to utilize life insurance as a form of tax-free or tax-deferred compensation, and ways to use life insurance proceeds to provide for the transferring of closely-held corporations when a major shareholder dies. Concern with matters of taxation and rulings by the Internal Revenue Service run through articles on almost all topics.

A number of trends in topics should be noted. The early years of the CLU Journal contained numerous articles spelling out the role of the professional underwriter, calling attention to the American Society and the American College, describing the relationships that should exist between the CLU and other professionals, and discussing insurance related organizations. Articles on such topics are rarely found in recent years, decreasing from 13.7% of articles in 1946-50 to 4% in 1976-80. A second topic which declined was concern with describing policies and contracts. These articles made up 17% of those published in the first five years of the journal and only 1.6% of those in recent

years.

Continuing Education. Members are reminded of their possession of a body of knowledge and of the need to stay current through a number of different channels of the American Society. The American Society has a Continuing Education Department which delivers the following charge to members in announcements of its various programs:

> That you should continue your studies hereafter throughout your working life. Your field of activity is an immense one, from the standpoint of knowledge acquired through study. The CLU program, extensive as it is, by no means represents all the knowledge and skill that need be mastered. It should have whetted your appetite for more, and should have paved the way for you to continue your educational efforts (The Society Page, May/June 1981:14).

In the earliest years of the American Society there was no organized continuing education efforts, yet a number of articles appeared in the CLU Journal addressed the topic of continuing study. The earliest article of this type appeared in the journal's second issue. In an article called "A Brief Essay on Reading and the Life Underwriter," Ackerman (1946) calls attention to the fact that professional status is the goal of the Chartered Life Underwriter movement, and that one of the marks of a profession is the use of a library. A professional should have a personal library and should also utilize libraries in the community, in local colleges, and in insurance association offices. Ackerman even suggests an organization system for

the life underwriter's personal library which includes general categories such as historial material on life insurance, principles of life insurance, life insurance as a career, the selling process, advertising by direct mail, and advanced underwriting. Much the same message is found in Ferguson (1950). In an articles subtitled "Building the Agent's Bookshelf," Ferguson recommends a number of books to CLUs and suggests that continued reading and study is essential for the professional life underwriter.

Continuing education and the benefits one derives from it are discussed by Steinbeck (1957) in "School is Never Out for the Life Underwriter." Feeling that from continued study you gain self-esteem through discipline and by having greater knowledge, Steinbeck (1957:187) also suggests sales benefits are derived from more knowledge.

> ... the advanced life underwriter, through confidence and belief in himself arising out of his continuous acquisition of information is able to think creatively about a client's needs; is capable of seeing new and even unexpected applications of the science of life insurance to better living, and is happily freed from the confining use of mere repetition of relatively ineffective sales gimmicks and techniques.

Learning for prestige and sales benefits are also mentioned in Gardiner (1959). He notes that, like other successful professionals, the life underwriter studies in his early years because it is the required pattern in order to pass examinations; but, he continues to study later

because of his awareness that such study is necessary and for the mental exhilaration he gains from so doing. Gardiner (1959:242-244) points out that the personal satisfaction of a continued program of study is at least as important as the significant material gains that are produced.

Of course, time spent learning is not time spent obtaining new business and this is a dilemma that has been addressed in the journal. Most often it is suggested that further learning makes one more effective and material gains will result. Others more openly admit that the more time you spend learning "the less time you spend selling." Keir and Keager (1969) discuss some of the latest learning technologies which they suggest, hopefully, speed up the learning process so that one will have plenty of time to sell.

The American Society does not limit its involvement with continuing education to exhorting members to read or study on their own. Since its early years and continuing today through the efforts of the Continuing Education Department of the American Society, numerous opportunities are offered members to participate in institutes, seminars, and symposiums sponsored by the American Society. One day seminars are held almost every weekend in some city. The CLU Institutes are residential in nature, are held on college campuses, and last one week. A number of four-day symposiums are sponsored each year by the American Society.

In recent years, several states have enacted legislation requiring life insurance agents to earn continuing education credits in order to maintain their state licensing. The American Society has actively encouraged this legislation and has sought and gained approval for the use of its various continuing education programs in fulfilling these state requirements.

Collegiate Life Insurance Education. Members perceive the body of knowledge involved in the field of life insurance as they are made aware of the growth of life insurance education at the collegiate level. Although officially chartered and able to be a conventional college, the American College of Life Underwriters has never attempted to become a residential institution. One of its goals has been to work for more offerings of life insurance courses at established colleges and universities. Eilers (1965) describes the growth of life insurance instruction in colleges, emphasizing that the college training route has been what many other groups have utilized to gain respect. Johnson (1961) reports that when the preparation for the career of life underwriting was identified with colleges and universities, the occupation was following in the footsteps of other professions such as law, engineering and accounting. Survey of American colleges by the American Society showed continual growth in the number of colleges offering courses

in insurance, from 549 in 1962-63 to 677 in 1975-76.

Additional Designations. Members may perceive that the body of knowledge has increased to the point that additional designations and certificates may be earned. Rahmbow (1972) speaks of the need to build on a CLU level of competency through programs comparable to graduate training. The American College currently offers a number of certificate courses in areas such as estate planning, group insurance, and financial counseling for those already holding the CLU.

In 1981 the American College introduced a second professional designation, the Chartered Financial Consultant. Debate still continues about this designation and the relationship of its holders to the American Society. Originally, it was suggested that the CLU would be the experience requirement for the CFC designation, although other designations such as CPA and JD would also suffice. As the designation is currently structured, it is not dependent on first obtaining another designation. This CFC designation as attached to the American College is an outgrowth of the expansion of those traditionally involved in selling insurance into other financial areas as life insurance companies have expanded their products/services.

The Annual Meeting/Forum. Each year the American Society has a meeting of its membeship. At these three-day meetings, the newest group of CLUs is awarded the designa-

tion, opportunities for socializing take place, and a number of panels, workshops and speeches are given. Although exact figures were not found as to attendance at these meetings, it appears that a relatively small percentage of the membership of the American Society attends.

An examination of recent meeting programs reveals little similarity between the CLU Forum/Meeting and meetings of "scholarly professions." Rather than having numerous sessions with high rates of membership participation, there are a very limited number of workshops, panel discussions, and speeches. The 1981 meeting had 24 people on the program with only 14 of these holding the CLU designations. Of the 14 CLUs, three were also attorneys and one was a college professor.

The workshops, panels, and speeches are limited to late morning and early afternoon. Late afternoons and evenings are reserved for socializing, with life insurance companies hosting dinners and receptions. Spouses, in almost all cases wives, are provided with a full schedule of activities including luncheons, style shows and sight-seeing. It would seem that these meetings would provide only limited opportunities for the members to perceive the occupation's body of knowledge.

The wide range of activities of the professional association, the American Society of CLUs, that has been

discussed does not presume to be an exhaustive treatment of the various activities of the professional association which tend to convince the membership of their possession of a body of knowledge. Yet the existence of the designation, the examination process, the journal, the emphasis on continuing education, the collegiate level education in life insurance, the additional certificates and designation, and the annual meeting/forum operate to convince CLUs that a body of knowledge is in existence which must be mastered and that the body of knowledge is expanding.

The Normative Dimension -- A Service Orientation

The second main component of the ideal-type approach to professions is the characterization of professions as having a service orientation. This normative orientation implies that the professional is called upon to do what is in the best interests of those he serves, rather than what is in his own self-interest. The American Society works to convince both those within the ranks of CLUs and those outside of the service orientation of the Chartered Life Underwriter.

The most prominent attempt by the American Society to convince the membership of its service orientation is the development of a professional Code of Ethics and the CLU Pledge. Repeated upon the awarding of the designation by

new CLUs, emblazoned on plaques to be hung in the offices of CLUs, and printed on the inside cover of each issue of the CLU Journal, the pledge asserts a service orientation.

> In all my professional relationships, I pledge myself to the following rule of ethical conduct: I shall, in the light of all conditions surrounding those I serve which I shall make every conscientious effort to ascertain and understand, render that service which in the same circumstances I would apply to myself.

As Greenwood (1966) suggests, this code is characteristic of professional codes in that it contains altruistic overtones and a public service orientation. Yet it appears to be less than explicit, systematic or binding. In addition to the pledge, CLUs have developed a more detailed and specific Code of Ethics and have formed an Ethical Guidance Committee to ensure that it is followed. Cases have been heard by the Committee and members of the Society have been removed, but the designation cannot be revoked and one can still sell life insurance unless state regulatory commission action is taken. This is a problem that the American Society would like to rectify (Walton, 1981). In recent years, The Society Page has introduced a column which addresses ethical questions. Most of them deal with violations of the service orientation.

In the early years of the CLU Journal numerous articles appear containing discussions of the professional life underwriter with special attention paid to the service orientation. Among the first of these was Bendiner (1947).

Bendiner was a member of the first group awarded the CLU designation in 1928, and he is described as having a life-long involvement with the "CLU movement." In spelling out what is involved in being a professional life underwriter, Bendiner (1947:281) comments:

> Coupled with knowledge and skill, there must be a professional attitude, a willingness to place service above self, a willingness to bring to the community a high type of sincere advice, unaffected directly by the necessity of the underwriter to make a living.

He goes on to stress that the life underwriter can justify his existence only as an instrument of service. Emphasis must be taken off new "production" and placed upon the "service" rendered to the public. In speaking of recruiting others to the "calling," Bendiner suggests that sights must be raised if quality is to be sought. The training for the life underwriter must place its emphasis on the privilege to serve rather than the opportunity to sell.

The discussion of a "calling" runs through a number of early articles in the CLU Journal. Haldeman (1947) writes an interesting article in which it is suggested that individuals need to see their life underwriter once a year for a check-up, assuming that changes in the life situation of the individual over this period might cause a need for a change in the services rendered by the underwriter. In addressing the question of the professional status of life underwriting, Haldeman (1947:492) writes:

> Is the life underwriter engaged in a profession or is he merely engaged in the business of selling life insurance policies as the corner grocer is engaged in selling food or the automobile dealer in selling cars? There seems to be a difference of opinion as to the answer to this question ... We cannot deny that there are still some life insurance agents scattered throughout the country who are engaged in the "commercial occupation" of selling life insurance, but we know, too, that there are many underwriters who are following a calling in which they profess to have acquired some special knowledge which they are using to guide and advise their policyholders. It is just as clear that those who fall within the latter have attained a professional status as it is that those in the first group may not be classified as members of a profession. The line of demarcation is not a fine one -- each underwriter knows to which group he belongs and the time is not far distant, if it has not already arrived, when buyers of substantial amounts of life insurance will insist upon dealing with only a professional life underwriter.

Coffin (1947) has a discussion of the selling versus service orientation, and he attempts to offer some suggestions for this shift to a service orientation. In the earlier days of life insurance, Coffin notes, the public had to have aggressive life insurance agents because the public had to be pushed and sold a policy. Although the agent was involved in selling, he was providing a service by overcoming the resistance to a worthy product. Now the picture has changed and the public does not need the persuasion and pushing. Coffin says that the modern underwriter substitutes his solid knowledge of financial and technical problems and his complete and friendly service to his clientele for this older selling approach. Yet he warns that too

many underwriters talk about a service approach when they are only interested in making a sale.

Scott (1948) suggests that the concept of giving service begins in thinking and results in action. The desire to serve, says Scott (1948:339) must be so sincere and so honest that a client will feel it.

> We must get our client to recognize the fact that he has a problem and to grasp the fact that we are the person who can really help him. He will be sympathetic to sincere service the second he recognizes it. He will spot insincerety just as quickly.
>
> Every man wants to believe with all the intensity of his being that he can render at least one service to the world better than any other man ... I think the buyer today is distinctly unwilling to admit that we have done him a service by the mere sale of life insurance. I think he is somewhat conscious of the fact that the sale of life insurance, as such, may have been a service, but a service exactly proportionate to the intelligence with which it is rendered.

One of the most interesting of the early articles exhorting members to have a service orientation is that of Smith (1948). In "The Philosophy of Estate Planning," Smith stresses the idea that if one holds firmly to the service idea, one will succeed.

> The philosophy of estate planning means that we approach the client with all the human understanding possible, with only one desire, the desire to do the best job, without thought of pay, that we can do. If we adopt this philosophy, this desire for service -- and this is a very important point -- this desire for service completely eliminates any fear of failure or difficulty from either internal or external influences (Smith, 1948:341).

The suggestion that holding fast a service orien-

tation will lessen the fear of failure sounds somewhat like the suggestion Malinowski makes about magic among the Tobriand Islanders. Kottak (1975:188) points out that Malinowski found among the Tobrianders magical activities associated with fishing in the open sea, which in an outrigger canoe can be a very hazardous activity. Humans have no control over the winds or weather which can affect open sea fishing. Feeling that these conditions caused the islanders to turn to magic, Malinowski (1958:92) writes: "Magic is to be expected and generally found whenever man comes to an unbridgeable gap, a hiatus in his knowledge or in his powers of practical control, yet has to continue his pursuit." Hilbert (1981) has suggested that salesmen, in following a rigid ritual in their sales presentations ,engage in a kind of magic insofar as they fee l that if the presentation (the ritual) is carried out correctly, the potential customer cannot refuse to buy the product. This functions to reduce the fear of failure among salesmen, especially those on commission whose economic well-being depends upon the volume of sales. This article by Smith seems to suggest that the more modern professional life underwriter, rather than emphasizing ritualistic sales presentations, emphasizes the service functions as a guarantee of success. This, just as the reliance on magic, reduces fear of failure. Thus emphasis upon service functions not only to enhance the professionalization process but as a form of ritual magic.

Among the last of the early articles in the CLU Journal which provides discussions of the importance of a service orientation among professional life underwriters is one written by two officials of the American Society (McCahan and Gregg, 1952), in which there is a discussion of a number of different comments by Huebner about professionalism in life insurance underwriting. A number of these comments follow:

> ... the practitioner should abandon the strictly selfish commercial view and ever keep in mind the advantages of the client. Conscientious and disinterested service -- proper advice and guidance -- is the very essence of professional conduct, and in the long run the best policy.
>
> If properly practiced, life underwriting meets all the requirements of the professional concept. As a calling it is fundamentally useful to society and so inherently noble in its purpose of family and business protection as to inspire sufficient enthusiasm on the part of the practitioner to make it his full-time life's work.
>
> Always serve your client faithfully. Professionally, this means the application of the Golden Rule in your daily work (McCahan and Gregg, 1952:203-206).

Since the early 1950's few articles have directly discussed the service orientation of the professional life underwriter. By 1972 discussions appear which deal with service in a less idealized manner, in discussion of how life insurance underwriters should be compensated. Rothkrug (1972) suggests that there is a need for a dual compensation system in life insurance, commissions for selling and fees

for service. This dual system is needed in that

> The dual form of compensation gives explicit recognition to the dual role played and assures the client will have the benefit of both the objective interest in his welfare and the fullest measure of creative energy which his most trusted financial advisor can bring to bear in his behalf (Rothkrug, 1972:40).

Rothkrug notes that the life underwriter is the only professional not paid directly by the client. He suggests that the problem of being paid by the company is that one tends to do what is in the company's interest. If paid by the individual, one would do what the individual wants.

An article by Marshall, et al (1979:45-65) reports on studies conducted with policyholders about the agent/policyholder relationship. The studies were directed at determining the level of service given to policyholders, particularly in light of the growing number of companies who market life insurance by direct mail, circumventing the agency system. Findings were that two levels of service appeared to be given by life insurance agents. Passive service with minimal response to policyholder initiated service requests were found to be common among those who had small amounts of life insurance. The majority of people with large amounts of life insurance were receiving active service including more agent initiated monitoring of client needs.

The Evaluative Dimension -- Prestige

Professions are occupations accorded high status. Bain (1959:361) argues that the movement to professionalize life insurance selling began as an organized collective action to raise the status of the occupation. The American Society's publications give ample evidence of a continuing effort to convince the membership of their privileged position among the ranks of professionals and the high esteem in which the CLU is held. Three basic justifications are found in the CLU Journal for the high level of prestige of the CLU.

First, the members are told they are entitled to high status because of their possession of a highly specialized body of knowledge which they employ for the benefit of the public. Second, high status is justified because of the goodness of the institution of life insurance to which the members are tied. In an early article by Weissman (1949: 211) members are told that "by guiding to greater security Americans of all classes ... they help to make the American dream come true." The same idea is seen in an article over twenty years later by Rothkrug (1972:44) who, suggesting that buying insurance grows out of the highest level of human motivation, showing unselfishness, love of family, and a search for immortality writes: "The career of the life underwriter is devoted to being an instrument, however

uncertain, for the expression of this motivation."

In a discussion of the "ethical pillars of insurance," Long (1972) discusses the close connection between certain ethical characteristics of our society and life insurance as an institution. Characteristics discussed include (1) achievement perceived as good, (2) acquisitiveness perceived as good, (3) belief in honesty, obedience, charity and tradition, (4) acceptance of personal responsibility and accountability for one's actions. Those involved in the expansion of a product of such moral significance, it is implied, should be highly valued.

Third, high status is justified because of the close similarity of the work the life underwriter does with the work of those already receiving high status. The work of the life underwriter is like that of the doctor, the lawyer, and the accountant. Continually one finds in the journal articles references to CLUs as being like other professionals -- as if to mention them in the same sentence makes them the same. Examples of this include Fuller (1957:176) who suggests that the insurance program prepared by the CLU is analagous to a diet prepared by a physician or the will an attorney writes.

In addition to justifying the high evaluation of the professional life underwriter in terms of characteristics of the occupation, the CLU Journal presents articles which state directly that the CLU is a professional and should be

accorded high status. Articles with such statements are more common in the early years of the journal. Elton (1947) quotes Soloman Huebner as saying that life insurance is becoming fully recognized as a profession just the same as law, medicine, and accounting. Huebner suggests that the role of the life underwriter is becoming similar to that of other professionals and people will seek him out for advice. Hull (1963:17) makes the same comparisons when discussing the CLU designation and its history, saying: "Where once the actuary, the lawyer, and the doctor reigned supreme as the professionals in our business, these have now been joined by the CLU."

Occasionally will appear statements which give less than complete endorsement to the acceptance of CLUs as professionals. Nice (1962:72), a CLU and general agent, says: "The CLU movement, while growing rapidly, has not yet attained the professional stature nor public acceptance that the CPA has attained. It is hoped that in the years ahead, we grow in numbers and prestige ..."

A number of articles have appeared in the CLU Journal written by leaders of other professions indicating their acceptance of the CLU as a peer. These articles are particularly appropriate for convincing the CLU of the high esteem in which the occupational is held. Annis (1966), a past President of the American Medical Association, contrib-

uted an article entitled, "A Doctor Looks at Life Insurance." Saying that doctors tend to shy away from underwriters who cannot or will not meet them on a professional level, Annis notes that he is now finding a new breed of life insurance agent who fully measures up to the doctor's requirements of informed, competent advice. According to Annis, the doctor expects professionalism from the people with whom he deals, and when he seeks advice, he demands that it be given in an informed manner.

MacLean (1961) a former President of the Society of Actuaries, writes an article, "An Actuary Views Some Modern Developments in Life Insurance," and says that the concept of the life insurance salesman as a professional who should be competent and responsible seems beyond question. MacLean suggests that someday all life insurance agents should be CLUs. An article by a former member of the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association was not quite so generous. Davis (1949) says that the recognition of the quasi-professional status of the top-drawer life insurance underwriter is gradually gaining ground. Yet he regrets that only a small percentage of all life underwriters actually attains the high standards of skill and knowledge which a true professional status requires. He does admit that an increasingly significant proportion of the total volume of life insurance is distributed by those with professional qualifications.

Just as showing the membership of its acceptance by more established professions would tend to convince the CLUs of their high status, knowing that the CLU designation has served as a model for other groups' attempts at professionalization would tend to produce the same result. In Hull (1963) members are told the CLU has become a model for others striving toward professionalization.

> What has the Chartered Life Underwriter program accomplished for business in general? It has provided a course of action and a pattern of thinking for many other kinds of business. The insurance industry has been held up as a model for many others in their quest for a standard of excellence and a bid for professionalism.
>
> During the past several years numerous organizations and special interest groups have consulted the American College of Life Underwriters in an effort to find solutions to the particular problems they face in their particular industries (Hull, 1962:18-19).

Examples of those seeking such consultation are travel agents, security dealers, financial analysts and criminologists.

Telling the Membership About Itself

The final section of this chapter reports on the findings of a number of surveys of the members of the American Society. The professional association seems to be concerned with looking at the characteristic of its members and monitoring changes in these characteristics. As members

are informed of these characteristics, they would tend to make judgments about the association and about themselves.

A survey of members was conducted in 1952 to mark the 25th Anniversary of the CLU designation. An attempt was made to gather information from the entire membership. A sample of one-third of the members was drawn for a CLU profile in 1967. Smaller sample surveys were conducted in 1972 and 1975. Areas of investigation in these surveys have included personal characteristics, career experience, income status, experience in attaining the CLU designation, and views of the American Society.

Personal Characteristics. All of the surveys indicate that the average CLU member is male (98.9%), is in his mid-40's, is married, and received his CLU designation in his late 30's. Of special interest in this survey seems to be the educational backgrounds of members. Table 4 shows the members by educational level over time. The various surveys point to some minor change. Those without post high school training are decreasing as a percentage of the total. Yet the designation has always been held predominately by those with college educations and, increasingly, by those with post collegiate training (other than preparation for the CLU examinations). The survey in 1972 showed that six of ten members reporting college had some work beyond the bachelor's degree (Abelle, 1975:60).

TABLE 4

Educational Background of Chartered Life Underwriters*

Year	Educational Background	Percent
1946	High School or Less	16.4
1952	High School or Less	12.6
1967	High School or Less	11.1
1946	Some College	21.2
1952	Some College	22.7
1967	Some College	20.9
1946	College Graduate	62.4
1952	College Graduate	64.7
1967	College Graduate	68.0

*These figures are for current members as of the year shown, not the educational level of persons receiving the designation in the year given.

Employment History. According to the records of the American Society, 88% of the individuals who have received the CLU designation since its inception were still active in the life insurance business in 1967. Studies show that most of the attrition is from death and retirement, and they conclude that only about 6.9% of CLUs have left the life insurance business (Lucas, et al., 1969:12). Abell (1975) found that 19 of 20 CLUs made life insurance their lifetime career.

Income. Lucas (et al.,1969:20) reports that independent studies by insurance companies have shown that CLUs' incomes are on the average 50% greater than non-CLUs with the same length of service. Yet Lucas warns,

> It is virtually impossible to determine whether the knowledge and analytical skill gained from the CLU program results in improved performance or whether the CLU program attracts persons to it who would succeed regardless of such a program. The demonstrable value of education linked with the expressed views of the CLUs as to what the CLU educational experience meant in their personal development leads to the belief that there are many direct benefits which accrue to men who take and complete the CLU program and that those benefits tend to improve their earnings.

If the income of CLUs far outstrips the income of those in life insurance who do not receive or seek the designation, it also far exceeds the average income of workers in the United States. The median income of CLUs in 1967 was $19,354, and the median income for a family with a male, white, male-headed household was $8,234. The figures for

1972 were $25,000 and $11,549 respectively.

Views of the CLU Program. The 1967 survey questioned Society members about their views on the CLU program and the value they felt the program had for them personally. Over 99% of the respondents believed the designation had been of positive value to them. In order of frequency of response, CLUs felt that the CLU work improved their competence (92.4%), enhanced their prestige within the insurance business (88.9%), enhanced their prestige with the general public (78.8%), made them feel more professional (80.7%), and improved their self-confidence (68.1%) (Lucas, et al., 1967:38).

Rodman and Marshall (1976:50) questioned members about their reason for seeking the CLU designation. In order of frequency mentioned, reasons given were (1) the desire for professional recognition and prestige and (2) the opportunity to increase professional knowledge as a means of career advancement.

Views of the American College. Of eight purposes enumerated in the 1967 questionnaire, 62.6% of the respondents were of the opinion that the main purpose of the American College was to serve the public by improving the level of knowledge of those engaged in life and health insurance. The second most important purpose chosen was the College's providing professional educational programs for persons engaged in life and health insurance. The third

most important purpose of the College was to increase the public's awareness of the importance of professional education in the practice of life underwriting (Lucas, et al., 1969:48).

Conclusion

This chapter has described various activities of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters which tend to convince CLUs of their status as professionals. As members read the communications and take part in the activities of the American Society, they are presented with a definition of themselves as professional and tend to internalize that definition.

The overall impression received in the analysis of data just discussed is that the American Society feels the need to play a very active role in convincing the membership of their status as professionals. Yet the more self-conscious discussions of professional behavior have declined in recent years. The American Society now seems more interested in producing communications discussing the professional characteristics and status of the CLU and aimed at the general public and those in other professions. It is this "convincing others" roles of the American Society that is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

CONVINCING OTHERS

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the efforts of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters to convince others of the professional status of CLUs. As mentioned in the opening of Chapter III, the division of material presented in Chapters III and IV is, at times, somewhat arbitrary. As one convinces oneself, one convinces others. It is a simultaneous process, and the actions directed at convincing others have the ability to convince oneself at the same time. Yet, the primary thrust of the American Society's actions as being aimed at members or nonmembers can be determined. Chapter III presented material taken mostly from the CLU Journal and the Society Page, publications designed primarily for communication among members. The American Society also produces brochures, newsletters, and public relations campaigns aimed at the general public and specific groups within the public.

The necessity of convincing the public of the membership's rightful claim to define themselves as profession-

als is implied in the work of Berger (1963:98-100):

> ... identity is not something "given," but is bestowed in acts of social recognition. We become that as which we are addressed ... identities are socially bestowed. They must also be socially sustained and fairly steadily so. One cannot be human all by oneself and apparently, one cannot hold onto a particular identity all by oneself.

Thus, the American Society must not only convince the members of their status as professionals; it must also convince others to bestow this recognition upon them.

Members appear to recognize the importance of the American Society's activities in this direction. Surveys of the membership in which members were asked about the relative importance they assigned to the activities of the Society reveal that the most often given response was the Society's increasing the public awareness of the meaning of the designation (Lucas, et al., 1969:49). Abelle (1975:63) reports that research on Society members showed they overwhelmingly believed that improved service to the public would result from greater awareness of the meaning of CLU, and this increased awareness would result from efforts by the Society to publicize the significance of the CLU designation.

Publicizing the designation is very definitely the job of the American Society and not of the individual holders of the designation. Although members may display and disseminate Society approved objects and literature, the individual members are restricted from publicizing the

designation on their own. From the earliest days of the designation, there has been a ban on its commercialization. In writing about the history of the American Society, Huebner and McCahan (1947:203) note that "the holder of the CLU designation was forbidden to commercialize it and no effort was to be spared by the College to detect and stop laxity in this respect."

This chapter is organized into two main divisions. The first deals with the role of the American Society as it works to convince the general public of the professional status of CLUs. The second deals with the actions aimed at convincing other professions of the professional status of CLUs. Obviously, the general public would include other professionals, yet, in addition to the more general activities of the American Society, a great deal of effort has been directly aimed at those in other professions. The convincing of other professionals has been particularly important to CLUs for three reasons. First, it is the status of the more established professions that the CLU seeks. Recognition of a peer status by these groups would be particularly salient in the process of establishing their status. Second, most of the professions to which the Society gives special attention in this respect are called upon to cooperate and, in some cases, compete with CLUs in the field of estate planning. Third, professionals are the most

prized clients for the services of CLUs. Taylor and Pelligrin (1959:13) point out that CLUs show a distinct preference to be selective in their clients and prefer to sell insurance to a professional clientele. As mentioned earlier in the remarks by Annis (1966) the former President of the American Medical Association, professionals would prefer to deal with someone of like status; someone who can meet them on their own level.

Convincing the General Public

It would seem obvious that the most effective way to convince others of one's status as a professional would be to act in such a way as to exhibit professional characteristics. And in articles appearing the the CLU Journal with such titles as "One Approach to Professional Life Underwriting," "Professional Responsibility in Estate Planning," "School Is Never Out for the Life Underwriter," and "Client-Counselor Relationships in Field Underwriting," members are told how a professional should behave and encouraged to follow that pattern. This assumes that behaving in such a way as to exhibit charactertistics assumed to define a professional will lead to professional status. Yet this may not be the case, as pointed out by Friedson (1973:187), who suggests that there have always been occupations with such characteristics that are not

granted the status of profession. Being granted the status reflects the society's belief that the occupation has such attributes and society's belief in the dignity and importance of the work. So a great deal more may be necessary to convince the public other than just the membership's exhibiting certain characteristics.

The efforts of the American Society to convince the general public can be seen in (1) publications directed at public consumption, (2) organized campaigns in the public media, and (3) endorsement and sale of items bearing the CLU insignia. It should be noted that these activities have a dual purpose -- convincing others of the professional status of the CLU and convincing them of their need for the CLU's services.

In January, 1952, the American Society began publishing a monthly newsletter entitled Query. Billed to the membership as a "prestige builder," the newsletter is a single 8" x 10" sheet which can be folded and mailed. Members can order these newsletters in large quantities from the American Society who prints the individual CLU's name and address on the newsletter. The CLU then mails them to clients. Although the format of the newletter has been changed eight times in its history, it contains four or five very short discussions of changes in tax law, insurance programs, and investment procedures. The articles often end with suggestions that one might "have an early conference

with your CLU" to see what impact these changes might have on one's estate plan. Members' response to the newsletter appears to be good. In 1970, 1300 CLUs were mailing out almost two million copies of Query each year.

Advertisements encouraging members to order Query appear in many issues of the CLU Journal and the Society Page. Sample advertisements for the newsletter point to the "convincing others" impact, suggesting, "We are confident that you will agree that the new Query will enhance your prestige and broaden your scope of influence" and "An ideal vehicle to establish and continually reinforce your image as a leading member of the financial planning team." Numerous advertisements for Query indicate its usefulness in "building your image as a life insurance professional."

In 1971, The American Society reports on research on a sample of Query readers. Questions were asked about the readers personal characteristics; their perception of the intent of the mailer; and their feelings about the format, length, and type of article in the mailer. The American Society (CLU Journal, April, 1972:20) reports that 89% felt the purpose of Query was to serve as "an informative, financial planning idea letter of a public relations nature," while only 8% perceived it as "an advertising mailing directly soliciting life insurance business." Of those sampled, 48% were professional men, 27% were corporate exe-

cutive or managers, 22% were business owners, and 2% were skilled craftsmen or technicians.

As the result of extensive marketing research, Query was revised in 1975. Included in the new format is additional discussion of the CLU designation. Examples of statements appearing in the newsletter along with the short articles are as follows:

(1) Query is sent to you by a member of the American Society of CLUs, the national society of financial professionals who have earned the CLU designation by meeting high education, ethical, and experience requirements.

(2) Members of the American Society voluntarily commit themselves to a Code of Ethics which is founded upon principles of competent advice and service for the client and enhancement of the public regard for the CLU designation.

A member competently advises and serves a client by

* providing advice and service which are in the client's best interest

* respecting the confidential relationship existing between client and member

* continuing his education throughout his professional life and by rendering continuing advice and service.

(3) The American Society is a professional organization whose members are dedicated to the highest standards of competence and service in financial planning and economic security. Members of the American Society have demonstrated their high degree of professional knowledge by passing comprehensive examinations in life insurance, law, economics, finance, trusts, and taxation; and have been awarded the CLU designation; and have voluntarily bound themselves to the Code of Ethics of their professional organization.

As these statements show, Query is intended to convince the public of the professional status of the CLU.

Beginning in 1980, the American Society began publishing a four-page newsletter entitled Assets. Sold to Society members who in turn mail them to their clients, Assets is published six times each year and contains condensations of articles that previously appeared in the CLU Journal or Keeping Current, a cassette tape sent to subscribing members containing articles similar to those in the CLU Journal. Assets is suggested as the mailer for "most important clients and prospects." Advertisements for Assets note that the newletter describes relevant laws and limitations and emphasize opportunities, pointing out that a CLU can provide additional guidance.

The American Society also publishes a number of informative brochures which may be purchased by members to distribute. These brochures are aimed at explaining the CLU designation. The brochure "What is a CLU?" offers a brief explanation of the meaning of the CLU designation and the "professional spirit and conduct of a holder of the CLU." A longer brochure "The Meaning of CLU" goes into the requirements for the designation and outlines the functions of the American Society, including the code of conduct of a CLU.

The American Society has not totally depended upon providing publications for their members to distribute among the public. It has also hired public relations experts to

design complete campaigns. Meile (1972:48) describes one of the latest of these, emphasizing the campaign is directly informational with an emphasis of letting the public know what a CLU is and what services he performs. The campaign described and designed by Meile is based on the local level with the coordination of local chapters of the American Society. In describing the program, Meile (1972:50) suggests:

> The heart of the program is a 13 minute film which, with dramatized format, explains the educational requirements of the CLU, the services he is qualified to perform and his ethical commitment to professional service.

Meile projected that over a two-year period, the film would appear on 200 television programs, as well as being shown at 700 meetings of local clubs and organizations.

Besides the movie, the campaign contains a monthly newspaper column to be run in suburban newspapers. The columns discuss insurance problems of concern to the general public and carries an explanation of what CLU means. There are also magazine articles and speaker's bureaus. This campaign, Meile suggests, would most definitely be heard by millions of persons who now confuse CLUs with members of the American Civil Liberties Union. In explaining this public relations campaign, it is suggested that it is an ethical imperative for CLUs to let the public know about the various services they perform; services which are in the public interest.

> Now, with a growing need for the public to understand the various types of professional financial counsel available, the CLU faces an ethical imperative which goes beyond the pledge. This imperative is to explain himself to the public (Meile, 1972: 50-51).

As part of attempts to make the public aware of the CLU designation and the professional status which it denotes, the American Society has made available for purchase by its members a wide range of items which signify the possession of the CLU designation. Upon completion of the exams and the awarding of the designation, new CLUs are presented with CLU keys. This is a gold-colored key similar to a Phi Beta Kappa key in size and most commonly worn on a tie clasp or watch chain. Once the individual has obtained the designation, he can then buy other products which display the CLU logo. Advertisements for these items suggest that as people take note of them there will be an opportunity to explain the designation. Or if the individual is already familiar with the designation, he will be impressed with the individual's having earned the designation. One example of such items is a framed copy of the CLU Pledge. Advertisements for it read: "It's a handsome, boldly-stated, uncluttered, easily read way to let your clients and friends know that you operate with the highest professional commitment."

Personal imprint labels are available which show the CLU key with the members name, business affiliation and

address. These "add the prestigious touch to policies, correspondence, proposals and business gifts." In regard to these gummed labels, the CLU is reminded that "no matter how many times you tell the world you're a CLU ... there's only one way to make it stick."

One can also purchase ash trays, pencil holders, key rings, cuff links, drinking glasses and bookends with the CLU logo. In an advertisement for a CLU ring, the copy suggests, "There you are, shaking hands with a client, and the client notices a handsome CLU ring. It's a conversation starter. An up-front reminder of what you studied for." Advertisements point out that the various products available for purchase by the CLU all reflect "the dignity and taste of the professional CLU." No information is given as to how sales of these items go. Yet over the last several years, advertisements have appeared regularly in the Society Page and CLU Journal. It is assumed that some demand for these objects exists.

A final activity of the American Society aimed at convincing the general public is their suggestion that members distribute positive statements made by those outside of the Society about the designation and its holders. In both the CLU Journal and Society Page are found short excerpts from newspaper columns or magazine articles which priase the professionalism of the CLU. The Society suggests that members "may even want to drop a few copies off with some of

their clients." Obviously, these articles have the dual effect of convincing the membership as well.

On such article is by Bove (1981), a Boston lawyer who writes a regular newspaper column on tax and money questions. Bove writes that when looking for a life insurance adviser, one should look for someone with the CLU designation. After explaining the requirements for obtaining the designation, Bove (1981:16) mentions the need for specialized advise regarding life insurance, advice which only a CLU can give.

> One reason for this care in selection of your insurance adviser is that not very many people can review his or her recommendations with a high degree of certainty and knowledge. The sad fact is that most people will ask their lawyers or accountants or bankers to review sophisticated insurance programs when none of these advisers is really capable of making such an evaluation. This is not to say that lawyers or accountants or bankers know nothing about life insurance, but for the most part they are not trained in these areas, and the nuances of such things as a reverse split-dollar insurance plan coupled with a minimum deposit election can befuddle even the most competent "non-insurance" adviser.

Convincing Other Professionals

Other professionals -- what Carr-Saunders (1955) might identify as the old established and new professions -- are a particularly significant group for CLUs. First, they are perceived as already having obtained the status CLUs seek, and having these groups recognize them as pro-

fessionals would be of great importance. Second, CLUs are often thrown into working relationships with other professionals, most often the lawyer and the accountant. Third, professionals are among the most sought-after clients for CLUs. For these reasons, the American Society has devoted considerable effort at convincing other professionals of CLU professionalism.

Those things which would convince the general public mentioned in the previous section would tend to touch the professional as well. Almost half of those in a sample of Query recipients were "professional men." But the general campaigns of the American Society may not be as effective with other professionals, who may very well be more attentive to claims of professionalism than the general public. Assumed to be more sophisticated judges of professionalism, professionals may require a different strategy. If the general public can merely be told of the CLUs possession of a body of knowledge and service orientation, it may be necessary to actually show the other professionals these characteristics.

In the early 1950's, advertisements often appeared in the CLU Journal suggesting gift subscriptions be given. Billing the Journal not as the correct gift for everyone, advertisements suggested:

> Not for your girlfriend, a plumber, a granddaughter, or your brother-in-law who can't seem to hold down a job ... but how about the lawyer who

> might like to know more about life insurance, the high-type client who's not yet completely sold on your competence, the trust man you worked with on a recent case, or that CPA you're trying to interest a little more in CLU?

The recognition of the Journal's ability to convince other professionals is seen in testimonials appearing in subsequent advertisements. Described as the opinions of some highly successful men on the personal benefits they receive from giving gift subscriptions, quotes include: "its exposure to attorneys and CPAs has enhanced our local reputation," "has been an ideal prestige builder in relations with attorneys, trust officers, etc.," and "the gift convinces the recipient that he is dealing with a professional."

The American Society makes available reprints of articles from the CLU Journal, suggesting that members might want to distribute them. The article which has been reprinted the most is "A Doctor Looks at Life Insurance" by Annis (1966) a former President of the American Medical Association. Over 90,000 copies of this article have been distributed, presumably to medical doctors that CLUs are trying to convince of their professional status, as well as to sell them life insurance.

As part of their attempts to convince other professionals, the American Society has undertaken campaigns aimed at specific professional groups. The most recent of these is directed at Certified Public Accountants and is described in 1980-81 issues of the Society Page. Before

beginning the campaign, the American Society conducted a survey of CPAs in private practice. Significant findings reported to the membership included ("CPA's Perceptions of CLUs",1981:1-7):

1) Two-thirds of the responding CPAs have had a working relationship with CLUs. Of these, 89% consider the CLU's professional services to be good/excellent.
2) Of the one-third who have never worked with CLUs, 61% said the occasion never came up, and 18% said their clients handle their own insurance needs.
3) The average CPA serves 132 clients, but the average CPA who has a CLU working relationship serves 184 clients, or almost 40 percent more.
4) 84% of all CPAs surveyed said they value the CLU designation most in comparison with other designations including the Million Dollar Round Table and Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter.
5) 84% of CPAs with CLU working relationships believe that CLUs have specialized education, knowledge, and experience. Of CPAs with no such working relationships, 64% either believe a CLU has no such specialized background or are undecided about a CLU's background.

These findings point out that those who have worked with CLUs have higher opinions of them than do those who have

not.

In order to get the message across to CPAs that the "CLU is a versatile professional who, along with the CPA, belongs on the financial planning team," the American Society has developed a multi-faceted campaign. One facet of this campaign is a series of advertisements run in the Journal of Accountancy. Sample copy from one of these ads appears below:

> Getting to the top is never easy. Not for the CPA. And not for the CLU, the Chartered Life Underwriter.
>
> It takes four to five years of advanced education. A battery of qualifying exams. A record of ethical conduct. And continuing education through the American Society of CLU. No short cuts, no free rides, no coasting.
>
> But that's the way it should be, isn't it?
>
> Today, an unobstructed view of all financial planning complexities -- including estate, business, benefit and tax planning techniques -- is the sine qua non of any member of a planning team, the CLU included.
>
> By spotting options, anticipating pitfalls and mapping out solutions, the CLU is able to integrate insurance needs with overall financial objectives. The CLU designation guarantees an overview the typical insurance broker doesn't have ... an overview which can be of value to you and your clients.

In addition to the advertisements in the Journal of Accountancy, the American Society has produced a special brochure entitled "CPA and CLU: Partners in Financial Planning," a suggested speech, and a feature article. In each of these, there is emphasis on showing the commonality of the two professions including the demanding course of

study, continuing education, high ethics and expertise. Attention is drawn to the benefits of a team approach to financial planning.

The American Society also utilizes its Continuing Education Programs to convince other professionals. As mentioned in Chapter III, the American Society sponsors a wide variety of seminars and short courses for its members. The Society encourages enrollment in these courses by other professionals, specifically attorneys and CPAs. In order to make these courses more attractive to these groups, the American Society lobbies to have them approved for continuing education credit in those states with continuing educational requirements for professionals. Publicity about these continuing education programs suggests that a CLU should invite a professional from an "allied field" to attend a CLU seminar, and it suggests that the lawyers and accountants attending will "be impressed by the high quality of CLU continuing education."

One particularly interesting aspect of this convincing other professionals has been the competition and/or cooperation of life underwriters, accountants, and attorneys in "estate planning." Although a definition of estate planning is never explicitly given in the CLU literature, it appears to involve the consideration of all facets of an individual's estate in order to maximize its value and

assure that the wishes of the individual are carried out when the estate is transferred at death. Estate planning often involves the purchase of life insurance as well as the setting up of trusts, writing of wills, and the coordination of these with the latest rulings on taxation. In advertisements, the American Society is running in the Journal of Accountancy and in recent articles in the CLU Journal, estate planning is described as a team effort. Likewise, the Society of Certified Public Accountants has recently run advertisements in popular magazines and newspapers emphasizing a team approach. A recent advertisement in the Wall Street Journal reads,

> Designing a sound estate plan requires more than life insurance and a will. Your CPA knows estate planning alternatives and can work with your insurance professional and attorney to develop an effective program for you.

Although the team approach appears to be accepted now, this was not always the case. From the late 1940's until the early 1960's, there seems to have been a debate about the role of the life underwriter in estate planning. The debate varied from suggestions that the life underwriter was the estate planner to perceptions of the life insurance agent as mere seller of insurance to solve the problems that attorneys and accountants diagnosed.

The position that CLUs are the estate planners is seen in an early CLU Journal article by Weissman (1949).

Weissman, a CLU, suggests that estate planning should be a separate profession, but one which is the likely outgrowth of training as a CLU. In speaking of the requirements of an estate planner, Weissman (1949:204-205) says:

> First he must have all of the training of a skilled life underwriter, as measured by the Chartered Life Underwriter designation. Next, he must have training in the law, with emphasis on those fields which are pertinent to estate planning. These include wills, trusts and estates, taxation and business law. He must also have an understanding of accounting, corporate finance and economics ...
>
> On the basis of the evidence, most of the best candidates for this profession have come from the field of life underwriting. If the estate planner is a life underwriter, he cannot, of course, practice law, but that is of no more importance than the fact that he does not act as a corporate fiduciary or practice accounting. He is in much the same position as the architect who creates the plan but does not build the house.

Weisman's position seems to be that the CLU with specialized training is the estate planner. If coordination of efforts with others is involved, he suggests that it does not begin until the greater part of the estate planner's work is done, and it is concerned chiefly with legal confirmation of certain aspects of the plan as devised by the estate planning CLU.

The extent to which the CLU is conversant with the law appears to be of major concern in the debate over estate planning. Haldeman (1947) notes that the life underwriter should not be expected to give opinions interpreting or specifically applying the tax laws, and

should not give such opinions. He should also not prepare or interpret wills, trusts, or other legal instruments for his clients. Haldeman seems to feel the need to remind the life underwriter that these duties are rightfully those of the lawyer. Yet, the life underwriter is called upon to be sufficiently conversant with the tax laws applicable to life insurance contract to call the client's attention to problems needing discussion with an attorney, and to have sufficient knowledge of wills and trusts to discuss or explain the part which life insurance plays in building the client's estate. It appears the professional life underwriter is to know some law, but not too much.

An enlightening discussion of the intricate interaction which must be carried out in a team approach to estate planning is seen in Powers (1949). In "The Lawyer-Life Underwriter Team Pulling Together in Estate Planning," it is suggested that the life underwriter may often find the attorney of some of his clients will possess an inadequate knowledge of tax law, or trust law, or some other law relevant to the client's case. Saying that due to the highly specialzed nature of much legal practice the attorney should not be criticized for this lack of knowledge, Powers (1949:221) further remarks:

> In such cases, the underwriter would render a disservice to the estate owner if he impaired his confidence in his adviser. Instead, the underwriter has a responsiblity to the estate owner, to himself,

> and to his fellows to make it possible for such lawyer to be more useful to his client by providing him with whatever material or sources of information he may need and by giving him pertinent citations or leads. With his background, the attorney can do whatever research is required.

The description of the life underwriter providing the legal knowledge to the lawyer in a way such that the client does not lose confidence appears to be similar to the doctor-nurse game described by Stein (1967). Stein describes the interaction between lower status nurses and higher status doctors in which nurses must make significant recommendations in regard to patient care while appearing to be passive. Doctors are to appear to make the decisions. The cardinal rule of the game is to avoid open disagreement at all costs. Powers' description of the life underwriter actually providing the lawyer with citations in order to help the lawyer aid the client while, at the same time appearing authoritative, sounds much like the same game.

In light of the conflicting roles and responsibilities of various members of the estate planning "team," joint committees were formed to work out statements of cooperation. In 1948, a joint committee of the American Bar Association and the National Association of Life Underwriters issued a "National Statement of Principles of Cooperation between Life Underwriters and Lawyers." Its stated purpose was to chart the proper spheres of activity of the two groups in discharging their responsibilities to

the public interest. It established as improper conduct for a life underwriter to:

1) practice law; give legal advice, prepare legal documents such as wills, trust agreements, business insurance agreement,

2) dissuade a client from seeking advice of legal counsel or attempt to divert a legal business from one attorney to another,

3) act as intermediary and furnish attorneys who will give cost-free legal advice to the underwriter's clients or prospects,

4) share an attorney's fee or pay any part of his life insurance commission to an attorney or other person not a life underwriter,

5) obtain legal opinions from an attorney and circularize them as selling documents.

The principles establish the impropriety of a lawyer to:

1) share in the life underwriter's insurance commissions,

2) divert the life insurance business to an underwriter other than the one who originally proposed the plan to his client,

3) share the legal fees with the life underwriter,

4) furnish a legal opinion knowing that the life underwriter will circularize it as a selling document ("Some Guideposts for Cooperation Between Lawyers and Life Insur-

ance Representatives, 1953).

The suggestion that the professional life underwriter should be conversant with the law has led to some concern about the life underwriter's practicing the law. Davis, a former member of the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association, contributed an article to the CLU Journal entitled, "Are Your Practicing Law?" Feeling that there is a regretable lack of material to aid the life underwriter in locating and defining the boundaries of permissable action, Davis (1949:25) points out that the most difficult questions as to what is improper giving of legal advice will disappear if the life underwriter will refuse to yield to the temptation to build prestige by posing as a legal expert. Chittick (1946), in one of the last articles in the CLU Journal to deal with this issue, discusses the problems of incomplete advice which the life underwriter might give and warns as follows:

> Fortunately, there are almost no reported cases charging a life insurance agent with engaging in the unauthorized practice of law in pursuit of his insurance business. However, there have been many complaints disposed of by conference. Many of the complaints arise out of estate planning interviews where the agent reviews legal documents and makes specific recommendations for changes or gives advice on specific tax matters. This is a type of intrusion to which the Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law is particularly sensitive (Chittick, 1964:35).

Chittick repeats certain areas from the Guideposts of Cooperation, suggesting that following it has cut down on much

of the problem in this area. In closing, it is suggested that if the rule established in the Guideposts is followed, the danger of liability to clients will be minimized and alienation of "our lawyer friend" will be avoided.

In discussions of professional responsibility in estate planning, Heins (1956) makes reference to it as a group specialty involving attorneys, accountants, investment analysts, trust officers, and life underwriters. Heins is concerned that competition among these group members might lead to governmental regulation if attempts by the respective professions to settle their inter-professional disputes fail. It appears that there is now general agreement on the life underwriter as a member of the estate planning team, and a member whose function is marketing as well as planning and expertise. Gatewood (1961) says that no other team member has a greater opportunity to exploit the theory of estate planning for the immediate or future benefit of his client than does the life underwriter. Unlike the other professionals on the estate planning team, the life underwriter does not have to wait for a client to approach him for assistance. Rather, he can aggressively seek out the client and discover his need for assistance (Gatewood, 1961:346).

The most recent discussion of the complex interactions between lawyer-life underwriter is seen in Ford

(1981). Although the debate appeared to be settled in terms of a team approach much earlier, the need seems to still exist to point out the roles to be played by the various team members. Ford points out that sooner or later an attorney will be involved in the estate planning process, and he points out ways to work effectively with them. Ford (1981:7) advises:

1) Don't minimize the contributions of the attorney, or view him as a mere scrivener to carry out legal details.

2) Don't look down on uninformed lawyers or lecture the non-specialist on the latest developments in advanced underwriting.

3) Don't extoll the benefits of avoiding probate, particularly as to fees.

4) Understand that the attorney is there to protect his client.

5) Sell your client and yourself on the value of the lawyer.

6) Don't ever contradict the lawyer in the presence of the client. Arrange for a conference beforehand to review your ideas and recommendations without the client present.

7) Don't debate the law and its application to the client's situation. If there is a legal or technical question, back off, find an article on the subject and send it to the lawyer for his files.

8) Don't recommend detailed will and trust provisions and changes, or provide "sample documents" to prospects and clients.

9) Follow through after the sale of insurance.

10) Offer the attorney your services but be tactful in offering "specimen" documents.

It appears that 32 years after the Powers' article, CLUs are still playing the doctor-nurse game with lawyers and, perhaps, other members of the estate planning team.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the role of the American Society of CLUs in convincing the general public and other professionals of the professional status of CLUs. Through a wide range of activities, the American Society has attempted to convince others by pointing to the meaning of the designation and the charactertistics and accomplishments of those who obtain it.

Efforts at convincing other professional groups have often emphasized the sharing of similar characteristics -- expertise, a service orientation, and continued study. Convincing lawyers and accountants has been particularly important and problematic because of the occasionally perceived overlap of rights and responsibilities in the area of estate planning. Adding to this problem has been the

suggested need for the life underwriter to have a knowledge of the law. Aiding their acceptance by other professionals has been the realization that it is financially rewarding to have working relationships with CLUs. Hirst (1948), a lawyer, remarks that most of his estate planning is done for clients introduced to him by life underwriters. Maddox (1949), a bank trust officer, points out that many trusts have been created as a result of the efforts of CLUs. The soliciting aspects of the CLUs responsibilities are noted by other professionals, and are seen by them as advantageous.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study has focused on the role of a single professional association, the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters, in constructing a profession out of those within the occupational group of life insurance sales agents designated as CLUs. Professionalization has been viewed as a reality-defining process in which a central role is played by the professional association. The professional association as definer of reality constructs a definition of an occupation as a profession and works to get that definition accepted. The American Society of CLU's activities aimed at convincing those within and outside of the occupation were the subject of Chapters III and IV. Although all professionalization processes have similarities, each is also unique and needs to be intepreted in light of the nature of the occupation and societal attitudes toward it. This final chapter discusses how the American Society's activities are linked to aspects of the occupation and societal attitudes.

Problematic Aspects of the Occupation

In Chapter II a number of structural problems were mentioned that mitigate against life insurance agents being perceived as professionals. One problem involved the perception of them as salesmen by those within the occupational group, by those within insurance companies, and by those in the general public. To the extent that professionals are to be perceived in a counseling role, the role of the agent as salesman is a problem. Customers/clients worry about being sold something they do not need. Companies reward sales agents on a commission tied to premium production, and counseling that does not lead to sales goes unrewarded. For the most part, status within the occupational group is tied to volume of sales, as seen in such agent organizations as the Million Dollar Round Table and Five Million Dollar Round Table.

The American Society has worked hard to have CLUs perceived as something other than salesmen. As discussed in Chapter III, the language in the American Society's publications reflects this. Rarely are "selling," "salesmen," or "customers" discussed; rather, the publications speak of "professional life underwriters," "counseling," and "clients." Changes in the language in more recent years to an occasion reference to "salesmen" and "professional

salesmen" may indicate more acceptance of the sales role, but the role is now perceived as akin to marketing as a profession, and the image is rather far removed from the salesman conception of an earlier period. Although the American Society has not appeared to challenge the reward structure of companies based on sales, it has often redefined sales as merely the outcome of the true professional activity, service to the public based on specialized knowledge. Service is of primary importance; it is argued that sales are a happy consequence of the service orientation.

Another structural factor working against professionalization is the rapid turnover of life insurance agents which, according to Bain (1959:370), makes it difficult for the occupational group to develop a group consciousness. The experience and production requirements and the series of examinations spread over a number of years minimize the turnover problem among those agents who earn the CLU designation. Research previously cited (Lucas, et al., 1969) shows a very high rate of persistance among CLUs. The American Society emphasizes the career commitment of their members to the membership and others. This allows the opportunity for development of group consciousness and an emphasis on collective mobility through professionalization.

Important to the professionalization process as exemplified by the activities of the American Society is the

fact that only a small segment of the larger occupational group life insurance sales agent is involved. There is actually considerable resistance to professionalization within some segments of this larger occupational group. Taylor and Pelligrin (1959:110) point to this debate on professionalization within the occupation group saying:

> This study calls attention to the conflict of two major goals of the occupation: to promote professionalization and to extend life insurance protection to all socioeconomic groups in the population. For the occupation, the trend toward professionalization is functional in that it heightens occupational status; however, it is dysfunctional for both the occupation and society in that it is incompatible in certain respects with service to a greater number of people.

Taylor and Pelligrin found that the more professionally oriented life insurance sales agents served fewer clients. Lucas, et al., (1969) had similar findings in a survey of American Society members. Although CLUs produced a larger volume of business and made higher incomes, they did so through larger amounts of coverage sold to fewer individuals.

Just as those emphasizing professionalization tend to downplay the selling aspect of their role, those against professionalization tend to glorify it. Making a sale is seen as a fundamental human service. To them professionalization is seen as being in conflict with the idea of the salesman as rugged individualist not seeking the security of an executive-professional look (Taylor and Pelligrin,

1959:114). Not everyone who sells life insurance is or wants to be a professional. Some prefer the term "customer" to the term "client," "selling" to "counseling" and the title "life insurance salesman" to "professional life underwriter." Thus, the American Society has limited the diffusion of the idea of the professional status of all life underwriters. By creating a designation which one who practices the occupation may choose to obtain, but is not required to obtain, the dilemma is resolved.

In part because of resistance within the larger occupational grouping, legislation has never limited certain services to CLUs. The professional status of the CLU has never been enforced by the power of state regulation as has been the case for attorneys and CPAs. Thus, the American Society has had to convince the public of their desire or need to have a CLU handle their life insurance problems -- something which non-CLUs are not prohibited by law from doing. This, in turn, makes it more difficult to convince the public of the CLUs' status as professional. This is further complicated by the fact those seeking to professionalize and those not seeking it work in close relationships. Most companies are represented by both CLUs and non-CLUs. Working in the same offices, managed by the same personnel, and rewarded in the same manner, CLUs and non-CLUs are presented to the public as a single group

representing a single company. Thus, the American Society cannot boost the image of the CLU as professional by pointing to the inabilities of those who have not earned the designation.

Another structural problem concerns the body of knowledge. The discussion in Chapter III of the contents of the CLU Journal as an indicator of the CLU's body of knowledge pointed to a number of conclusions. CLUs have become more involved in publishing articles, but lawyers have consistently been the largest category of contributors. Some of the growth of CLU designated authorship is explained by the expanding number of college professors and lawyers who are obtaining the CLU designation and contributing articles to the journal. The early years of the journal are characterized by numerous articles concerned with basic information about the economy, about business subjects found in undergraduate college curriculum, about the life insurance policy as a legal contract, and about professionalism. Through the years, topics concerning taxation of estates and businesses and ways of utilizing insurance to minimize taxes come to dominate the journal. It appears that the current issues of the CLU Journal concern a body of knowledge most often associated with the law, specifically the law as it is concerned with tax rulings which affect estates and closely-held corporations.

Thus, it appears the CLU originally had little or no

distinctly unique knowledge. Basic information about life insurance was necessary, but it was not highly specialized. Other knowledge tested to receive the designation and reflected in the journal appears to be that of a college graduate following a business curriculum. The question arises as to why there appears to be such a willingness on the part of the legal profession to share their body of knowledge with the CLU. As discussions in Chapter IV noted, the attorneys do not want the CLUs practicing law. This willingness may arise out of the soliciting role that may be played by the CLU. Lawyers want to share their knowledge with the CLUs in order to make them aware of legal complexities involving insurance problems -- a knowledge which will further increase the need for their legal services as the CLU becomes the soliciting member of the estate planning team. This marketing function of the CLU is given more space in recent issues of the CLU Journal. within articles such as "The Role of Height and Weight in the Performance of Salesmen of Ordinary Life Insurance (Murrey, 1980)" and "Irrational, Maladaptive Cognitions and Behaviors of the Super Insurance Producer (Abrahms, 1979)."

Societal Attitudes Toward the Occupation

As mentioned in Chapter II, there was resistance to life insurance in the 19th century. This resistance has

been linked to three things: 1) life insurance was perceived as establishing a monetary equivalent of human life, 2) life insurance was seen as showing a lack of trust in God to provide, and 3) life insurance was associated with gambling and games of chance. In order to overcome this resistance, aggressive marketing techniques were employed by the life insurance industry, and the agency system as it currently exists was developed. The later half of the 19th century was characterized by attempts at selling insurance by emphasizing the moral goodness of the product and the missionary-like qualities of those doing the selling. Richard A. McCurdy of Mutual of New York Life Insurance Company was quoted in 1905, speaking of insurance as a "great beneficent missionary institution" which was attempting to extend the benfits of life insurance as far as possible (Zeliger, 1979:125). Bain (1959:113) suggests that a central article of faith among early insurance agents was the "nearly sacred beneficence" of their work. Thus, early concern with life insurance selling as a profession centered around the goodness of the product. The professionalization during this period followed a ministerial model -- the life insurance agent should be accorded high status because of the goodness of this work.

Increasingly, resistance to the product ceased and life insurance became an accepted cultural invention.

Having life insurance which aids one in providing for those to whom one has an obligation and ameliorating the financial suffering of those one leaves behind fits well into the society's definition of the good death (Parsons, 1963). The missionary model of professionalization was no longer needed or appropriate. Yet the emphasis on professionalization was already established, and some success had already been obtained in raising the status of life insurance sales agent. For those agents not totally supportive of a non-professional selling role, a new model of professionalization was needed. The CLU movement arose. Its emphasis on experience and educational requirements opened the route to professionalization via the holding of a complex body of knowledge coupled with a service orientation. The decreasing cultural resistance was paralleled by the increasing complexity of tax law. The American Society then constructed a profession with the lawyer and accountant as model. No longer a missionary attempting the change cultural values and beliefs, the agent became the companion of the lawyer and accountant, guiding the individual through the complexities of life insurance as part of estate planning.

An Assessment

In concluding this study, it seems appropriate to

make some assessment as to the success of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters in convincing its members and other of the professional status of CLUs. If the American Society has been successful in this reality defining process, it would seem that professionalism would now be taken for granted and would no longer be a topic to be addressed. The material discussed in Chapters III and IV indicates this is not the case. Public relations campaigns aimed at the general public and at more established professions continue to be mounted. Members of the American Society are still reminded of their professionalism and the privileges and obligations which flow from that characteristic.

Impressionistic data gathered from the general public as this study was being done tend to show a general ignorance of the designation. Only a small minority of people seem to recognize immediately the CLU designation, and even fewer are prepared to make a judgment about the CLU's professional status. The recognition of the CLU designation lags significantly behind that of the CPA, the model the CLUs have most closely followed. The American Society recognizes this continues to be the case as indicated by Meile (1972:50) who notes that the general public confuses CLUs with members of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Members of more established professional groups, par-

ticularly lawyers and CPAs, are more attentive to claims of professionalism and more often recognize the designation. Whether there is acceptance of CLUs as fellow professionals is questionable. Particularly suspect in their claims to expert knowledge, CLUs are judged harshly by more established professionals for the lack of educational requirements such as a college degree or advanced professional school. CPAs and lawyers have, as discussed in Chapter III, offered positive statements about CLU professionalism, and CPAs are currently running advertisements which speak of professional life underwriters, although not specifically of CLUs. As mentioned previously, the soliciting role of the CLU may make it advantageous for other professions to utilize them, but the acceptance of them as fellow professionals is far from complete.

The success of the American Society in convincing CLUs themselves appears to be somewhat problematic as well. There does appear to be greater acceptance now than at times past. As the activities of the American Society are examined one is struck by the self-consciousness of its concern with professional status. This is most noticed in the early years of the American Society's activities. As the analysis of article topics found, the 1940's and 1950's saw many articles concerned with the professional life underwriter and the pattern of behavior which he should exhibit.

Members were constantly reminded of, and encouraged to continue, their quest for greater knowledge, their dedication to the service of the public, and their esteemed position as a professional. Such involved discussions of these topics indicate a certain lack of taken-for-grantedness among the CLUs themselves.

This lack of taken-for-grantedness is also seen in the language as exemplified by references to "professional life underwriters" and "professional CLUs." Such parallel use of this terminology in referring to established professions would sound awkward and/or redundant -- for instance, professional lawyer or professional doctor. The language of the CLU shows the continued problematic nature of their acceptance of their own professional status.

Final Remarks

This dissertation has been a case study of a professional association as it has engaged in a reality-defining process. The findings from the examination of the activities of the American Society of Chartered Life are unique to a specific segment of the occupational group of life insurance agents; thus, they may be not generalizable to other cases of professionalization. What may be generalizable is the perspective utilized in the study -- a perspective suggesting the central role of the professional association in convincing those within the occupational

group and those outside of it of the professional status of its members.

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