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The Cinderella's of industry: the occupational and trade union identity of clerical workers

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ABSTRACT

The main objectives of this thesis are to explore the occupational and trade union identity of clerks and to develop a theoretical perspective through which clerical workers' views of their situation can be examined. For this purpose the perspectives of action theory and reference group theory are revised and integrated. The central argument is that a logical extension to the focus upon actor definitions of reality lies in the investigation of key reference groups which actors themselves select. This is of particular importance in relation to clerks, since their attitudes to work and to trade unionism have traditionally been explained in terms of their middle-class aspirations and their identification with management.

In this study of a hundred-and-sixty-five clerks drawn from six organizations in the North of England, representing mining, shipbuilding, engineering and civil air transport, a major finding is that clerical workers reject both management and manual workers as significant identification referents. They perceive the clerical occupation as separate and distinct. They accept trade union membership as vital for the representation of their distinctive interests.

However, within the broad acceptance of trade union membership, variations in trade union identity emerge. These are related to the specific concerns of clerks in different firms. Intra-occupational analysis demonstrates that trade union membership varies in meaning according to the degree to which clerks define management in oppositional terms and perceive their occupational rewards as having fallen too far behind those of production workers. However, the clerks in this study, whatever their differences, do not strive to be better off than manual workers or aspire to the ranks of management, nor do they perceive their status concerns to be discordant with trade union membership.

'The Cinderellas of Industry - The Occupational and Trade Union
Identity of Clerical Workers'

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CHAPTER I   CHANGES IN THE CLERICAL OCCUPATION

"The twentieth century has witnessed the progressive social devaluation of clerical work." (1)

Introduction

If clerical workers have excited the imagination of sociologists at all, it has been mainly because of the problems which clerks pose for debates on social stratification and class consciousness. Within this context changes in clerical employment and in patterns of white-collar unionization have been considered. Impossible to ignore, because of the rapid increase in their numbers during the twentieth century, clerical workers have been rarely studied directly in occupational terms, but much more readily in political and social terms. Thus while there is a considerable body of statistical information concerning changes in clerical work, we have few studies of the way in which clerks define their work situation and of the kinds of occupational identities which they hold. Even the definitive, if somewhat polemical, thesis of C. Wright Mills (2) has stimulated relatively little investigation into the meaning which work has for clerical employees. Their main claim to fame has been what is termed their 'marginality' in the class structure and the accompanying experiences of 'status ambiguity' and 'status panic' which are accorded to their location in a class 'limbo'. As a result the changing work situation of clerks has received much attention in objective terms, since it is held that as work tasks and relationships become more 'factory like', then clerks may come to realize their common interests with manual workers and act accordingly by uniting with them. The proletarianization of clerks or their resistance to such a process is then a common theme which unites most sociological observations of this group of employees.

This thesis is not designed primarily to contribute to the debate on the proletarianization of clerical workers, although indirectly it may do so by providing greater understanding of why clerks do or do not identify their interests with those of manual workers even when they perceive management in oppositional terms. This thesis seeks to redress the balance in the study of the clerical worker by developing a theoretical perspective through which the work situation as clerks perceive it may be examined. By uniting action theory and the reference group perspective, it is argued, the way in which clerks define their objectives within a system of relationships which they themselves demarcate, provides a focus upon the clerical occupation which has as yet not been attempted. In order to put this study in context, however, it is necessary to consider some of the major changes which have occurred in clerical employment during the twentieth century and to examine the way in which various writers have interpreted such changes.

GROWTH TRENDS

Changes in the structure of occupations in modern industrial societies during the twentieth century have been likened by M. Crozier to a "veritable administrative revolution, comparable to the industrial revolutions of the nineteenth century." (3) The expansion of professional, managerial, administrative, technical and clerical employment has been a characteristic trend in industrial societies associated with economic growth, industrial modernization and increasing capital investment. Allied to this has been the numerical decline of certain manual occupations, notably semi-skilled and unskilled, together with an overall relative contraction of manual employment compared with white-collar work.

In Britain between 1911 and 1966 the numbers of white-collar workers' increased by 176 per cent whilst the number of blue-collar workers rose by only 5 per cent. (4)   Bain demonstrates that "clerks have claimed most of the ground yielded by the manual workers." (5) During the period 1911 to 1961, the period on which he bases his analysis, clerical occupations "grew by 260 per cent and increased their share of the total labour force from 4.5 per cent to 12.7 per cent." (6)   He contrasts this rapid increase with that of other white-collar groups whose growth was of a lower order, such as managers and administrators with a growth rate from 3.4 per cent to 5.4 per cent, lower professionals and technicians from 3.1 per cent to 6.0 per cent, and higher professionals from 1 per cent to 3 per cent. (7)   In 1966 it was estimated that clerks made up 34 per cent of the total white-collar group, salesmen and shop assistants 16 per cent, lower profess- ionals and technicians 17 per cent, managers and administrators 16 per cent, higher professionals 9 per cent, and foreman and inspectors 8 per cent. (8)   The growth in the clerical labour force has been accompanied by a radical change in its sex composition.   Whereas in 1911 only 21.4 per cent of clerks were female, by 1961, 65.1 per cent were women. (9)   By 1966, this figure had again increased to 69 per cent. (10)   Thus it is clerical workers, composed largely of women, who make up the single largest group of white-collar employees.

Here it must be remembered that the definition of clerical work has changed and evolved over the years and now includes many types of different jobs.   In the Census for 1911 only one category of clerk was recognized.   By 1967, the range of occupations defined as clerical by various classifications included costing and estimating clerks, typists, shorthand typists, secretaries, and other machine operators, cashiers, book-keepers, telephone and telegraph operators, civil service officers and local authority officers. (11)

This of course indicates the changing structure of employment although it also draws attention to the problem of occupational definitions. It was however estimated that about one-third of all white-collar workers could be labelled clerical employees in 1966. Since then it appears that the rate of growth of clerical employment has slackened. Taking all clerical employees together their period of rapid growth in this country occurred after the second world war and up to 1961. Since then, as Bain and Price have recently shown, clerical workers who constituted 12.7 per cent of the total occupied population in 1961, increased their numbers to 13.2 per cent in 1966 and 14.0 per cent in 1971. (12)

It is interesting to note that while most writers agree that growth has been accompanied by an ever increasing range of clerical skills, which in and of itself does not logically lead to a decline of status of clerical work, they conclude that social devaluation has taken place. Although C. Wright Mills suggests that numbers alone are a significant factor when he says "If everybody belongs to the fraternity, nobody gets any prestige for belonging," (13) it is worthwhile remembering that clerks may not see themselves as belonging to a large homogeneous mass of employees. C. Wright Mills admits elsewhere in the same book "On all points of definition, it must be remembered that white-collar people are not one compact horizontal stratum. They do not fulfil one central, positive function that can define them". (14) Here of course he is including not only clerical employees but other groups of white-collar workers as well. However the same point holds good for clerical employees as a group. To be fair to C. Wright Mills, he as well as other writers, does not rest his case for the status problems of white-collar workers on growth figures alone. The meaning of growth in a historical perspective is considered to be crucial along with an analysis of factors which affect the relationship of white-collar employees to manual workers.

Historical Perspective

Although details are sparse concerning the nineteenth century clerk,
there emerges from the literature stereotypes upon which are based
comparisons with present day clerks.   C. Wright Mills gives an
emotional account of the nineteenth century small entrepreneur who
effectively controlled his own property and carried out his own accounting
and clerical functions in an atmosphere of liberalism and individual
freedom.   As against this he pits the present day white-collar employee
who is propertyless, alienated and fearful.   He refers to them as "the
new little people" (15) who are politically inept and unconscious of their
situation.   Within this contrast he also comments on the old office as
opposed to the more recent bureaucracy.(16)Like D. Lockwood he stresses
that in the early days of office work the job was less specialized and
the individual could gain a well-rounded experience of various tasks
perhaps resulting in advancement.   However the stereotype of the "counting-
house" clerk is far more vivid in the work of Lockwood. (17)   For Mills
the basic historical fact is the centralization of property, the loss of
individual freedom and the alienation which followed.   Lockwood, using
various sources, presents two images of the nineteenth century clerk.   In
the former half of the nineteenth century he is depicted as an employee
who learns the particular skills of the job as required by the employer
in the work situation.   He is bound in a particularistic relationship with
the employer and it is really this base which Lockwood uses from which to
make comparisons with present day clerks.   However he also stresses that
later in the nineteenth century the influx into clerical employment of
moneyed "gentlemen" helped to create a new image of the clerk.   Instead
of the Dickensian stereotype of the hardworking, poorly paid clerk
struggling for survival and respectability, the "gentlemen" injected their
own brand of respectability into the occupation.   The personal relationship
with the employer, however, persisted and Lockwood argued that loyalty and

respectability were important factors in linking clerks with the entrepreneurial and professional classes. He thus concludes that the clerk in the counting house era "was somehow a priviliged type of proletarian" (18) Yet he also gives glimpses of extensive nepotism and of an employment situation fraught with frustration and exploitation.

A careful reading of Lockwood's account of the counting house era demonstrates the difficulties of generalizing, even at that time, about the role of the clerk and the precise nature of clerical work. Dale makes a similar point when he argues that the conditions of clerical employment in the latter half of the nineteenth century were far from uniform. The divergencies which existed then, he suggests, are still characteristic of clerical employment. He quotes Orchard writing in 1871 who asserted that "clerkdom presents divergencies as wide and peculiarities as interesting as does any other class of a great labouring community".(19) Dale himself writes in 1962 that there is not "merely a gulf between the circumstances of one individual clerk and another: it is wide divergence between the conditions, prospects, and interests of groups of clerks. ... There is little which may appropriately be said about all of two million clerks". (20) It is perhaps because of these divergencies in the past as well as the present that contradictory images of the clerk arise. On the one hand it is possible using both literary and sociological writing to draw a picture of the nineteenth century clerk as subservient, pitiful and deluded. On the other hand it is equally possible to derive a rather nostalgic image of the well rounded clerk who could make himself indispensable to the firm and whose standing at work and in society has been gradually eroded. On the whole it is the latter notion which is prevalent in sociology based upon the analysis of important changes in clerical employment associated with growth.

Changes associated with growth

As the numbers of white-collar employees have increased so the organization of clerical employment has changed. While there are still a large number of small firms employing clerical workers in something like the conditions of the counting house era, the pattern of change has been one of increasing bureaucratization, rationalization and mechanization. While clerks as a whole are likely to be caught up in the first two of these processes, it is women who are more directly allied with the third. From the first days of the typing machine to the more recent developments of duplicators, office calculators and computers it is women who have been recruited to perform the tasks associated with them. Rationalization has progressed with the increase in office size and has lead, as was suggested earlier, to a proliferation of job titles and tasks. D. Lockwood, however suggests that the centralization of office work and the continuing specialization of tasks has not completely destroyed the personal relationship of clerk to employer and that the modern work situation "forms a social context in which office workers tend to be separated from each other on the one hand, and closely identified, as individuals, with the managerial and supervisory cadres of industry on the other." (21) He argues that the similarity between clerical tasks and factory work is over-exaggerated and that it is really only where the clerk becomes a machine minder that such a comparison is valid. M. Crozier on the other hand suggests that the assembly-line analogy is not inappropriate but that it is women who are more likely to be involved at this level. C. Wright Mills also says "the prized white-collar spot for women is becoming more and more the job of a factory-like operative." (22) For male clerks and some female office workers it is difficult to assess the extent to which their jobs have become more routinized over the years. It is likely that men have benefitted from the influx of women into this

occupation, but that many of their jobs have also been reduced in scope especially in firms employing large numbers of clerical employees. Lockwood, however, warns against exaggerating the degree to which this has happened. Again there are likely to be wide differences in the breadth of skills and degree of responsibility associated with clerical work between firms.

The hierarchical authority system of the modern bureaucracy is also considered to have altered the position of the clerk in the world of work. Most writers argue that modern day clerks are latched in at the bottom of a management hierarchy from where, even if they cannot advance, they will borrow authority and enjoy a reflected status. This position does not seem to be all that different from that of nineteenth century clerks. Lockwood suggests it is more qualitative than absolute, in that in earlier days the clerk's position was similar but he was more likely to be "forward looking" and "individualistic". (23) It is of course open to empirical research to discover whether clerks in different organizations and at different levels in the hierarchy do in fact identify with management. In any event to the extent that any employee is selling his labour and does not own the enterprise it is possible to argue that he borrows authority although his power to organize others will vary. Promotion prospects for clerks as a whole are considered to have diminished with the rise of bureaucracies and the increase of low level tasks, but here again Crozier suggests that some male clerical posts have been shunted upwards to a managerial level and that in any case the effect of women occupying the lower stratum in the occupation is to increase the status of the men. Again it is difficult to generalize here since in recent years the influx of graduates into middle management posts is likely to have narrowed the opportunities for male clerks in public and private industries.

Perhaps more important than declining opportunities for promotion

for clerks, which in any case will vary with company policy,is the

relative narrowing of income differentials between clerks and manual

employees. G.S. Bain argues that "the narrowing of the white-collar

manual earning differential has been one of the most striking changes

in pay structure during the twentieth century". (24) Various writers

support this global statement. Lockwood suggests that for the first

three decades of the century clerks were on the whole earning more than

manual workers. He dates the deterioration in differentials from the

depression years but in particular stresses that after the second world

war in a climate of full employment blue-collar wages went up much more

than white-collar earnings. According to M. Crozier the same pattern

has occurred in both America and France. However it is important to

qualify this picture a little. Bain demonstrates that the main area

of closure has been between skilled manual employees and some of the

white-collar groups. In 1922-4 male and female industrial clerks and

male bank clerks were the only white-collar groups who did not earn more

than skilled manual workers. By 1960 all male clerical groups and male

laboratory technicians earned less but other white-collar groups still

earned more than skilled manual workers. However Bain also presents

data to show that even though there was a slight improvement in relative

earnings for white-collar employees between 1956 and 1960, the overall

trend has been a decline in the white-collar/blue-collar differential.

For clerical workers as a whole this was of the order of 16 per cent

from 1922-4 - 1960. Female clerical workers as a whole experienced a

relative increase of 9 per cent in the same period but this statistic

obscures the fact that female civil service clerks and female bank

clerks experienced a relative decrease (25). Of course the very fact

that clerical work has become increasingly feminized makes any historical

comparisons difficult, for although the relative earnings of women compared with manual employees had actually improved by 1960, they occupied then and continue to occupy the most lowly paid clerical jobs.

Crozier suggests that the influx of women into white-collar employment and changes in the structure of the occupation itself must be taken as important qualifications to the overall claim that the relative position of white-collar earnings have declined. He argues that as the top clerical jobs have become redefined as executive or professional jobs so also the direct comparison of statistics on earnings over time becomes more confused. Once again the problem of classifying occupations enters in to the analysis. The very fact that those who were once labelled 'clerks' might now be labelled 'professionals' would of course dampen the relative gap between clerical and manual earnings.

Nevertheless taking the white-collar group as a whole the position is that although they are still better off than manual workers, they have lost ground during the twentieth century. As Bowen, Elsy and Shaw (26) have shown using the Department of Employment figures for 1973, male clerical workers' wages are now lower than those of all groups except the unskilled manual group. The following table presents this picture more clearly. Table 1 also indicates that although the average gross weekly earnings for female clerks are considerably lower than those for male clerks, they are still earning more than women in manual employment. The differential between male and female clerical employees is likely to persist in spite of Equal Pay legislation since women are typically employed on lower grades and trained for routine tasks.

TABLE I <u>Average weekly earnings of male and female clerical</u>
         <u>workers and other occupations, 1973</u>

Occupation	Average gross weekly earnings (excluding pay affected by absence) Males	Average gross weekly earnings (excluding pay affected by absence) Females
Clerical and related	£35.1	£22.4
Making and repairing (skilled manual)	£40.7	£19.9
Painting, repetitive assembly (semi skilled manual)	£38.1	£20.6
Miscellaneous labourers (unskilled manual)	£34.4	£18.1
All manual occupations	£38.1	£19.7
All non manual occupations	£48.1	£24.7
All full time workers	£41.9	£23.1

Lockwood argues that it is not only in the area of earnings that a

decline in the clerks relative position has occurred. White-collar

employees have also lost ground as more blue collar employees have

come to share in other benefits of employment like paid holiday

leave and pension schemes. He also suggests that the assumed

security of clerical employment was challenged in the post 1920 era,

when many clerks lost their jobs and had no form of insurance to

cover them.

Whatever changes have occurred in clerical employment, it is

clear that the sex composition of the occupation has altered

considerably. Lockwood suggests that by the mid-twentieth century

"we should no longer speak of the 'blackcoated' but rather of the

'whitebloused' worker." (27) He sees the arrival of women into

clerical work as a further factor leading to its decline in status

since they are in general treated as the second class citizens of

the world of work. By 1966 women comprised 69 per cent of all

clerical employees and of all white-collar occupations clerical work

is now the most highly feminised. (28)   Crozier sees that as a most

significant factor in the proletarianization debate since, like many

other sociologists, he considers the interests of women in work to be

very different from those of men and therefore different by nature

from the mass of manual workers. (29)   He asserts that 'The femin-

ization of office jobs is certainly one of the fundamental phenomena

in the evolution of the occupation structure.   This is too often

forgotten in discussions of the problem of social classes.   The

proletarianization of white-collar employees does not have the same

meaning at all if it is women and not headsof family, who comprise

the majority of the group." (30)   As well as the changing sex

composition of clerical employment, it is also suggested that the

class origins of clerks have altered over time.

   With the advent of the national provision for rudimentary

education in 1870 and subsequent changes in the education system it

is assumed that clerical occupation has become more open to the working

classes.   It is difficult to verify this assumption because of the

sparse statistics concerning clerks in the past and also because of

the changing structure of the occupation itself.   However it is logical

to assume such a change since manual occupations themselves have

contracted.   In addition several surveys have provided support for

the view that increasing numbers of clerks have been drawn from working

class backgrounds.   Lockwood quotes from evidence described in Glass's

"Social Mobility in Britain", that by the middle of this century at

least 50 per cent of clerks came from working-class homes. (31)

Hamilton, in a study conducted in the mid '60's, stated that half of

the clerical workers he surveyed in America identified themselves as

working class and that these class identifications were closely related

to their class of origin. (32)   Bowen and Shaw found, in a more
recent survey of clerks in the steel industry, that the majority
of the sample (81 per cent) were working class identifiers and had
working class origins. (33)   However it is dangerous to generalize
from these results to all clerical occupations. Mumford and Banks,
for example, found in their study of banking clerks, that ninety five
per cent of male bank clerks came from middle class homes (34) and
J.R. Dale found in his study of clerks in private industries that
only a small minority of his sample (33 out of 208) defined themselves
as working class. The majority (108) felt that they were lower middle
class. (35)   Dale also noted "the high proportion who equate their
social status with that of a carpenter (41.7%) and a foreman (56.2%),
both of whom would fall into the upper working, - or lower middle-class
category." (36)   This was seen by Dale to be evidence of the marginal
class position of clerks which would substantiate the views of Lockwood
and others that the clerical occupation is no longer primarily middle-
class as it was at the beginning of this century. However, as the
above studies indicate (and they can do no more than this since the
measurement of social class identify is fraught with difficulties) the
degree to which clerical occupations have become more open to people
with working class origins and identifications is likely to vary between
occupations.

Having noted the problems associated with presenting a precise
analysis of change in white-collar employment during the twentieth
century, certain trends emerge. When we speak of clerical workers
there are many more of them. They are more likely to be women and less
likely to be drawn exclusively from the middle classes. Their jobs
are more likely to be specialized and they are also more likely to work
in closer contact with other clerks. Their relationship to management

is likely to be less personal and their promotion prospects to be less hopeful. In addition their relative position vis a vis manual employees, with regard mainly to earnings but also to other features of job and work such as security, paid holiday leave and pension schemes, has declined. Finally they have increasingly become members of trade unions, although as Bain has warned we should be wary of assuming that a boom in white-collar unionization has occurred.

White-Collar Union Growth

Bain demonstrates that the absolute growth of non-manual unionism in the United Kingdom in the years 1948-64 was 33.6 per cent as compared with a figure for manual unionism of 0.6 per cent. (37) However he also asserts that "white-collar unionism in general has done little more than keep abreast of the increasing white-collar labour force, and the density of white-collar unionism has not increased significantly during the post-war period." (38) But since 1964 it seems that real growth has occurred. Bain and Price demonstrate that in the period 1964-70 there was an absolute increase of union membership of 34.3 per cent for white-collar employees and a corresponding increase of only 0.2 per cent for manual workers. These growth figures represented an increased density of union membership of +9 per cent for white-collar unions and +1.7 per cent for manual unions. Thus whereas the density of white-collar union membership in 1964 was 29 per cent, it had risen to 38 per cent by 1970, as compared with the density of blue-collar union membership which was 51 per cent in 1964 and 52.7 per cent in 1970. (39) These figures demonstrate that manual unionization was still greater in 1970 than white-collar unionization but that a rapid rate of increase after 1964 had brought the level of white-collar union membership much closer to that of blue-collar unions. More recent

calculations concerning the rate of increase of white-collar union growth have shown that since 1970, white-collar union density has increased by 4.2 per cent as compared with manual union density which has increased by 1.8 per cent. (40) D. Patterson, research officer for APEX, has recently provided figures for selected union memberships from 1971-74. (41) His table is presented here in order to illustrate that growth has continued.

TABLE 2 MEMBERSHIP OF SELECTED TRADE UNIONS : 1971-74

| Name of Union | Membership (000's) | | | |
	1971	1972	1973	1974
AEUW (TASS)	105	101	106	114
ASTMS	220	250	280	310
USDAW	330	319	325	326
APEX	125	118	121	137
CPSA	185	188	208	216
COHSE	90	103	113	121
NALGO	440	464	498	518
TOTAL	1495	1543	1651	1742

Source TUC Annual Reports

This table relates to absolute growth and Patterson in drawing it up comments "although it is not known how the rate of growth compares with that in the period 1964-70 or with the rate of change in white-collar employment, the probabality is...that the density of white-collar trade unionism has continued to increase." (42) R.M. Blackburn feels that the absolute growth of white-collar unions is in itself impressive, even if the growth in density (which he calls 'completeness') is less so. He suggests that "one might argue that it has been a considerable achievement for them to hold their ground in the face

of such a rapidly expanding potential." (43)   However it would seem

that white-collar unions have, in the period after 1964, grown to

such an extent that the density of membership has itself increased

considerably after a long period prior to 1964 when density remained

static.   It has been predicted that in Britain during the 1980's the

number of white-collar employees will exceed the number of manual

workers as a proportion of the total labour force. (44)   The

implication, as Kleingartner, notes, is that "trade unions, with an

eye towards the future, must become deeply involved in the world of

white-collar employment." (45)

In this introductory chapter changes in clerical employment

and the growth of white-collar unionization have been documented.

One of the key questions for sociologists in considering these changes

has been whether becoming a union member is an expression of a changed

philosophy concerning the clerk's position in work and the wider society.

C. Wright Mills was cynical about this.   He argued that "In the union

or out of it, for it, against it, or on the fence, the white-collar

employee usually remains psychologically the little individual

scrambling to get to the top, instead of a dependant employee exper-

iencing unions and accepting union affiliation as a collective means

of collective ascent." (46)   Whether or not Mills was correct in

this assertion, he does suggest that membership of a union does not

necessarily mean a commitment to the trade union itself or to trade

unionism in general.   Bain (47) and Bain, Coates and Ellis (48) argue

that union growth in itself is not a reflection of social imagery but

rather of factors like employee concentration, the approval of

employers and government encouragement.   Bain presents convincing

evidence to show that the choice of becoming a union member is not

open to all, particularly to individuals working in small firms.

This is an important point since the preponderance of women working

in clerical jobs is often thought to be a restricting factor in union

growth.   R.M. Blackburn, for example, put this argument forward
relatively recently.   He cited the increasing proportion of women
in the white-collar labour force as "a factor tending to reduce
the proportion of workers who are union members." (49)   The basis
for this assumption was that "it is usual for women to be less
unionized than men, mainly because of their lower commitment to
work" (50)   Bain, and Lockwood before him have suggested that such
an interpretation of a lower level of unionization amongst women is
mistaken, since women are more likely than men to work in those firms
where the unions do not seek recruits.   In addition where male
membership is high so also is that of women.   While it is possible
to accept analyses of growth at the structural level such as Bain
advances, it is equally feasible to argue that clerks who work in
close proximity with other clerks (employee concentration) are more
likely to develop an awareness of their occupational interests and to
either actively choose trade union membership or at least to resist it
less than clerks who have not developed such awareness.

Lockwood's thesis is closer to the latter perspective except
that he makes a distinction between unionization and class consciousness
which is fundamental to his final judgement of the clerk.   He argues
that "there is no inevitable connection between unionization and class
consciousness...The conditions making for concerted action among the
members of an occupational group and those making for class consciousness
are not identical.   Concerted action is a function of the recognition
by members of the occupational group that they have interests in common;
class consciousness entails the further realization that certain of
those interests are also shared by other groups of employees." (51)
The factors which he cites as conducive to unionization are then those
which promote a common identity.   He argues that there is no relation-
ship between level of income, job security, status and trade unionism.

Rather he feels that bureaucratization is the most important factor
since it leads to blocked promotion and to the isolation of a separate
clerical class. Unlike some writers who have suggested that the
decline in promotion chances is the all important factor in generating
union growth amongst clerical workers Lockwood argues that "blocked
mobility in itself would appear to be an insufficient cause of union-
ization; the individuals whose chances of promotion are curtailed
must, in addition, be aware of their common identity as an occupational
group, and this awareness is first and foremost a product of standard
working conditions." (52) Lockwood also suggests that while the
degree of contact with manual unions does not explain the overall growth
of white-collar unions, it goes some way to explaining the distribution
of clerical members within unions. Thus he argues that "railway,
mining, engineering, dockside and printing clerks have all been
stimulated in their organization by the support coming from the powerful
manual workers' unions." (53) Lockwood's final judgement concerning
the unionization of clerks (in terms of growth, union character and
membership identity) is that as a process it has been "fraught with
problems of class consciousness" (54) He defines class consciousness
in terms of three elements; market position, work situation, and status
situation. The clerk's market position he suggests has never been
strictly proletarian, his status position while becoming increasingly
marginal has not been entirely eroded, and his work situation, even
where it has been conducive to 'factory' like work conditions, has
continued to preserve a physical and social division between clerks
and manual workers which has prevented mutual identification of the
two groups. Nevertheless he argues that the work situation is the
most important element in terms of either inhibiting or facilitating
class consciousness and in determining the type and extent of clerical
unionism.

CONCLUSION

The debate on factors which determine union growth is an important one for sociologists and students of industrial relations. However it is somewhat outside the scope of this thesis, and will only be touched upon as a feature of the main concern which is the occupational and trade union identity of clerical workers. However it is worthwhile noting that there has been a tendancy in the literature to explain union growth and union attachment as a function of the same variables and to that extent further reference will be made to so called 'growth factors'. The significance of the changing world of clerical employees will be examined through the eyes of clerks themselves and an attempt will be made to relate these perceptions to their views on trade union membership. Previous theories and studies concerning the clerk-as-trade-unionist and the broader area of trade union attachment will be discussed in later chapters.

The main objective of this thesis is to explore the occupational and trade union identify of clerical workers with a view to clarifying the degree to which they see themselves as a separate occupational group with distinctive interests. In this manner it is possible to consider their trade union membership and to make some proposals about their future contribution to the trade union movement in the context of their understandings of what it means to be a clerical worker. Lockwood has suggested that the key to understanding trade union identity and class consciousness is the work situation, for, he argues "the work situation involves the separation and concentration of individuals, affords possibilities of identification with and alien-ation from others, and conditions feelings of isolation, antagonism and solidarity." (55) In accordance with this view it is proposed to examine clerical definitions of their work situations in a number of different industrial settings which are described in chapter IV.

In order to facilitate analysis of the clerk's occupational and trade union identity, the theoretical perspectives of action theory and reference group theory are merged. Thus the issue of whether clerks identify closely with manual workers, management or other clerical workers will be examined through the reference groups which they select for comparative or identification purposes. The justification for this approach is developed in the next chapter and of course has wider implications than the study of clerical work itself. However, in an area which is bolstered by much documentary data as this chapter has endeavoured to show, and where there are relatively few empirical studies, it is essential to develop a perspective through which the views of clerical workers themselves can be articulated.

CHAPTER II   <u>THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE</u>

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a perspective through which clerical definitions of work and trade unionism may be explored. The problem to be examined is how the action frame of reference, which focuses attention upon actor definitions of reality, can be employed without recourse to structural location of such definitions. It will be argued that an alternative approach to those which emphasise the structural determinants of action is one which incorporates the reference group perspective. However, this depends in part upon a clear statement of what is intended by reference group analysis. If the reference group concept is used only as a substitute term for any sort of social influence upon actor definitions of reality, then it clearly makes no advance upon traditional usages of the action frame of reference. It is therefore important to clarify the problems associated with both reference group theory and the action frame of reference before attempting to unite them into a perspective for this study of clerical employees.

Industrial Man to Social Man

The action frame of reference was popularized in industrial sociology by Goldthorpe et al in their study of affluent manual workers. (1) They argued that in seeking to explain the relationship of man to work "an action frame of reference would direct attention systematically to the variety of meanings which work may come to have for industrial employees." (2) This level of analysis, it was suggested should begin with the ordering of "wants and expectations relative to work", (3) and should take account of the definition of work as a process involving non-work interests and relationships. It is

generally agreed that the Luton study marked an important milestone
in the development of industrial sociology not least because it
challenged existing explanatory models of industrial man. It drew
attention to the limitations of the human relations approach with
its emphasis upon group life within the organization - analysis of
the workers being in terms entirely of what happens in the work place.
It also questioned the technological deterministic approach with its
emphasis upon functionalist explanation and work-role determined
behaviour. The authors argued that both approaches commence with the
notion of the industrial enterprise as a social system. The end result
is a deflection away from the individual's (or groups of individuals)
goals and analysis in terms of the reified goals of the enterprise.
Goldthorpe et al are critical of such reification and argue that the
orientations which men bring to the work situation are fundamental
determinants of man's behaviour and attitudes in work. They illustrate
this assumption with the case of the affluent worker who is portrayed
as effecting a calculative bargain with the employer and whose non-
involvement in social relationships at work or with trade union affairs
is consistent with a pure type of instrumental exchange. He takes on
the role by choice and 'goes through the motions' in order to achieve
ends which lie outside the work place.

It can be argued that Goldthorpe et al overstated the case for
'orientations' to work which are independent of role activity at work.
Whether the experience of performing dull, routine tasks can be dis-
counted as a significant contributor to a particular definition of work
is debatable. In the case of clerical workers it has been suggested
that their work tasks are becoming more like those of assembly line
workers, with women performing the most routinized tasks for which they
are prepared by specialist training. The experience of doing clerical

tasks of this nature could be as significant as the clerk's wider
social experience in generating particular definitions of work.
In addition it can be argued that work and non-work reference
groups are equally important sources of comparison for the worker.
Goldthorpe et al suggests that downward social mobility is an
important causal factor in the purely instrumental outlook of
their sample. They argue that relative deprivation has lead to
"a strong motivation to acquire a relatively high standard of living." (4)
It is clear from the study itself that the work situation provides,
if nothing else, a series of negative reference groups which
reinforce the actor's instrumental outlook. Since the instrumental
type of orientation to work is portrayed by Goldthorpe et al as a
perfectly rational response which derives from the social situation
outside of work there is a sense in which the authors present a
static representation of man's relationship to work. Although it
can be argued that the Luton study transformed 'industrial man' to
'social man', it also had the effect of reducing the experience of work
itself to an irrelevancy. Thus if the car assembly line worker's
orientation to work is to change, this will arise from events outside
the work-place. He brings his social definitions to work and takes
them away again unaltered by life within the factory. Such a static
representation of man's relationship to work is questionable and
raises further problems concerning the dynamics of structure and
process. Although the assumptions that the actor himself defines
reality and pursues his own goals are acceptable there remain important
problems associated with the derivation of such definitions and goals.

Structure, Process and Action Theory.

Alan Dawe has argued that the development of sociology has generated two major perspectives which rest upon fundamentally different conceptions of order and control. (5) These consist of a sociology of the social system and a sociology of social action. He argues that "the first asserts the paramount necessity, for societal and individual well-being, of external constraints, hence the notion of a social system ontologically and methodologically prior to its participants. The key notion of the second is that of autonomous man, able to realize his full potential and to create a truly human social order when freed from external constraint. Society is thus the creation of its members, the product of their construction of meaning and of the action and relationships through which they attempt to impose that meaning on their historical situation." (6) Whether or not it is acceptable to regard sociology in these terms, it is useful to consider the dilemma arising out of Dawe's 'two sociologies'. In the first instance the individual's perception of reality is thought to follow upon prior structural arrangements. His attitudes are thus determined and his actions conditioned by his structural position in the social system. Thus conceptualized, the individual is seen to be constrained, and logically it is valid and appropriate to start analysis by examining the constraints either in the form of abstractions like objective class position or the education system, or in terms of physical locations like a factory or a prison. The deterministic model of man may be softened to an influence model but basically the assumption that he is a prisoner of the social system is common. This is evident in some recent comments by Dreitzel on the construction of social reality. He says "the construction of realities may be more influenced by power

relations, socialization processes and class structures, than by
the creative interpretation of the actors engaged in interaction. ...
the basic rules of everyday life ... are not necessarily a free
product of the subjectivity of members in search for meaning." (7)
The alternative view put forward by Dawe is of a sociology which
commences analysis at the level of the actor who is seen as striving
to find meaning in a potentially chaotic universe and in so doing
creates order. Berger and Luckmann develop this concept of man and
society. (8) They argue that "all social reality is precarious ...
All societies are constructions in the face of chaos". (9) Here
social arrangements through which actors achieve their ends are seen
to arise through acts of defining social reality and attempting to
impose such definitions upon other actors. Philosophically and
ideologically the 'two sociologies' presented by Dawe represent
alternative and opposed attempts to deal with the central problem
of the social sciences: this is at one level the problem of the
relationship of man to society and at another the problem of structure
and process.

In this context it is interesting to reconsider the action frame
of reference which, in general terms, calls into question the
philosophical assumptions underlying theories which stress the
external reality of structures which are conceptualized as constraining
and determining man's behaviour. The action approach is alternatively
associated with the tradition of viewing man as striving for meaning in
a social world which he constructs for himself. Thus the emphasis is
upon the actor who pursues goals which are ordered into a scheme of
priorities. The goals themselves are seen to be 'socially derived'
and the action which takes place in pursuing them is also conceived

as taking place in 'social situations.'   The sociological activity

of locating meaning systems in social situations is however problematic.

Essentially it leads to a separation of man's attitudes and values

from his experience.   It suggests that it is possible and desirable

for the researcher to separate social situations and to consider action

in relation to these separate entities.   Typical of this approach is

Silverman who offers a paradigm for applying the action frame of

reference to organizational analysis and stresses the dynamics of

conflict between different groups of actors pursuing different ends.

He makes the separation between social situations inside and outside

of work and their relationship to action. (10)   Thus the social

situation may very quickly emerge as some new form of structural

determinism.   Silverman himself says "If our analysis has been

correct it would suggest that future research should concern itself

less with 'organizational' processes and more with the way in which

certain aspects of the structure of a society impinge on man's behaviour

at work." (11)   The confusion of actor definitions of reality and

structural influences as conceptualized by the sociologist is further

exemplified in a recent article by R. Brown. (12)   He argues that the

action approach in industrial sociology should retain the emphasis on

the actor's own definition of the situation but that this emphasis

should be complimented by a study of "the distributions of resources,

of power and authority, and of the physical and technological conditions

in industry, which form some of the more intractable "conditions of

action" for those pursuing their individual or shared objectives." (13)

The "conditions of action" like social locations or environments are by

implication external to the individual - they influence and constrain

his actions.   The action frame of reference in these terms is not so

radically opposed to structural explanations as at first it might seem. Both at the conceptual level and in its practical application it allows for limited expression of meaning which in the end is bounded by the social construction of the observer, for attempts to define independently the social location of meanings or the conditions of action are essentially more than the subjective expressions of actors themselves.

Social Relationships and Defining Reality.

The action frame of reference as it has been developed and employed by industrial sociologists does not take account of the notion inherant in its focus on actor definitions of reality that organizations and environments only exist insofar as the acting individuals perceive their existence and relevance and act accordingly. The implications for research following this perspective are outlined by Blumer who says that "Since action is forged by the actor out of what he perceives, interprets and judges, one would have to see the operating situation as the actor sees it, perceive objects as the actor perceives them, ascertain their meanings in terms of the meaning they have for the actor, and follow the actor's line of conduct as the actor organizes it - in short one would have to take the role of the actor and see the world from his standpoint." (14) This position implies that a separation of man from his environments which are part of his continuous experience is to lose the essential nature of that experience. If man is caught up in the process of creating environments then it is difficult to argue that he reacts to them. Yet it is still reasonable to ask whether men themselves objectify certain aspects of their experience. Do people regard the working environment as distinctive from the wider community? Do they perceive the firm as

an organization which constrains their activity? Do they think

of a trade union as having a concrete identity which sets it apart

from the firm and is over and above their experience as a trade

union member? These questions are similar to the wider question

which Berger and Luckmann(15) raise concerning the nature of society.

They argue that society is a product of individual constructions but

at the same time they maintain that individuals come to regard

'society' in objective terms as having a concrete and constraining

character. We come to experience society as a thing, a reality

which confronts us and makes demands upon us. Yet, they stress,

it is important to realize that this objectification of society arises

out of the social construction of reality. The same problem was

tackled rather simplistically but none-the-less effectively by Sherif

(1935) in laboratory studies of norm evolution. (16) In an attempt

to settle the debate concerning the constraining quality of norms,

Sherif demonstrated that the judgement of the movement of a light in

a darkened room (the "autokinetic effect") was a function of group

interaction. Once having stabilized a group judgement, in subsequent

trials the individual group members evoked this standard as a referent

for their decisions. However the 'norm' or standard has no external

reality - it is constraining only insofar as the individual recreates

it in the process of forming a decision or giving meaning to the

existing problem. The act of referring to a shared construction of

reality is an act which gives meaning to the present experience. This

is not to say that man is both determined and determining, but rather

to suggest that social life is best conceptualized as systems of

relationships through which individuals continually create and recreate

the 'conditions of action'.

The social constraints to action can usefully be thought of as expectations which are more-or-less compelling depending upon the power of one group of actors and the efficacy or willingness of another to fulfil or reject those expectations. In considering for example technological discovery or application, changes in work tasks or the organization of work, and rules and norms, it is important not to abstract such events away from the groups of people who caused them. Structural deterministic explanations suffer precisely because such an abstraction occurs and man as a determining force can no longer be considered. As Berger and Luckmann say "Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world ... The reified world is, by definition, a dehumanized world." (17) That this construction of reality may itself be regarded as a system of meaning which could have far reaching effects upon the way in which men regard themselves and others, is indicated by Gouldner who says "To limit judgement solely to "autonomous" technical criteria is in effect not only to allow but to require men to be moral cretins in their technical roles." (18) Whether this occurs however depends upon the power of those imposing this meaning and upon the individual's or group's acceptance or rejection of such a definition. As will be shown later in this study clerks shared some common views of the typical images which manual workers and management held of them. Clerks themselves did not wholly accept typifications like "they (manual workers) think we're on a soft cushy number;" "they (managers) think we're a necessary evil." Yet the very fact that clerks believe that they are misunderstood or unappreciated in terms of these images may have important consequences for the way in which they define their relationships to other groups of actors. If action is based on beliefs and assumptions about others, and

the mutual defining and redefining of self and others, then it is

likely that misunderstandings and conflict will arise. Thus when

we argue for a view of society which rests upon shared definitions

of reality, it is not necessary to adopt notions of concensus or of

perfect communication between actors or groups of actors. As

Festinger has pointed out social interaction can be largely understood

as the struggle for definitions of social reality whose validity rests

only upon agreement or disagreement between actors. (19)

A more general theory of society, which as Pfeutze has argued,

addresses the problem of the psychological meaning of social structures

is that of symbolic interactionism. (20) G.H. Mead, the founder of

the symbolic interactionist perspective, posited the relationship of

man to society in terms of the emergence of a self which is socially

defined and controlled. Through the development of language and

imitative play, the child internalizes the expectations of others and

acquires what Mead refers to as the 'generalized other', which he

defined as "the organized community or social group which gives to the

individual his unity of self." (21) It is through this process, he

argues that "the community exercises control over the conduct of its

individual members; for it is in this form that the social process or

community enters as a determining factor into the individual's

thinking." (22) Although Mead focused attention upon the problem of

self in relation to others and argued for a view of society based on

process rather than structure, it can be argued that he implied perfect

communication and an over-socialized image of man. However, if we

allow for imperfect communication, Mead's view that we act in terms of

our imagined notions of what others expect need not be discounted.

The social construction of reality must in some sense rest not merely

on the actor's own expectations and goals, but upon his view of others'

expectations and goals and how these will facilitate or hinder his

accomplishments.   Thus the negotiation of social reality can be conceptualized as a cooperative or a conflictual enterprise.   It may be based on misunderstanding or a clear understanding of competing definitions.   It should not be thought of, as Mead's theory suggested, as a process through which social actors reflect each other's expectations and in having recourse to the 'generalized other' merely respond to an already determined social reality.

Selectivity, Self-Identity and Self-Location

The view of social life which rests on the dynamic of 'role-taking' in the sense in which Mead intended it has stimulated much debate, not only for the perspective offered of human relationships, man and society, but also for the questions raised concerning self-identity.   For Mead, self and society are inextricably linked since self-identity is seen to emerge through the reflected images which rest in role-relationships. Some critics of Mead have suggested that one problem which he left largely unresolved is how a self which arises and is sustained through reflected images can discriminate and decide which images have meaning. Gerth and Mills for example argue for the separation of self from others in the sense that an autonomous self can select 'significant others' in order to legitimize self or to provide meaningful reflections for self. (23)   They see this as a developmental process and therefore self is still socially derived.   Merton and Kitt in a definitive article on reference group theory argue that Mead and his followers never really considered the problem of the individual taking a significant frame of reference from groups of which he does not hold membership.   They suggest that reference group theory is distinctive because it focuses upon problems of orientation to non-membership groups. (24)

The notion of selectivity is central to reference group theory even though the concept itself has been used in a number of different

ways. Hyman who introduced this concept in 1942 argued that the distinctive contribution of reference group theory is that it assumes that "the group to which we give our allegiance and to whose standards we try to conform is determined by our own selective affinity, choosing among all the personal influences accessible to us", (25) Since then many writers have echoed this basic premise. L. Mann in summarizing the problems associated with the concept reference group concludes "The concept ... is valuable, however, as it draws attention to an important distinction between "membership" groups and "psychological" groups. One may have membership in a group but be relatively unaffected by it; a group to which one does not belong may exert a powerful psychological influence". (26) If this is the case then any attempt to understand the way in which actors perceive the social world must include a consideration of the referents they select in the process of self-identification. It is in these terms that the notions of "environments", "social locations" and "conditions of action" can be pursued.

Even where organizational arrangements appear to the observer to be rigid and uncompromising as with for example what Goffman has termed "total institutions" (27) it would still be reasonable to investigate member definitions of reality. Goffman deals with a variety of coping strategies within the confines of the "total institution" but does not indicate whether the list of strategies is exhaustive or elaborate why one rather than another is selected, nor does he consider whether members themselves view the institution as "total". Although he offers useful insights into strategic behaviour it can be argued that it is only possible to understand and predict the use of strategies among groups of actors if we consider their definition of the situation rather than assuming a direct relationship between what appears to the observer to be a totally confining situation and the acts that follow. However if the act of defining the situation is not totally dependent upon the physical 'facts' as they are seen by the observer, whether inside or

outside an organization, then a number of important considerations
follow. As has already been indicated the role of the researcher as
someone who locates social actors either initially or subsequently
in a social structure for purposes of explanation is radically
altered. Once we admit that 'things may not be as they appear' then
the task of the researcher must be to attempt to capture the way in
which social actors both define reality and locate themselves within
it. This does not mean that the observer will not engage in a process
of locating others but that he may not use this as an ultimate explan-
ation of either attitudes or behaviour. He must devise new methods to
enable the actors themselves to divulge their 'social maps' and to
suggest the parameters to their own social situations. Thus the 'action
frame of reference' can only achieve a logical status in terms of its
specified aims if in fact it is recognized that actors may not necessarily
belong in a meaningful sense to the arbitrary social positions to which
the social scientist assigns him. (28) This means that self-locations
like self-identification are based on the selectivity of the actor.
The 'social locations' and 'conditions of action' which are meaningful
to him are parameters which he defines for himself. However, it is
worth stressing that shared notions or typications of 'social locations'
and 'conditions of action' may arise through social interaction. Thus
clerical employees may acknowledge a class structure and may locate
themselves in it. They may also believe that technology is a separate
force which is an important condition of their behaviour. To be
consistent action theory cannot uphold the centrality of actor definitions
of reality without admitting the important processes of selectivity, self-
identification and self-location.

Action Theory and Reference Group Theory

In this study of clerical employees I wished to extend the 'action frame of reference' as it has been employed in industrial studies to incorporate some of the above ideas. I felt that a logical extension lay in the related field of reference group theory. In the first instance as has already been emphasized this area of theory focuses upon psychological group membership and upon selectivity in reference groups. In addition, inspite of problems concerning lack of clarity of the concept, it is an area of theory which makes predictions about the manner in which social actors arrive at self-locations and consequently act. The concept lacks clarity in the sense that it has been used to mean anything from an abstract idea or value to a specific person or group. (29) In this sense it is probably more useful to speak of 'key referents' rather than of 'reference groups'. Another problem in this area of theory is that the concept has been used descriptively as a substitute term for any sort of influence upon the individual's attitudes. A good example of this usage lies in a paper by D. Lockwood (30) on sources of variation in working class images of society and previously in a paper by J.H. Goldthorpe and D. Lockwood (31) on affluence and the British class structure. In both cases the consideration of class attitudes is held to be more complex than simply placing the individual in a particular socio-economic category and the notions of primary experience and reference groups are evoked. However within the context of the articles these are readily reducible to social structural arrangements which determine both attitudes and behaviour as one of the conclusions to the first article reveal. Goldthorpe and Lockwood in analysing the process of convergence between certain sections of the working class and middle classes suggest that "this must be seen as closely linked to changes in the structure of social relationships in

industrial, community and family life, which are in turn related not
only to growing prosperity but also to advances in industrial
organization and technology, to the process of urban development,
to demographic trends, and to the evolution of mass communications
and 'mass culture,' (32)   Thus whether or not social actors identify
with the working class or the middle class and what specific type of
class identification emerges depends upon social arrangements which
influence their attitudes and aspirations.   This sort of usage of
the reference group concept is lamented by Pollis, who argues that
too often it is used as synonymous with concepts like 'attitude' and
'norm' and thereby merely contributes "to the general notion that
sociological factors somehow influence individual behaviour." (33)
He goes on to argue that "If noticeable gain is to be made via the
reference group construct, it should be defined at the social
psychological level of analysis.   That is, it should be a construct
designed to explain an individual's behaviour as that behaviour is
related to the individual's significant socio-cultural worlds". (34)
This argument again emphasizes the problem of what researchers mean
when they utilize notions like the actor's 'definition of the situation'.
This vague and often misrepresented notion can be refined in terms of
theory and method to the level of the key referents which actors
themselves use in defining their expectations and the means they select
for realizing their expectations.

It is clearly important to specify my own assumptions concerning
the use of key referents.   The basic assumption is that the actor
responds to his environment, as he perceives it, selectively.   In
terms of reference group theory it is possible to move from that
general starting point to specify types of referents and their
function for the actor.   This requires clarification

since one of the features of this theory has been the debate about
the most valid constructs which the actor may be said to utilize.
Resting as the theory does upon the conception of the dynamics of
self-identity and society, one of the key problems has been to
disentangle the importance of group membership in a 'physical' sense
from the more abstract ideas about the importance of groups in a
'psychological' sense. Hyman was clearly aware of this problem
when he wrote, "If the groups to which individuals refer themselves,
their reference groups, are empirically determined, knowledge and
prediction of attitudes, self-evaluation and conduct will be enhanced;
the cherished principles about group influence can be protected; and
an understanding of the complex processes by which men relate themselves
to groups can be enriched". (35)   The 'cherished principles about group
influence' of course were then and continue to be a prime focus of study
in social psychology and until recently of the human relations approach
in Industrial Sociology.   The development of reference group theory has
in my view been seriously hampered by the focus upon group control over
the individual.   This is apparent in most of the typologies which have
been developed to distinguish specific functions of reference groups.
Thus the distinction between 'normative' and 'comparative' reference
groups introduced by Kelley has in fact been the basis for most other
typologies. (36)   Kelly argued that the function of the comparative
reference group is to provide standards or comparison points against
which the individual can evalutate himself and others;   here the
group pressure may be real or imagined and it may arise out of the
desire to belong to another group or to live up to a particular set
of standards.   The function of the normative reference group on the
other hand is to set standards for the individual and to enforce such
standards;   here the group pressure is 'real' and the individual has

the choice of yielding or resisting. There is an implicit distinction
in these two types of a 'psychological group' (comparative) and a
'membership group' (normative) which is unsatisfactory.

It is unsatisfactory precisely because the initial assumption that
the individual selects key referents becomes confused as soon as the
attempt to preserve the alternative notion of the reality of group-as-
controller enters in. Turner comments on a further distinction made
by Shibutani between groups as a source of values and groups whose
acceptance one seeks. (37)   Turner argues that this is a false
distinction since in both cases the function is the same in providing
a set of values and norms with which the individual can identify if he
so chooses. He argues that "when a reference group is the source of
values and perspectives ... one takes the role of a member of the group,
which is the same as having a "psychologically functioning membership."(38)
He prefers to designate groups which are used in this manner as
"identification groups" which overcomes the problems associated with the
notion of a "normative reference group". Thus instead of considering
the normative pressures of, for example, a trade union upon clerks we
can ask whether clerks identify with union membership and in what sense
they use the union as a referent for their behaviour. We can also
explore whether their view of their own trade unions is coloured by their
identification with either another union or with a different type of
union.

It is then possible to make a useful distinction between "identi-
fication groups" and "comparative reference groups." The latter are those
referents which the actor selects in order to judge himself and his
social position. Several writers have suggested that in a fixed stable
social order such comparisons will merely serve to reinforce the actors
notion of where he is vis a vis others. Durkheim argued that social

upheaval is accompanied by a loss of stable reference points and that anomic suicide may result. (39)   Merton points out that anomie can result from strains built into society in terms of the gaps which exist between desired ends and the means available for achieving such ends. (40)   In C. Wright Mills's book on white-collar workers we see a combination of the Durkheimian view that rapid social change leads to a crisis of status identity and Merton's thesis concerning means and ends.(41)One of the fundamental themes presented by Mills is that the growing masses of white-collar employees are in a state of "status panic" because the groups with which they compare themselves are on the one hand middle-class and on the other working-class referents.   They are basically unsure of their position in work and in the wider society. (42)   As has been suggested earlier in this thesis it is clearly important to investigate the comparative reference groups of clerks in order to arrive at some conclusions about their social location, their aspirations, and any feelings of relative deprivation which they may experience.   In so doing it is important to make clear that such comparisons may be historic as well as present.   Thus the comparison of the present day clerk with the clerk's position in the past involves the actor in evoking a stereotype of the clerk which rests in most cases upon secondary information.   In the same way it is possible to argue that some identification referents may have their bases in the past.   This would be the case if the clerk referred to rules or traditions which he had no part in devising and yet accepted as a guide for his behaviour.

As well as 'identification' and 'comparative' referents it is useful to incorporate what Turner has called "interaction groups" and defined as "groups neutrally toned to the actor;   he must merely take them into account in order to accomplish his purpose" ((43)

Here we are reminded of one of the key notions of 'action' theory which is that the actor in seeking to impose his definition of the situation upon others must take account of others in devising the means to action. Thus clerical employees in seeking for example to improve their conditions of work cannot do this in a social vacuum. They must in the first instance be conscious of their own interests and in the second of their relationship to "interaction groups," since such groups may either hinder or help them in carrying out their purpose. In any event they will engage in predictions about how other groups will behave in order to better control the outcome. It is useful to summarize my position in combining 'action' theory with reference group theory in diagrammatic form.

```
                                      Identification )
                                                     )
              HISTORICAL REFERENTS <                 ) Mainly
                       ^                             ) Secondary
                       |              Comparative    )
                       |
Social Location        |
Expectations           |           Means
             <---------A--------->Selected -----------------> ACTION
Aspirations            |
                       |
                       v                Identification )
              PRESENT REFERENTS <       Comparative    ) Primary
                                                       ) or
                                        Interaction    ) Secondary
```
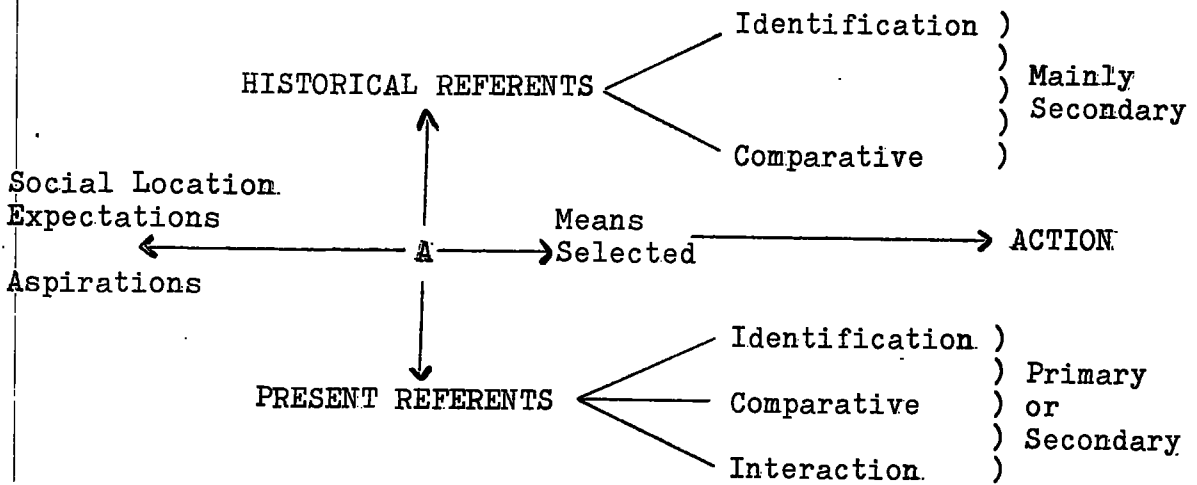
The typology presented is not meant as an exclusive one but merely to define some of the important dimensions of the construction of social reality which I was interested to explore. In addition I wished to investigate what type of referents clerical employees would choose. In the case of people references would these be primary or secondary? By primary I mean immediate face-to-face references and by secondary, more distant conceptions of groups or organizations selected for reference. As will be seen in later chapters I devised means for

clerks to divulge on a spontaneous basis the referents they selected in talking about various issues, as well as testing the _salience_ of various referents to them.

What now remains is to consider important problems related to prediction and explanation. Runciman raises a key issue which needs clarification.(44) This concerns whether the referents chosen are the result of a person's existing attitudes or the cause of them. Does, for example the white-collar employee choose to compare himself with a managerial group because his attitudes towards his own promotion prospects are that they are poor, or does the comparison itself result in feelings of dissatisfaction? Runciman suggests that it is only possible to avoid tautology here by asking two completely separate questions. Firstly what determines the actors choice of referents and secondly what results from the choice? Since both questions are relevant it is worthwhile considering some previous findings in both areas.

In considering determinants of choice it is important and is in line with the previous arguments of this chapter that we consider these in terms of the actor's experience rather than as structural givens. In terms of 'identification' referents several propositions have been tested in the past which suggest that proximity and immediacy are important factors. (45) Turner (46) in a manner similar to Homans (47) suggests that adequacy of social participations leads to a readiness to accept and identify with a particular group or idea stemming from the group. However it has also been suggested by social psychologists that mere proximity is not a sufficient explanatory variable.(48) The key is a belief that others are similar in important respects. This feeling of sharing common interests leads to interaction which increases identification. Sherif has also shown that the experience of threat

or competition from "out-groups" can heighten feelings of identification with the "in-group". (49)   In terms of relating these notions to clerical employees Silverman has offered a specific hypothesis concerning "clerical consciousness".(50)   He suggests that when promotion prospects are poor and when there is close proximity to manual workers then clerical employees will become aware of their interests.   This hypothesis makes more sense if it includes the further refinement that it depends whether 'proximity' is experienced as a threat and whether promotion prospects are paramount in the work goals of clerical employees.   It has been suggested by several writers in the field of white-collar work that clerks in any case will experience competing identifications.   Thus they have been described as marginal and basically unsure of their interests.   It is then important to discover what identification groups they select, not merely to unravel the place of work in their lives, but also the degree to which they feel part of a common group with common interests.   In this manner it is possible to investigate to what degree any sense of occupational identity exists and whether some clerks experience this more than others.   The expectations which clerks have of their work situation will depend on their selection of identity referents,and their evaluation of their rewards will depend on the comparisons they make between themselves and others.

The determinants of selecting comparative referents again cannot be posed in structural terms.   Indeed most writers have stressed psychological processes.   Merton for example has emphasized that some real or imagined similarity is the basis of comparison.   Hyman and Singer have suggested that a pleasure principle (the need to enhance self-regard) or a reality principle (the need to see oneself as others do) are basic mechanisms. (51)   Runciman who has developed the notion

of relative deprivation has of course been concerned with the
possibilities of comparison with a contrasting group or person
who has something which the individual desires. (52)   It is fair
to say that there is no body of coherent theory here but rather a
set of propositions pitched at different levels concerning the
determinants of choice of comparative referents.   Most writers
agree that more empirical work is required before it is possible to
elucidate any guiding principles of choice.   In the field of white-
collar studies C. Wright Mills for example suggests that the question
of work satisfaction is probably linked to income and possibly to
status and power.   He concludes "what such questions probably
measure are invidious judgements of the individual's standing with
reference to other individuals and the aspects of work, the terms of
such comparisons must be made clear." (53)   Crozier, who is
concerned that more subjective analysis be made of white-cillar
employees, presents evidence to show that individuals in higher
positions are more satisfied with work interest but less satisfied
with the positions they hold.   The opposite holds true for individuals
in lower positions.   He explains this finding in terms of feelings of
personal security but in passing also mentions a correlation with
parental professions and the individual's own level of education,
social aspirations and cultural level (54)   If he had explored the
comparative referents of these respondents it may have clarified that
seeming paradox of attitudes expressed, for there is a striking similarity
between these findings and the much earlier findings of Stouffer in his
study of the American Soldier. (55)   Merton and others have reinterpreted
Stouffer's studies in reference group terms in order to explain, for
example, why men from the Air Corps who had better prospects of promotion
were more critical of the promotion system than men from the Military

Police whose chances of promotion were worse. (56)   The answer it is generally agreed lies in the comparison which is made, in this case with similar others, who acted as a yardstick for self-evaluation. In general, feelings of deprivation or gratification will follow such comparisons.

The overall result of selecting referents is to provide a construct of self location vis a vis others.   If the actor feels relatively deprived in significant areas of his life he will select the means to alter his situation.   If on the other hand he feels relatively gratified he will be concerned to preserve his situation in the face of possible competition.   On occasions he may also take up the position of the underdog and criticise a system which favours some more than others. (57)   If he finds the business of self-location difficult because of competing or inconsistent referents his behaviour will also be inconsistent.   It is suggested in the literature on white-collar employees that this uncomfortable state may lead to withdrawal or apathy both at work and in the wider society.   An occupational study of clerical employees which starts with the consideration of how they view themselves vis a vis others and what attitudes follow can better predict or explain subsequent behaviour.   It is of course important to recognize that there may be unintended consequences of action for the key actors, precisely because, in taking into account what we have termed interaction referents, these may prove in the last resort more powerful, more wily or generally more unpredictable than expected.   Nevertheless it is the intentions of clerical workers which have in the past been most questionned.   Many of the assumptions made about their intentions are presented in later chapters.   Suffice it to say here that any consideration of whether the clerk can or will be a militant trade unionist must commence with an analysis of how he himself views

his relationship to the world of work.

Conclusion .

In the following chapters the perspective developed in this chapter will be applied. Specific hypothesis are less important than a broad exploration of the views of clerical workers. It is important not to give the impression that the research was over-systemmatized in terms of hypotheses or conversely that there were no biases in its design. As Appendix 1 shows, the interview schedule was largely aimed at discovering the definitions, referents and self locations of clerks. Clearly the areas selected for discussion set boundaries around the proceedings. However it is the case that whatever instrument is used for research whether it be free assoc-iation, participant or non-participant observation, or the use of interviews and questionnaires, the experimenter's own biases will enter in. This is not obviated either by adopting one theoretical approach rather than another. Social scientists must always bear the responsibility of their own involvement in research and ultimately accept that their interpretation of results derives from their own constructs. Here it is worth remembering the consideration of Schutz that once a meaning is attended by the experiencing person and shared with others it is essentially different from the initial experience (58) If access of 'pure' experience is impossible even for the experiencer, the social scientist should endeavour to be aware that his own constructs are an integral part of research activity. With these limitations in mind, action theory and reference group are combined to offer a perspective which facilitates the examination of actor definitions of reality.

In this chapter the main aim has been to clarify some of the difficulties associated with the action approach in sociology. The chief criticism is that it posits a focus on actor definitions of

reality which are held to be located in independent social situations. The argument has been that shared ideas of reality may arise and that actors themselves may subscribe to notions of external forces which may or may not be seen to be outside their control. However it is the manner in which the actor himself bounds reality which is of fundamental importance. In order to focus attention both upon the shared nature of action and upon the phenomenology of defining reality I have attempted to refine the action perspective by incorporating reference group theory.

CHAPTER III   ORIENTATION TO WORK AND TRADE UNION ATTACHMENT

Introduction

In this chapter recent attempts to investigate the relationship
of the actor to work and to trade unionism will be considered. The
concept of orientation to work has focused analysis at the level of
the actor and his definition of the situation rather than at the
structural determinants of behaviour. Nevertheless, as a guiding
concept it lacks clarity and has stagnated in the typologies which
sociologists have felt to be essential in ordering their own under-
standings of man and work. The term trade union attachment is used
in this chapter to bring together a number of approaches which have
attempted to analyse the relationship of trade union members to their
trade unions. The term attachment is used intentionally to indicate
that however this problem is dealt with, the actor and his union are
typically conceptualized as separate entities which must then be related.
The purpose of this chapter is to present further justification for the
theoretical perspective developed in this thesis and to demonstratate why
the concepts of occupational and trade union identity are more appropriate
than those of orientation to work and trade union attachment.

ORIENTATION TO WORK

The concept of 'orientation to work' is now taken to mean far more
than simply the attitudes of the employee to aspects of his job and work.
The main concern of industrial sociologists who have developed this
concept has been to investigate shared meanings imputed to work by
various groups of employees and to elucidate ideal types of orientations
as working models. Essentially the concept draws attention to the place
which work has in the life projects of individuals and the way in which
prior expectations influence their judgements of work. The major
attraction of the concept is that it focuses the analysis of man

and work at the level of actor definitions of reality. However
there appears to be considerable confusion in the literature as to
the origin of 'orientations', their stability over time, and the degree
of consistency in ordering wants, expectations and meanings. In
addition, the concept 'orientation' is emergent in nature since it is
part of the actor's overall scheme of meaning. This presents
considerable problems for measurement, and when researchers use
different techniques for investigating 'orientations' it is because
they have to break the concept down into working parts. Asking about
the actor's orientation to work is clearly problematic at the method-
ological level. Inevitably questions must be posed in terms of such
things as actors' expectations, preferences, and perceptions of what
they would like as opposed to what they have got.

In addition there is a tendancy on the part of key writers to treat
the action perspective and the concept of orientation to work as
synonymous. Daniel for example writes "the action approach stresses
the concept of orientation to work." (1) He then goes on to treat them
as identical. Goldthorpe in his final comments to Daniel's critique
of the Affluent Workers Studies also commits the same error. He writes
"Daniel entirely fails to mention the point, which from the first one
has been concerned to make, that the explanatory value of the idea
of orientation to work will be directly related to the extent to which
certain economic and social conditions prevail: .... It needs, then to
be made clear at the outset, which Daniel does not do, that it is not
supposed that the social action approach will have __equal__ explanatory
value in regard to all industrial situations". (2) This demonstrates
some of the methodological confusion involved in the industrial sociol-
ogist's usage of social action theory. Clearly the concept 'orientation
to work' can only be one of many sociological constructs which might be
derived from the social action perspective and applied to particular

problems. The action approach in industrial sociology is thus considered to be responsible for leading to a stress on the analysis of man and work in terms of extra-organizational factors and for separating work and non-work into two distinct systems. Clearly if these problems do arise it is through a particular application of the philosophical assumptions of action theory via the concept of orientation to work. The debate about the origin of orientations is thus blurred with an over-riding muddle about action theory itself.

ORIENTATION TO WORK AND SOCIAL IMAGERY

The concept of orientation to work also seems to arise from a separate tradition in sociology, of investigating social imagery and in particular the relationship between social imagery and social class. Thus Lockwood's article on sources of variation in working class imagery of society may be seen as giving important impetus to the search for typologies of shared meaning which have their roots in the wider community. (3) Lockwood is attempting to refine Bott's earlier distinction between two basic views of society. She argued that a 'dichotomous' power model was more likely to be used by the working classes and a 'hierarchical' prestige model by the middle classes. (4) Lockwood suggests that working class imagery can be further broken down into a power model, a status hierarchy model and a pecuniary model which are utilized respectively by the traditional worker, the deferential worker and the privatized worker. The social imagery which differentiates the working class in Lockwood's typology is determined by work and community factors. In particular Lockwood stresses the sort of relationships which typify each image of society in an effort to follow Bott's argument that "the ingredients, the raw materials of class ideology are located in the individual's various primary social experiences, rather than in his position in a socio-economic category". (5) He suggests that both the traditional and deferential worker although they differ in the

way that they relate to fellow workers - the traditional type having
a high degree of job involvement and strong ties with fellow workers
and the deferential type having a particularistic and personal
relationship with his employer which prevents strong ties with fellow
workers - experience a sense of belonging to social groups which
reinforces notions of demarcation in social relationships. Alternatively
the pecuniary model "is an ideological reflection of work attachments
that are instrumental and of community relationships that are
privatized". (6)   Thus whereas the traditional worker sees the world
divided into "us" and "them" and the deferential worker recognises a
hierarchy, the privatized worker sees few distinctions amongst the vast
majority of the population.   Clearly the 'privatized worker' as a
theoretical type becomes more fully articulated in the empirical study
of the Affluent Worker and is renamed the 'instrumental worker'. (7)

Goldthorpe et al also mention three other distinctive types of
worker, the professional, the bureaucratic and the solidaristic types.
(8)   The development of such typologies as this can be seen as arising
out of the traditional concern of sociologists to elucidate the
relationship of social class to attitudes and behaviour.   Indeed the
application of the action perspective could be said to be secondary to
this concern.   However, both the action perspective and the study of
social class imagery imply that explanations of work-based behaviour
and attitudes must be related to the wider community rather than simply
the workplace itself.   It is in this sense that the two have come
together in the central concept of 'orientation to work'.

Orientation to Work and Organizational Factors

Indeed it is also possible to arrive at this concept via more
specific organisational debates as Ingham has done. (9)   In particular
Ingham is concerned with the effects of size and various aspects of

bureaucratisation upon employee attachment to the organisation. He
is at pains to criticise previous writers who have implied "that all
industrial workers are equally orientated to the attainment of the
non-economic rewards ... and that because these are present to a lesser
degree in large organisations this will result in low levels of attach-
ment". (10)   Ingham supports the Goldthorpe thesis that independant
orientations lead to preferences for particular work situations.   He
suggests a three-fold typology of orientations - 'instrumental' where
the work situation is judged in monetary terms alone, 'instrumental -
expressive - negative', where the work situation is judged in monetary
terms but also in terms of united opposition to management and 'instru-
mental - expressive positive' where the monetary concern is accompanied
by a desire for close contacts with people in authority and interesting
work.   These types of orientation describe the various meanings which
are imputed to work in different communities and at different stages in
the life cycle.   Silverman has renamed Ingham's types as Economic Man,
Marxian Man and Hawthorne Man and feels that the importance of Ingham's
contribution to organisational analysis is that "a congruence between
worker-expectations and organisational form is not thought to be
'necessary' and, indeed, in the case of Marxian Man is unlikely to
occur at all." (11)   Ingham later argued for a four-fold typology based
upon the value attached to economic and to non-economic rewards. (12)

The impetus for developing the study of orientations to work arises
then from at least three different approaches, the application of the
action perspective, the study of social class imagery and organisational
analysis.   The development of typologies has not been confined to
variations amongst manual employees but also includes variations amongst
white-collar groups including professionals and scientists.   Cotgrove
and Box for example, have made distinctions between 'public', 'private'

and 'instrumental' scientists. (13)   They have pointed to a
relationship between these distinctive orientations and the level
of satisfaction expressed about the employing organisation.   The
'public' scientist for example, who values autonomy, personal
commitment and communication with the public world of the scientist
is more likely to feel constrained in organisations where he cannot
pursue these goals.   A broader attempt to type professionals can be
seen in the distinction made by Merton and Gouldner between 'locals'
and 'cosmopolitans'. (14)   Locals are those who use the organisation
itself as a key referent for their values and ideas.   Cosmopolitans,
on the other hand, tend to refer to extra-organisational reference
groups.   The development of typologies of orientations to work amongst
clerical workers is less in evidence.   They are usually treated as a
homogeneous group and considered to be primarily 'instrumental' or
'calculative'.   Parker argues for a minor distinction between clerical
workers, semi-skilled workers and minor professionals on the one hand
and routine clerical workers and unskilled workers on the other. (15)
He suggests that clerks who fall into the first group will have an
indifferent or calculative interest in work.   Routine clerical
workers will be totally alienated from work and their central life
interest would be in the non-work sphere.   C. Wright-Mills implies
that the idea of a variety of clerical orientations to work is a non-
starter.   Rather he argues that the work is intrinsically meaningless
and that clerks doing meaningless work must seek their meanings elsewhere.
(16)   Here of course Mills is making a value judgement in line with his
Marxist approach that the meaning of work disappeared with the craftsmen
and that it is not possible to infuse that which is totally alienated
with meaning.   The outcome of his argument is that once again clerks en
masse are judged to have an 'instrumental' or 'extrinsic' orientation to

work.   In Mills' terms this arises out of the work situation itself

as well as at the more general level out of economic and technological

changes in society.   Mercer and Weir in their study of the white-

collar workers in Hull found that clerical workers were more likely

to cite that out of the things that their job involved, "doing a good

job" provided them with most satisfaction. (17)   Mercer and Weir

concluded that in the emphasis on "doing a good job", some element

of what we might call a "craftsman-like" attitude existed and that it

seemed to them that "Mills over emphasized the alienating aspects of

white-collar work." (18)   Their work suggests that it is difficult

to judge clerical orientations to work by merely evaluating clerical

work as an outsider and that actors' expectations have to be taken

into account.   They have at other times, however, fallen back

particularly on the instrumental typing of clerical workers.   When

comparing their results with those obtained by Goldthorpe et al in the

Luton study, they conclude "Overall, the picture that begins to emerge

is of an orientation to work which, if not entirely instrumental, non-

theless resembles that made familiar by the Luton study at many points.

In particular, there is little indication that clerks are less likely

than other workers to emphasise the importance of salary, security and

the prospects of obtaining a greater measure of both, rather than the

intrinsic satisfactions to be obtained from the tasks of work." (19)

The development of typologies of orientations to work can in one

sense be judged as a useful activity.   It focuses attention upon the

diversities of meaning which work may come to have for groups of actors.

However, one problem with ideal types is that they abstract the meanings

to such a level that they no longer approximate to the views of the

employees themselves.   Indeed in most typologies a process of polar-

isation occurs.   The outcome is then one of either creating subdivisions

of the original types or one of banding most people somewhere in
the middle of the types. Sheldrake discusses this problem by
referring to a study conducted by Glaser of medical research
students. He says "Glaser ... noted that the categories "local"
and "cosmopolitan" are strongly opposed, and suggested that a further
category might be provided, the 'local-cosmopolitan', but this seems
to be a form of 'butterfly collecting' that could be extended
indefinitely ... I suggest, that an alternative approach is to allow
categories to develop from the material, rather than imposing a prior
framework, and the never-ending subdividing this may entail." (20)
In his study of computer programmers Sheldrake then does not test the
applicability of other typologies but attempts to derive a specific
typology to account for the differing perspectives of employees. He
distinguishes between 'technical' and 'organisational' orientations to
work and relates these to job performance and attitudes towards Bureau
policy. While his concern to evoke orientations from workers themselves
is commendable he has apparently missed the significance of 'orientations'
to work which are studied in relation to the wider community. He relates
orientations to educational experience but on the whole he explains them
in terms of the work situations themselves.

The applicability of general typologies of orientation to work,
however, still remains. Brown and Brannen in their study of shipbuilding
workers on Tyneside explore how far these workers coming from a homogeneous
community situation hold the 'traditional proletarian' type of social
imagery suggested by Lockwood. (21) A central theme in their work is
that the work situation in shipbuilding is an important source of diversity
in terms of social groupings based on work activities. In addition their
research demonstrates that neither a simple 'power' model or a simple
'prestige' model represented the workers' views of society. Some were

prepared to differentiate white-collar groups and saw all manual workers as the same and some were not prepared to differentiate white-collar groups but made distinctions between manual groups. They emphasise the conditions of conflict and cohesion in an industry where there are divisions in terms of trades and skills and at the same time shared experiences of hard physical work and the overall traditions of shipbuilding. A further related theme emerging from this research is that typologies of social imagery imply too much consistency when in fact different aspects of the worker's community and work situations may lead to contradictory images of society. (22) Brown refers to the finding that certain contradictions can also be expressed in terms of objectives at work. Thus shipbuilding workers emphasised 'good wages' and 'security' and to a lesser degree 'being near home', 'good conditions' and 'interesting work' as the important criteria of choosing a job. However, they valued working in a shipyard because of good sociable relationships with work-mates and interesting jobs. Brown comments - "The point here is not that workers' objectives in the work situation have been shown to be unimportant in explaining their attitudes and behaviour, but that different objectives may receive priority in different circumstances." (23)

In general this creates problems both at the level of typologies and also at the methodological level. It also means that any easy formulation concerning the source of orientations to work is untenable. Daniel argues that the global nature of the concept adds to its confusion. He suggests that distinctions could usefully be made at three levels, those of "job choice, intrinsic job satisfaction and job quitting". (24) These distinctions are suggested for much the same reason that Brown cites the dynamic changes of priorities. Daniel argues that the factors which attract workers into a job need not be the same as those which offer

satisfactions in the job and these could in fact be unrelated to
reasons for leaving the job. However, while these distinctions
suggest that work may have different meanings at different times,
they do not solve the problem of how different meanings arise and
the relative influence of community and work situation. If we
admit that it is difficult if not impossible to treat orientations
to work as independent variables which determine in a static way
the worker's view of work in his life, then it is possible to proceed
in a number of ways to advance our understanding of the meanings which
various groups of workers impute to work. This can be tackled
by taking more care in the analysis of conditional meanings and
contextual priorities as Brown suggests. (25)

An alternative approach is to examine the ways in which actors
themselves define their work situation in relation to important
referents. The main focus of such an analysis would be the expect-
ations of employees and their judgements of aspects of job and work
in relation to those expectations. The expectations, it could be
argued, would be ordered and would change in relation to important
identification, interaction and comparative referents as defined in
the previous chapter. These referents could be selected from work
and community situations. However, such an investigation would lay
less stress upon the separation of work and community influences, and
more upon the actor's view of himself in a variety of settings which he
perceives and acts upon. In this thesis the focus is on the clerk's
definition of his work situation and his identification with membership
of the clerical occupation. However, the clerk may select important
community-based referents in order to define and pass judgement on
the rewards of his work and within the context of this study some
attention is paid to the issue of whether or not community or work -

based referents were more salient for clerks. In focusing attention upon the clerk's perceptions of reality within a context made up of relationships which he defines as relevant, the concept of orientation to work is felt to be inadequate although some use will be made of Daniel's proposals to examine "job choice, intrinsic job satisfaction and job quitting" (26) In this study these elements will be explored through the eyes of clerks in terms of how they entered clerical work, what satisfactions and disatisfactions they have experienced in clerical work and what other jobs they would prefer. However, in this study it is felt to be essential to consider what clerical work means to those involved in it and to examine whether clerical workers identify with membership of their occupation totally, partially or not at all. This requires a broader analysis than that proposed by proponents of the orientation to work approach. It necessitates some exploration of the parameters (if these indeed are perceived to exist) which clerical workers draw around their occupation and more attention to their views of typical experiences within it. Any concern with their orientations to work would then be complementary to the broader aim which is to explore clerical work as the experiencing clerical worker views it and defines his relationship to it.

The notion of occupational identity more adequately depicts this concern. It focuses attention very basically upon what clerical workers typically think about their membership of an occupation which is felt by many to provide only a base from which upwardly aspiring clerks can look to management. If this is the case, then we could posit only a distant relationship with the clerical occupation. However, very little exploration of clerical occupational identify has been attempted except through their views on promotion. If they have been judged to be in favour of promotion this has been taken as evidence of

the desire to move into management ranks. If they have complained
about promotion prospects this likewise has been taken to infer
concern over the 'blockage' preventing their movement upwards.
One important exception to this general rule lies in the observations
of Silverman who argued that clerical workers may not be a unitary
group and that "we may examine which group of clerks identifies with
management or with manual workers or with neither, and which group is
susceptible to a 'status panic' or does not feel its status threatened
or is not at all concerned about its status." (29) In this thesis
much attention is given to these issues of identification since it
is felt that the clerk's sense of belongingness to his occupation will
be heightened to the extent that he rejects identification with manage-
ment and manual workers.

In addition the conception of occupational identity focuses upon
the meaning which clerical work has for those involved. As Blauner
has argued, "self-estranging work threatens a positive sense of selfhood
because it fosters a damaging rather than an affirmative occupational
identify." (28) Although the idea that clerical work is basically
self-estranging has been challenged by some, it is much more widely
held to be boring and alientating. Thus it is important to consider
how clerks view their work tasks and in what sense they feel that there
is a potential for personal involvement in their work. In doing so,
the emphasis which clerks place upon extrinsic factors can also be
examined. C. Wright Mills has argued that as a result of the meaningless
character of white-collar work, income, status and power concerns come
to the fore. Thus he suggests that "the sharp focus upon money is
part and parcel of the lack of intrinsic meaning that work has come to
have." (29) Since it is generally agreed that the incomes of clerical
workers have declined relative to those of manual workers, it might be

expected on the basis of Mill's argument that the monetary rewards
of clerical work would be uppermost in the minds of clerks, as would
their loss of status and power. Clerical views on the intrinsic and
extrinsic satisfactions of their work are clearly central to an
understanding of their occupational identity.

A further dimension of occupational identity lies at the level
of the occupation's public image. Blauner has drawn attention to
this problem when contrasting the occupational identity of the printer
with that of the chemical operator. He suggests that the latter "unlike
that of the printer ... has no venerable traditions with which to identify.
No generally accepted standards have as yet been developed for judging
the absolute and relative level of the process operator's skill, which
by its very nature is less visible and tangible than that involved in
manual work. Because of the public's lack of familiarity with automated
technology, it is probably difficult for the chemical operator to gain
the respect of others through identifying with his work - in contrast to
the printer or the railroad engineer." (30) Insofar as occupational
identity, like self-identity, is thought to be partially dependent upon
the mirror images which significant others provide, then we might expect
clerical workers to express anxiety about their occupational identity as
did Blauner's chemical operators. This would be less because of a lack
of traditions, since clerical work is hardly a new skill in our society,
but more because it is viewed as a general skill which has become more
automated. In addition it could be argued that popular images of the
clerk are far from confirmatory. Nowhere is this better seen than in
the writings of C. Wright Mills, but it is also evident in literature
and drama. The question is whether clerks themselves perceive public
images to confirm or disconfirm them as members of their occupation.
The clerks in this study offered some interesting views on how they

were regarded by the general public, manual workers and management which demonstrated that they did experience occupational identity anxiety in this respect.

In conclusion this thesis is concerned to explore the relationship of clerical workers to their work as they define it with a view to better understanding both their occupational and their trade union identities. In order to so so, clerical workers in different industries and work situations must be included since, as Silverman has pointed out, it is unlikely that clerks are a unitary group. Thus it is important to consider what identity problems are common to many clerks and what are more pronounced as a result of particular work experiences. With this in mind it is felt that clerical occupational identies may vary and that such variations will be closely related to differing trade union identities.

Trade Union Attachment : Membership Types

The narrowest focus for dealing with trade union attachment is the one which starts with a view of the trade union as an organization (a concrete entity) to which members are more or less attached. A recent example of this approach occurs in the work of Child, Loveridge and Warner. (31) They put forward a model as shown in Fig. 1 on page 60, which distinguishes between four types of union member "The Stalwart", "The Card-Holder", "The Trouble Maker," and "The Alienated Member". These types are based upon the degree of active involvement in union affairs and the degree of congruence between union policies and member expectations. The latter notion is developed by the authors as an attempt to focus upon members' orientations towards their union and the meaning the union holds for them. The crucial measure of satisfaction implied

Fig.1 (32)

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                              + |
                                |
   The 'Stalwart'               |    The
   (c.f. 'Organization          |    'Card-holder'
   Man')                        |
                                |
                                |                      Degree of active
 + _____  -_        involvement in
                                |                      union affairs
                                |
   The                          |    The alienated
   'Trouble-maker'              |    member
                                |
                                |
                              - |
```

Congruence between
union policies and
member expectations
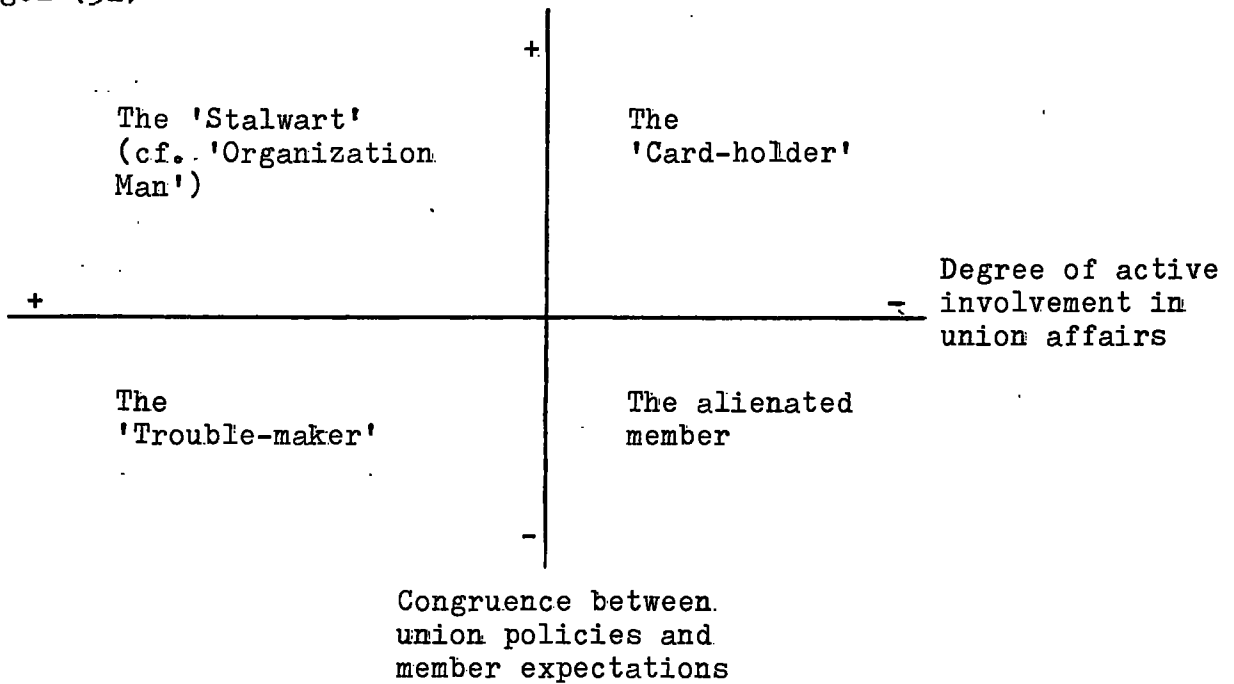
is the degree to which such orientations are reflected in the outlook

of both lay and full-time officials and the overall policies of the

union.   They argue that incongruency between member expectations

and union policy is a strain which can inhibit effective union

functioning.   The notion of congruency is however misleading.   In

the first place it suggests that there can be a "fit" between an

organization's specific policies and a member's expectations.

Secondly it makes no allowance for the variety of meaning which trade

union membership may have for the individual.   At a more general

level the model assumes that the union is an organization which

transcends members and this leads to a rather narrow conception of

the crucial dimensions determining union membership types.   Thus

members' behaviour and expectations are considered but by implication

these are thought of solely in relation to the assumed organization.

The possible relationship between the individual's definitions of

work and the wider society and his orientations to the trade union is

left untouched.   Moreover, any ideological considerations of commitment

to trade unionism are obscured by this approach which is basically

concerned to locate the individual within the union-as-organization.

Even if we accept this as a limited but legitimate objective the
general problems of such a typology are still considerable.   The
individual for example is typed as a "card-holder" because he is
low on active involvement and high on congruency.   If we go on to
ask why he is like this - the answer implicit in the model is that
it is because he is a "Card-holder".   The characterisation of union
members might be expanded on this basis, as it was for example in the
work of Seidman et al, (33) but the outcome is more descriptive than
explanatory.   This is evident if we apply Child, Loveridge and Warner's
typology to the previous findings of Goldthorpe et al in Luton.   The
affluent worker would be classified as a "card-holder" in terms of his
low participation in union affairs and his satisfaction with union
activity in line with his purely instrumental demands.   However, as
Goldthorpe et al were at pains to demonstrate, we can only explain this
orientation towards the union if we take account of employee definitions
of work. (34)

Union Types

The characterization of member attachments is then of limited
usefulness and it is doubtful even at the descriptive level whether it
is sensitive enough to the variety of meaning possible or to changes in
employee views of their union.   A separate but related attempt to deal
with this problem concentrates characterization at the level of the
union itself.   Both Blackburn (35) and Lockwood (36) develop a notion
of union character, the key reference point in both cases being the
traditional manual worker's union.   They use this as a 'benchmark' to
judge what Blackburn has termed the 'unionateness' of trade unions
The criteria for defining 'unionateness' are similar in both cases and
take the form of a set of indices against which to measure the degree
of correspondence between,in particular white-collar associations and

trade unions, and the traditional blue-collar trade union. (37)
The emphasis on union character has been posited in terms of social
stratification variables. The direct focus has not been union attach-
ment as such but this has been studied in an indirect manner in terms of
the appropriateness of union types for employees located in different
class positions. Thus the basic assumption of 'union character'
approaches is of fairly straight forward relationship between social
class, social imagery and trade unionism. Bain, Coates and Ellis
have recently summarized a number of international approaches which
develop the motion of union character - they suggest along two dimensions:
organizational goals and organizational behaviour. (38) In both cases
they suggest the distinction between manual and non-manual trade unions
becomes blurred when looking at specific cases. Rawson's thesis that
manual unions have broader objectives than white-collar unions does not
appear to stand up in the light of evidence drawn from different countries
which shows that a variety of white-collar unions pass motions at confer-
ences which are broader than narrow sectional interests and have a wide
social and political significance. (39) In line with this argument it
is interesting to note that APEX (one of the unions involved in this
study) passed a composite motion at the 1974 conference welcoming the
return of a Labour Government but stating,

"However, Conference urges the Government to bring about the
immediate return to free collective bargaining and demands a cut
in military expenditure, increased taxation of wealth, the control
of interest rates, the control of overseas investments, the selling
of foreign held assets and a complete restriction on property
speculation.

Conference feels these measures are necessary to ensure continued
prosperity and to achieve a socially just society in this country". (40)

Any simple assertion that the objectives of trade unions reflect the different class positions of their members is thus misleading.

However it is perhaps the behavioural dimension which is most often thought of as providing distinctions between white-collar and blue-collar unions particularly in terms of militancy and united opposition to employers. Thus many writers portray the view that the more middle-class the members the more likely it is that the union will not pursue its ends through opposition. Thus professional associations have been typified as unwilling to utilize those means associated with the traditional labour movement in order to achieve their ends. The evidence of recent years demonstrates the frailty of this argument. Teachers, civil servants and nurses have all engaged in a variety of militant actions in order to pursue their objectives. More recently the Steel Industry Management Association has formalized a series of proposals including go-slows, non-coverage of the plant when manual workers withdraw their labour and refusal to work overtime. (41) This organization is not even affiliated to the T.U.C. or to the Labour Party as many white-collar unions are. APEX has long fulfilled these criteria of unionateness. While it is difficult to generalize about the behaviour of white-collar unions compared with blue-collar unions it is useful to re-emphasize the point made by Bowen and Shaw concerning one traditional industry, that of steel. They refer to and document the cooperative policy of I.S.T.C., the major manual worker's union in the industry and comment upon the fact that the main impetus for conflict in this union arose not from disputes with employers but with other white-collar unions in the fight for the right to recruit white-collar workers in the industry. Significantly I.S.T.C. as the traditional manual worker's union has not conformed to any blue-print which stresses the militancy of manual unions compared with white-collar unions. (42)

Returning then to the ideal types of union character presented by Blackburn and Lockwood, a fundamental problem is that unions which fully subscribe to these norms are often found to be less militant than those who do not and the converse is also true. These ideal types suffer from the same problem of any other. They provide specific points of reference but these become inflexible and the assumptions on which the models are built tend to persist inspite of contradictory evidence. In this case the relationship between class position, social imagery and trade unionism is clearly not straightforward but there is difficulty in refuting it entirely. Thus even Bain, Coates and Ellis who spend a whole book demonstrating that stratification variables, however they are defined and operationalized, do not relate to union growth and character are reluctant in the end to deny some possible relationship. They conclude "stratification variables may also be relevent to a study of union character. The social imagery of union leaders and shop stewards may well be a determinant of union behaviour, just as the membership's social position and imagery may be an impediment or a spur to certain kinds of collective action" (43) They go on to suggest that they are merely denying that stratification is a major variable in explaining union growth and character. Lockwood (44) and Blackburn and Prandy (45) have at various points in their writing drawn attention to the similarity of white-collar unions to manual unions and yet they also posit a positive and direct link between class consciousness and trade unionism.

Growth Factors.

Bain himself argues that membership attachment is inextricably bound up with union growth (46). The forces for growth he states lie outside the control of individuals and consist of the degree of employee concentration, the degree of union recognition by employers and the

extent of government action.   Given that these factors exist he

asserts that union members will come to "value trade unions". (47)

Thus he implies that the attachment of employees to their trade

unions is dependent upon structural factors.   Here he is of course

confusing membership with attachment and while it is acceptable at

a high level of abstraction to argue as he does for facilitating

factors in the growth of white-collar unions, it is quite unacceptable

to extrapolate the attitudes of the membership from the kind of

statistical analysis he offers.   The issue of "coming to value trade

unions" is an open one as C. Wright Mills has suggested.   He argues

that there is no necessary logic in the development of new social and

political ideals as a result of being a union member.   He stresses

the overall instrumentality of union activity in America and says that

"unions, 'instrumentally' accepted, are alternatives to the traditional

individualistic means of obtaining the traditional goals of success".(48)

However,it may be that the union comes to mean more for the members

and Mills links this to the excitement of union action perceived as a

relief from a dull and boring job.   This latter notion accords well

with his overall cynicism concerning white-collar workers and the

American labour movement as a whole.   Nevertheless,he raises the

significant question of how far union membership itself is either a

reflection of class consciousness or a determinant of changing political

and social beliefs in the direction of solidaristic ideals.

Trade Union Activities

Attempts to characterize membership types or trade unions themselves

or indeed to focus upon union growth factors are all limited since they

omit any consideration of employee definitions of work.   This is odd

even in common sense terms since trade unions whatever their shape and

form are chiefly work based organizations. Robert Dubin in a recent
article takes up this point in connection with militancy. He says
"There have been few serious attempts to characterize union militancy
according to the features of the work milieu. In the broadest vein,
capitalistic exploitation has been alleged to be the stimulus for
militant worker responses in the dialectic of the class struggle!
There are, however, many genuine unions in capitalist economies that
are not militant. More pointedly, isolation of work setting combined
with danger and a shared work-living culture have been indicated as
sources of militancy among miners and dock workers." (49) Dubin goes
on to offer an explanatory model of union militancy which is based upon
the attaching features of work. His thesis is that "persons select
features of their regular milieu to which they become affectively
attached". (50) and that the trade union which is engaged in bargaining
with employers over a wide variety of work-attaching features is unlikely
to be militant. The reason for this seems to be based on the Lewinian
principle that participation leads to commitment and on more general
notions about power sharing. While he presents international comparisons
of trade union behaviour to substantiate his argument his theoretical
approach is not absolutely clear. He does not discuss the derivation
of workers' interests in work but rather implies that there are numerous
sources of attachment which the trade union can activate in negotiations
with employers. Thus while on the one hand he represents the union as
a collective expression of members' interests, he suggests on the other
hand that the union negotiations can be somehow independent of such
interests and can actually initiate them. Since he is focusing his
argument at the level of organizational behaviour, member perceptions,
interests and orientations are referred to but not seriously interwoven
with considerations of work institutions and trade unions. However, it

may at least be said of Dubin that he looks at the problem of the relationship of members to trade union as a function of aspects of employee interests in work.

To summarize the treatment of trade union attachment presented so far, the literature appears to divide those who think of this as a purely organizational problem and those who are more concerned with ideological notions of the appropriateness of trade unionism as an expression of class interests. What both have in common is a relatively meagre appreciation of either work factors or work definitions as significant variables in accounting for employee views of trade unions. While it is satisfactory to separate out attachment to a particular union from identification with trade unionism, it is still important to consider both from the standpoint of employee definitions of work which includes expectations brought to the work-place and experiences of work itself. In order to illustrate the importance of this approach I would like to refer to two studies of white-collar workers.

The first was conducted by Barlowe in the administrative head-quarters of a large corporation in the North of England in which a survey of white-collar staff was undertaken. (51) He discovered that staff were satisfied with pay and that they felt fairly paid in relation to similar employees elsewhere. However, they felt badly rewarded vis a vis technical staff in their own organization. Barlowe suggests "this was less a matter of pay than of status ... administrative staff felt that the industry was technologically based throughout; that the levers of ultimate control lay in the hand of engineers." (52) Five months after the survey white-collar staff engaged in a 'work-to-rule'. Barlowe was then able to investigate the overt and underlying causes of this action. Ostensibly militant action appeared to be a response to

re-negotiated pay agreements for manual workers and technical staff
which left the administrative grades' pay agreement alone unaltered.
The administrative staff felt that management were unlikely to yield
to their claim because mangement, they thought, perceived the weakness
of the staff trade union. After several meetings in which much
uncertainty was expressed about taking militant action a decision was
reached to 'work-to-rule' and was well supported. Significantly one
department which did not take part was the Accounts department which
had been nominated as a key area for action. Barlowe suggests that
the explanation for this lay in attitudes towards and perceptions of
local management. Those departments which fully supported the action
were those in which the staff perceived management as "exploitative
and authoritarian" (53). In addition clerks who felt threatened in
terms of promotion prospects were more likely to become involved in
militant action. Thus as in Gouldner's study, "Wild Cat Strike", (54)
pay demands were the surface feature of the situation. Underneath lay
specific anxieties about promotion and wider concerns about how
administrative staff were 'valued' by management. A further aspect
of this study which Barlowe does not draw out is that the significance
of pay is relative rather than absolute. The technical staff pressed
for an increase in order to keep up the differential between themselves
and manual workers. The administrative staff who already felt unjustly
treated compared to the technical staff now felt that the situation had
gone too far. In these terms the symbolic value of pay as an aspect
of status and group identity emerges quite clearly.

The second study for discussion, conducted by Bowen and Shaw (55)
also emphasizes the importance of status anxiety as a fundamental process
in employee preferences for trade union representation. This was a survey
of clerical attitudes in one steel plant in the North-East of England.

Clerks were all members of BISAKTA, the main manual workers' union in the industry. The results of this study made it clear that a distinction had to be made between attachment to trade unionism as an appropriate expression of clerical interests and attachment to the representing trade union. The majority of clerks in the sample were working-class identifiers and their fathers had been manual workers in either mining or steel. They did not express any expectation or wish that they should rise out of the ranks of clerical workers to those of management. They felt that trade unionism was an appropriate expression of their interests. However the sample were divided upon the preferred form of trade union representation; 50% were happy being members of BISAKTA and 50% felt that a completely separate white-collar trade union would be better. The authors attempted to explain this divide in terms of structural variables such as age, sex and place of residence but found that no variable of this nature, about which they had the information, correlated with union preference. Rather the division of opinion appeared to be related to definitions of the status rewards of clerical work at the present time especially compared with manual employees. The clerks who wished for separate representation were those who perceived a threat to their position in terms of the narrowing differentials in pay between themselves and manual workers, who felt that their skills were not recognized sufficiently by management and manual workers and who felt that their influence over affairs in the plant was much lower than that of the manual group. The clerks who were satisfied members of BISAKTA did not differ in their interests or aspirations from those who were typed as 'status anxious' but they felt relatively satisfied with current recognition, influence and pay vis a vis manual employees. In this study it was demonstrated that to be in favour of unionism was clearly no guarantee

of attachment to a particular union. The split of opinion was not
about the means which a union should use in achieving objectives
since most clerks agreed that collective bargaining rather than
militant action was a better tool. Rather the attachment or non-
attachment of clerks to BISAKTA was directly related to perceptions
of status and work rewards, particularly in comparison with production
workers.

The Concept of Union Attachment

It is appropriate at this point to consider the value of the
concept of union attachment which has clearly been used in a number
of ways to depict the attitudes of members, their involvement in
union affairs, their willingness to take militant action and to support
collective action and their overall satisfaction with their own union.
Quite apart from the problem of wide usage, the concept of union
attachment contains within it the assumption that the members and the
union are analytically separate but can be related. Thus the members
are thought to be more-or-less attached to something with a concrete
identity which is independant of them. Even where the emphasis is
on the members' own imagery of the union the concept of union attachment
has overtones of the members' views of an organization which has
separate identifiable properties. For these reasons it is necessary
to redefine union attachment in terms which are consistent with the
overall theoretical approach of this thesis. In line with the refined
version of action theory outlined earlier, it is now suggested that
rather than consider the problem of the actor's relationship to his
trade union or to trade unionism in terms of 'attachment', it is more
useful to investigate his trade union identity. It is suggested that
the trade union should be conceptualized as a potential identification
referent. What we should then be concerned with are the ways in which

actors define their membership (or non-membership) of a trade union.
This will necessitate an investigation of how they themselves define
a trade union, their views of what it means to be a member, and what
facilitates, limits or prevents their identification with membership
of a union.   The question of whether union membership is seen as a
means to an end or an end itself can be pursued in terms of different
forms of identification.   However it is felt that no specific typology,
like that offered by Child, Loveridge and Warner (56) is appropriate in
advance of the views of clerks presented later in this study.   Like
Sheldrake I prefer the alternative of allowing "categories to develop
from the material, rather than imposing a prior framework" (57), in
order to avoid as far as possible the pitfalls of prejudging the
variations of meaning which union membership may have.

Conclusion

In this chapter problems associated with the concepts of
'orientation to work' and 'trade union attachment' have been considered.
While they have been central to a number of interesting and valuable
studies in the broad area of man, work and trade unionism, they were
not entirely appropriate as guiding concepts to this study of clerical
workers.   In essence the concept of 'orientation to work' is less
problematic than that of 'trade union attachment' since it is more
firmly rooted in the action approach.   However in uniting action theory
with the reference group perspective it proved necessary to reconsider
both concepts and to suggest that alternative guiding concepts would be
occupational identity and trade union identity which are no less simple
to measure, but which focus more consistently upon the actor's definition
of reality.   Trade union identity is used to refer to the way in
which clerks define their relationship with trade unionism.   Both
with occupational identity and trade union identity the main focus is

upon the clerk's own definitions and experience.

One objective in selecting this approach was to explore to what extent occupational and trade union identity would be related. With this aim in mind it was appropriate to select a variety of apparently different work situations through which differences in views might arise, and where if similarities in views did emerge, the degree to which these rested on the same selected referents could be examined. In the following chapter details of the firms involved in the study are given within the broader discussion of methodology.

CHAPTER IV   RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction.

The data used in this thesis was gathered as part of a wider study entitled "Attitudes of Industrial Clerks to White-Collar Trade Unionization" which was conducted with S.S.R.C. assistance awarded to Peter Bowen and myself. (1)   At the commencement of the research it was agreed that I would be responsible for methodology and Peter Bowen for the development of a broad industrial relations framework as a perspective for understanding the significance and processes of white-collar unionization.   This latter part of the work has yet to be completed and this thesis is in no way intended to pre-empt the much broader interpretation of the results which would reflect the industrial relations interests of Peter Bowen.   In carrying out this research we were much indebted to Valerie Elsy who was the main research assistant on the project. (2)

The impetus for this project on industrial clerks came from previously completed research in one steelplant in the North of England. The results of the survey of steel clerks were published in 1972 by Bowen and Shaw. (3)   While this initial study provided some interesting findings, which I have discussed elsewhere in this thesis, we felt that it was limited because it only provided data relevant to clerks in one industrial setting and in one rather untypical work and community situation. (4)   Thus we decided that in order to pursue an understanding of the industrial clerk we would require comparative data based on what we considered to be potentially differing work situations. We were less concerned to design a project which would control for varying community situations since this would have required a much greater research effort than we could realistically provide.   While this can be cited as a defect in the ultimate design of the research,

it can also be argued that at least a study which takes account of differing work situations provides a useful addition to the literature (in which clerks have on the whole been treated as a large homogeneous mass). In addition my main interest in the design of the research was to explore the work and community interests of clerks through their own eyes. By focusing on this problem the integration of the perspectives of action theory and reference group theory became a fundamental concern for me in the development of research techniques. This interest was fully supported by P. Bowen although it would be fair to say that his own interests were both broader and more structurally oriented.

This lead to many valuable debates which assisted me in the development of this thesis. In order to pursue my interests it was agreed that in addition to the questionnaire designed by the team, the interview schedule could be designed by me as an attempt to examine the way in which clerks made judgements about their job and work situations within contexts which they themselves defined. (5) For purposes of this thesis the data emerging from interviews is used with some reference to questionnaire data. In this chapter details of the design and processes involved in the carrying out of the whole research project are supplied.

The Firms

As has already been suggested the main aim of the overall research project was to provide a comparative study of clerical workers. Although the study was not designed to investigate every kind of clerical worker an attempt was made to select industries in the North East of England which would provide a range of clerical employment situations. Six organizations were finally selected to represent

four industrial settings - shipbuilding, mining, engineering and civil air transport. In response to early advice given by the S.S.R.C. we also endeavoured to study clerical views in terms of differing memberships of trade unions and the final selection of firms was made with this in mind.(6) The trade unions represented in the study were the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staffs (A.P.E.X.) and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff (A.S.T.M.S.) which are purely white-collar unions recruiting professional and office staffs in the public and private sectors. In addition members of the Colliery Officials and Staffs Area (C.O.S.A.), the white-collar branch of the National Union of Mineworkers (N.U.M.) were included in the study. Table I provides relevant information about the organisations included in the research project and provides fictitious names for the firms for purposes of anonymity.

(Table I is shown over)

As can be seen from Table I, the size and proportion of the clerical labour force in relation to the total numbers employed varied in each case which has to be borne in mind as one feature of the varigated settings in which clerks are employed. The number of female clerks employed exceeded those of males significantly in only two cases, Mercury Engineering and Earth Control. Since clerical work is the most highly feminized of all white-collar occupations, it was interesting to find that male clerks were in predominance in three of the firms investigated and almost equal to female clerks at Saturn Ships. This again suggests that overall statistics concerning the clerical labour force may obscure variations in the sex distribution of clerks between various work situations. In terms of the research these variations provided scope for interesting comparisons of the work

Table 1   Employment Characteristics of the Firms (6)

Industry	Sector	Company	Company Definition	Total Numbers Employed	Total Numbers Employed Clerical	Clerical Employees		Union	Union Membership Total Numbers	Union Members		Non-Union Members Total Numbers	Non-Union Members	
						Males	Females			Males	Females		Males	Females
Mining	Public	Earth Control (EC)	Regional Office of NCB	890	486	199	287	APEX NUMCOSA	APEX 105 NUMCOSA 289	39 124	66 165	92	36	56
		Earth Supplies (ES)	Area Stores of NCB	80	78	55	23	APEX NUMCOSA	APEX 6 NUMCOSA 69	4 48	2 21	3	3	–
Shipbuilding	Private	Saturn Shipyards (SS)	Shipbuilding Division of a National Shipping Company	4,250	111	54	57	APEX	111	50	40	21	4	17
Civil Air Transport	Public	Jupiter Airways (JA)	Operating Division of a National Airline	165	55	34	21	APEX	55	34	21	–	–	–
Engineering	Private	Neptune Electrics (NE)	Product Division of a Multi-National Manufacturer	1,400	158	88	70	APEX	143	31	62	15	7	8
		Mercury Engineering (ME)	Division of National Manufacturer	1,312	48	7	41	ASTMS	47	8	39	1	–	1

and trade union interests of male and female clerks. Table I also
shows that the majority of clerks in each of the firms were trade
union members, although sizeable proportions in Earth Control and
Saturn Shipyards were not. The research was not designed to make
comparisons between union and non-union members but since the clerk
has often been typified as the resistant or reluctant trade unionist,
it was useful to include two firms in which the question of why clerks
had not joined a trade union could be explored.

In order to elaborate the variations of work situations from
which clerks were drawn in this research it is useful to give further
information on each firm including some details of main clerical
functions, grading scales and salary ranges. The information was
compiled from company data, impressions gleaned from observation and
discussions with personnel. It was prepared by all three members of
the research team. In the case of each firm figures are provided to
illustrate the variety and organization of clerical tasks. It can be
readily observed from these figures that clerical work was far from
uniform in the six firms. Information concerning grading structures
and salary scales within the firms is presented in a series of tables.
As with Table I, the figures and tables relating to the firms are
presented on separate sheets and referenced in the text at the most
appropriate points.

JUPITER AIRWAYS

The airport is situated in a rural area eight miles from Newcastle
city centre, surrounded by farmland with no manufacturing industry
nearby. Some employees of Jupiter Airways live in villages within a
two mile radius of the airport, but many come from much further afield.
Employees are mostly scattered in terms of place of residence, within
an eight mile radius of the airport. Thus there is no one residential

community from which employees are drawn.

Jupiter Airways has been subject to rapid growth in the past decade.
Beginning as a small local airline operating between the North East and
London it was recently absorbed into the British Airways Group. Current
operations for the station are extensive and include both domestic and
continental traffic. The local station of the airline consists of only
those employees who are concerned with the day to day handling of
passengers and freight from a regional airport. The main administrative
functions of the airline - for example ticketing, wages and salaries of
employees are based at Headquarters in London. The departmental
structure of this local station reflects its major function, the
processing of people and cargo and the control of airline flight move-
ments. Fig. 1 illustrates the organization of these activities.
Jupiter Airways is quite a small operating unit and clerical staff are
dispersed throughout most departments. This figure illustrates the
organization of these departments and thus excludes the Engineering,
Servicing and Air Crew personnel.
(Fig. 1 and Table 2 are shown over).

The station has much of the flavour of a military establishment.
Nearly all personnel are uniformed. Employees' grades are clearly
displayed in the form of stripes on the cuff and collar of the uniform,
and even by its colour. Only the most junior and senior staff do not
wear uniforms. Staff are located in one of six grades: M, M2, M1, A,
B, T. These grades are arranged hierarchically. M represents the
apex of the hierarchy but most employees are located in grade A. Table 2
provides details of the distribution of station staff by grade together
with the salary ranges. (7)

Fig. 1 JUPITER AIRWAYS : Organisation of Major Administrative and Clerical Activities

Station Manager

Secretary

P.B.X.

Training	Accounts	Cabin Services and Transport	Station Progress	Traffic	Reception	Cargo
Total Staff = 3	Total Staff = 2	Total Staff = 11	Total Staff = 5	Total Staff = 3	Total Staff = 17	Total Staff = 14
Function: Training of Station Staff	Function: General Accounts and refunds procedures	Function: Aircraft Catering and Passenger Services	Function: Duty Officers Co-ordinate work of other depts. aircrew and met. reports	Function: Traffic Officers control flight movements and aircraft loading	Function: Passenger reception and documentation	Function: Cargo documentation and storage

Table 2   JUPITER AIRWAYS : Station Grading Structure (October 1972)

Grades	Nos. of staff M	F	Salary range	Selected Job Titles within Grade
M	2	–	£1965-2565	Senior Instructor, Administrative Officer (Training)
M2	7	–	£1803-2328	Supervisors and Duty Officers
M1	5	4	£1684-2110	Passenger Services Officer, Senior Traffic Officer
A	11	9	£1300-1820	Senior Receptionists, Traffic and Catering Officers
B	9	7	£1196-1664	Ordinary Receptionist, Cargo Assistant, Clerks
T	–	1	£ 988-1456	Telephonist

A distinctive feature of Jupiter Airways is the hours of work since a two shift system is operated. The first, or early shift begins at 6.45am continuing to 14.45pm. The second or late shift begins at 14.00pm and finishes at 22.00pm. These periods are referred to by employees as "duty periods" which perhaps echoes the military flavour of the station. Only those staff employed in the Accounts Office, the telephonist and the station manager's secretary are excluded from this shift system. They work more typical 9 - 5 office hours.

It must be admitted that to an outside observer the work carried out by ground personnel at an airport does not fulfil the usual notions of what clerical work entails. As we shall see later, clerical employees at the airport felt that their jobs provided them with opportunities for varied and interesting work, including 'meeting people' which they valued, and they tended to contrast this type of job with more typical office job. Employees, especially those in the Passenger Reception Department, were very much aware of their responsibilities in 'public relations'. The emphasis on 'working with people' is also reflected in the training courses offered to personel of Jupiter Airways. Sixteen courses are offered, ranging through ticketing procedures, basic and advanced fares, cargo handling, traffic handling and passenger handling. Specific examples of passenger handling courses are "Developing Inter-active Skills", "Working with People", and "Techniques of Oral Communication".

As researchers we were suitably impressed with the air of cool efficiency which pervaded the smart concourse buildings and were rather surprised to find overcrowded, poorly furnished, and generally cluttered backstage office accommodation. It should be remembered that apart from reception personnel, who spend much of their working time in

direct contact with passengers, other clerical staff work largely
behind the scenes. Those who work in cabin services and cargo
also handle goods such as catering materials and duty free items.
Thus whereas in many industrial firms, clerical work is supportive
to production work which is a center stage activity, at Jupiter
Airways we gained the impression of the clerical function as a back-
up to the more public service activities of passenger transport.

NEPTUNE ELECTRICS

Neptune Electrics is situated in an urban area at the coast,
ten miles from Newcastle. The factory and office buildings are
near the town centre surrounded by both residential and shopping
areas. Close by is the river where the more traditional industries
of shipbuilding, ship repairing and other related industries are sited.
Employment in the area is diverse in both older and new established
industries, although as in other parts of the North East unemployment
is still comparatively high. Although a few employees travel to work
from as far as eight miles away, the majority live within a one mile
radius of the firm.

The company is a product division of a multinational manufacturing
group and manufactures telecommunications equipment. Like Jupiter
Airways the company has experienced rapid growth during the last ten
years and this is expected to continue in the forseeable future. Neptune
Electrics produces switching equipment for telephone exchanges. The
company's major customer is the Post Office and its current modernization
programme guarantees a market for Neptune's products.

Unlike Jupiter Airways however, the clerical function at Neptune
Electrics is more diverse and reflects the typical pattern of office
organization in manufacturing as opposed to service industries. There
are an estimated 104 clerical job functions at Neptune Electrics.

These activities range from clerk storekeeper and security officer working in the factory area through the usual secretarial, typing, accounts, payroll and drawing-office clerical staff to the highly specialized and technical work-study clerk and the progress-chaser. Progress-chasers form a distinctive group: their work location is on the shop floor but unlike other clerical groups their tasks require wide and free-ranging movement throughout the firm. These jobs in close association with production, like the progress-chaser and the storekeeper, involve longer hours of work than other clerical activities. This division of clerical work between works staff and office staff is frequently found in industry and adds a further dimension to the complexity of defining 'a clerical worker'. At Neptune works staff have a 40 hour week; office staff a 37 hour week. As in most manufacturing organizations clients are not the immediate concern of clerical workers. Their major social contacts at work are with other clerical workers, supervisors, management and manual workers. Much of their time is spent in processing "things" (for example, time cards, stock-records, accounts and correspondence). This is in marked contrast with Jupiter Airways whose clerical employees nearly all have some contact with passengers. The administrative activities of Neptune are closely tied to the production process and the departmental organization of these activities is only intelligible if their supportive role is remembered. Fig. 2 illustrates the departments with which clerical work is associated and gives an indication of the clerical functions in these departments.

(Fig. 2 is shown over).

At the time of initial enquiries for this research one important issue which emerged was the application of job evaluation techniques and clerical work measurement. The impression given was that the

Fig. 2   NEPTUNE ELECTRICS : Organisation of Major Administrative and Clerical Activities

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │   General Manufacturing  │
                    │    Manager DIVISIONAL    │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Manufacturing Site Manager │
                    │      Neptune Electrics   │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
   ┌──────────┬──────────┬───────┴───────┬──────────┬──────────┐
```

Manufacturing	Materials	Manpower	Wks. Engineering	E.D.P. & Systems Dev.	Finance
Storekeepers Progress control	Function: Contracts Purchasing Production Control Stores	Function: Personnel Training Security Canteen Wages	Function: Printing Services Misc. Services	Function: Works Study	Function: Accounts
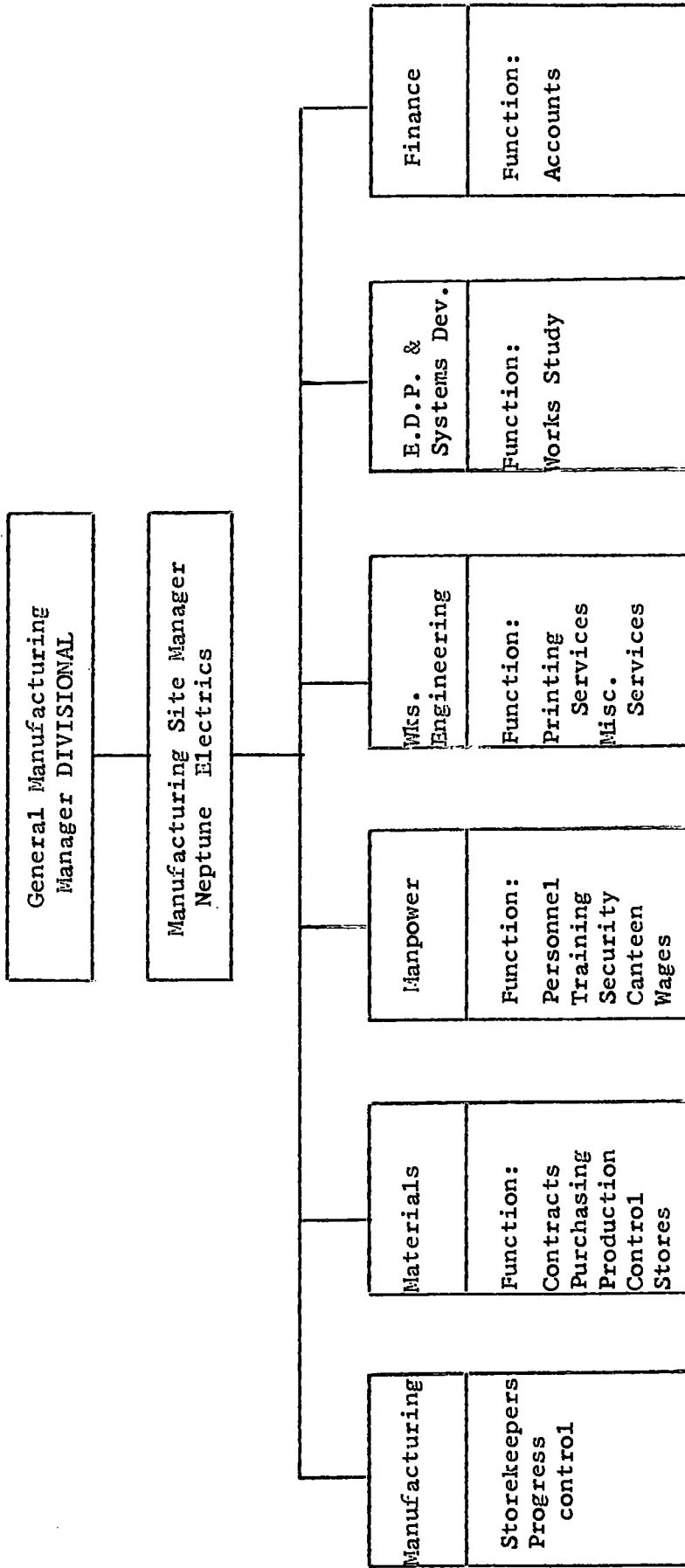
purpose behind the application of these techniques was questioned
by management and little understood by clerical employees.
Whereas management felt that the clerical work measurement
programme reflected badly on the quality of existing supervision
since it was directed primarily at the rationalization of clerical
supervisory tasks, clerical employees themselves saw the programme
as bound up with job evaluation and felt that it would therefore
bring about favourable changes for them. This feeling was associated
with a dissatisfaction with the existing grading structure. However
they believed that management and trade union were taking too much
time in bringing about desired changes. The grading structure which
was the focus for discussion is illustrated in Table 2.
(Table 3 is shown over).
This shows a sixpoint grading scale with the most senior staff on
grade six and it was at this level particularly that the structure
was felt to lack clear definition. In any event the general feeling
was that the structure was outmoded and changes were required. The
table also shows the salary ranges associated with each grade and
gives some indication of typical job titles in the grades. The
problem of grading was closely linked to the more general problems
of promotion and recruitment. Graduates who were increasingly
recruited were placed at the top end of the clerical grading scale.
Recruitment of other clerical staff was controlled at the divisional
level. All "new starters" had to be 'requisitioned' from divisional
heads - a procedure which apparently took several months. This had
the interesting effect of encouraging internal recruitment of hourly
paid manual workers into clerical grades. The impression given was
that these recruiting procedures were seen to be threatening. The
clerks saw their own promotion prospects as diminishing due to graduate

Table 3   NEPTUNE ELECTRICS : Grading Structure (July 1972)

Grades	Numbers of Staff		Salary Range 36¾ hr. wk. *		Selected Job Titles within Grade
	M	F	M	F	
			£ p.a.	£ p.a.	
1	2	12	624–1300	572–988	Female clerks
2	17	35	676–1404	624–1144	Clerk typist, wages clerk, personnel clerk, data preparation clerk
3	23	12	728–1508	884–1248	Work-study clerk, senior materials account clerk, assistant buyer
4	14	6	1404–1664	1196–1300	Contract co-ordinator, stock controller, supervisors, secretaries
5	9	2	1508–1768	1243–1404	Systems Co-ordinator, unit accountant buyer, senior stock controller
6	18	1	1800–2200	1404–1554	Systems Co-ordinator, unit accountant buyer, senior stock controller

*   40 hr. week salaries same plus 12½%.

recruitment at the top end of the scale which they now saw as a
"grey area" - no longer open to clerks.

Another aspect of clerical employment at Neptune is the apparent
lack of confirmation of clerical roles in terms of training.   In
contrast to Jupiter Airways there are no special training courses.
Most training is done on an ad hoc basis to deal with new problems
(such as Value Added Tax).   Yet Neptune Electrics has very sophisticated
training procedures for its manual operatives.   It seems that in this
firm the supportive role of clerical work is emphasized in many respects
and not least in the physical arrangements of the factory floor and
offices.   The offices are placed around the shop floor and the office
doors open into the factory area.   This arrangement gives the impression
of production at the centre of things - a stage or an open arena on
which the main businee is acted out for all to see.   Clerks are
clustered around the edges as if in the wings.   Their access to other
offices, the canteen and even the coffee machines which are placed in
the factory area, involves moving across the central stage and coming
into contact with production workers who are mainly women.

Because of the physical arrangements in this factory, we as out-
siders, gained a very strong sense of clerical workers engaged in
backstage work involving supportive tasks for the major actors who
were production workers.

MERCURY ENGINEERING

The Mercury Engineering factory is situated in a new factory
development of a new town in Northumberland, eight miles from Newcastle.
This factory is a "green field" site although it would be inaccurate to
suggest that it is somehow isolated in a rural area away from the basic
industries of the region.   Indeed the new town residential development
and its factory estates, of which the Mercury Engineering factory is
only one unit, were established to resettle families and employees from

older and declining industrial areas. The majority of clerical

workers here live within a four mile radius of the firm mostly

living within the new town itself.

Mercury Engineering is part of a rapidly expanding and diver-

sifying British company. Its products include men's toilet requisites,

quality steel hand tools and safety appliances. In 1963 the manufacture

of toilet requisites was transferred to Northumberland and now this

factory is by far the largest single unit of the national company

having a payroll of 1,300. Like Neptune Electric the Mercury

Engineering factory is predominantly a manufacturing site and clerical

and administrative staff here are limited in number to those required

to support production activities. Administrative functions common

to all sites are carried out at headquarters in the South of England.

Figure 3 illustrates the departmental organisation at Mercury Engineering.

(Fig. 3 is shown over).

In this company there is an important distinction between monthly

and weekly paid office staff. Only the weekly paid staff are included

in our investigation. The nature of this distinction lies in the firms

definition of clerical work as located on the bottom four grades of a

grading scale which at point five becomes administrative grades. The

significance of this distinction is that women are typically on clerical

grades and men on the higher administrative grades. Table 4 indicates

the clerical grades.

(Table 4 is shown over).

It is theoretically possible for a weekly paid staff employee to be

promoted, upgraded and paid on a monthly basis. All vacancies are

advertised internally as well as externally. Company policy is to

select all candidates for promotion by competition.

Fig. 3 Mercury Engineering : Organisation of Major Administrative and Clerical Activities
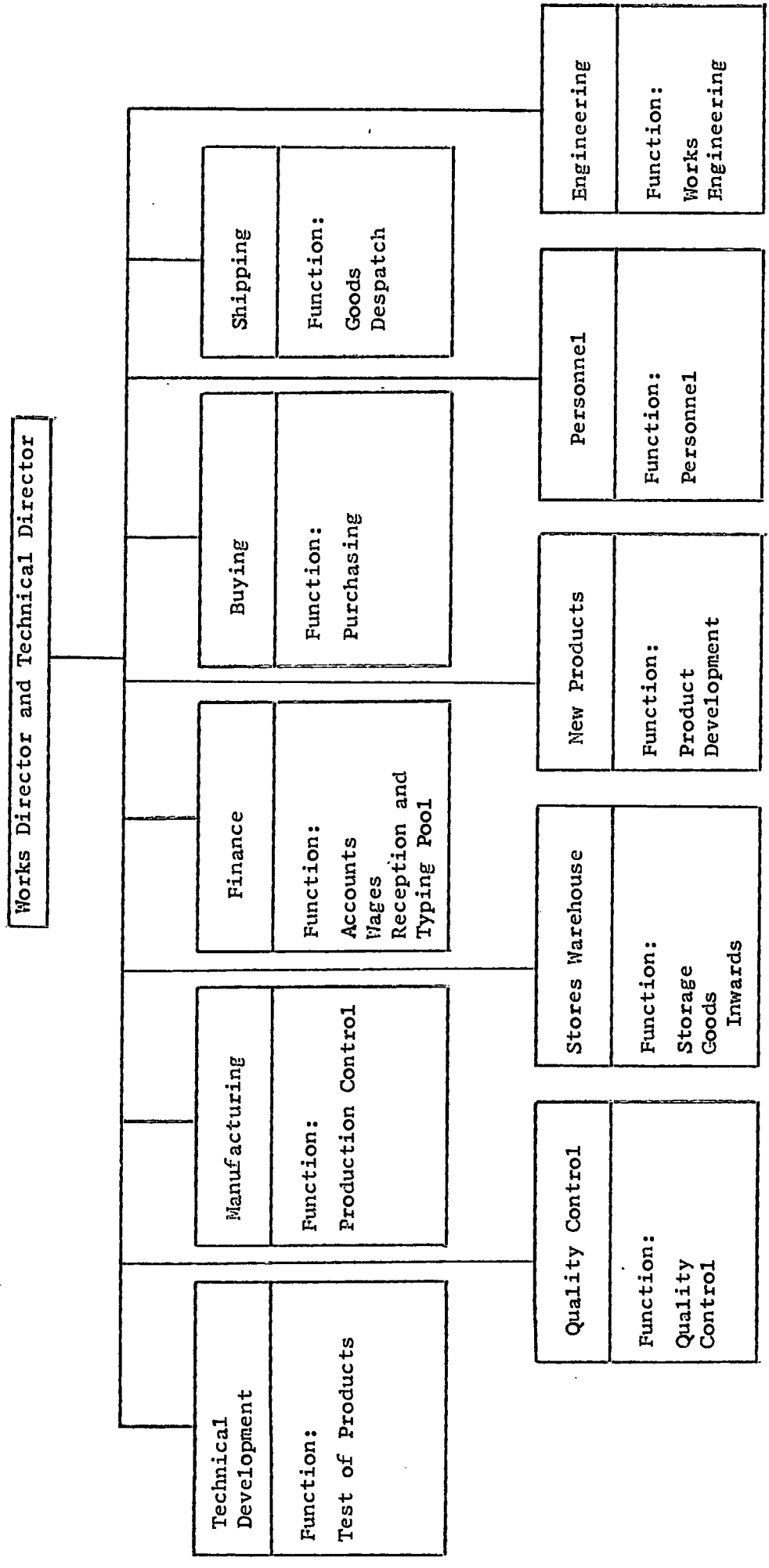
Works Director and Technical Director

Technical Development
Function:
Test of Products

Manufacturing
Function:
Production Control

Finance
Function:
Accounts
Wages
Reception and
Typing Pool

Buying
Function:
Purchasing

Shipping
Function:
Goods
Despatch

Engineering
Function:
Works
Engineering

Quality Control
Function:
Quality
Control

Stores Warehouse
Function:
Storage
Goods
Inwards

New Products
Function:
Product
Development

Personnel
Function:
Personnel

Table 4   MERCURY ENGINEERING : Grading Structure (1972)

Grades	Nos. of Staff M	Nos. of Staff F	Salary Range M £ p.a.	Salary Range F £ p.a.	Selected Job Titles within Grade
Junior	–	9	1092–1404	832–1092	Junior Accounts Clerk
2	8	12	1196–1560	884–1196	Production Control Clerk
3	2	10	1300–1664	988–1300	Clerk, Clerk-typist, Accounts clerk
4	–	9	1404–1768	1092–1352	Secretary

It is interesting to compare the grading structure at Mercury Engineering with that operating at Neptune Electrics. At Mercury Engineering "clerical work" is defined very narrowly. Many jobs that in Neptune Electrics would be described as clerical are here defined as "monthly paid", and monthly paid in Mercury Engineerings' terms means more "responsible" jobs involving decision making. These jobs were described to us as having a "lesser" clerical content and supervisors and heads of section are included in the administrative group. By comparison the weekly-paid clerical jobs are of the more routine kind including typing, secretarial, machine operating and general clerical tasks. In the case of this firm the fact that women generally occupy the lower grades in office work is very visible.

As in Neptune Electrics training for clerical employees is minimal. New recruits receive a brief induction course and there are opportunities for day release courses although these are not offered particularly or taken up by women. There is some general training for all office employees relating to specific items like Value Added Tax.

Clerical work in this firm is "women's work" by definition and although women come into contact with the male administrative staff, the women work in close proximity to one another in mostly open plan type office accommodation. Unlike Neptune Electrics, not all clerical and administrative staff are situated in close physical proximity to production workers. The majority work in a separate office block although all workers share the same canteen facilities.

Earth Control

Earth Control is situated in a large industrial estate within the Tyneside connurbation. The estate was established to attract industrial development during the depressed inter-war years. The majority of clerical employees at Earth Control reside in the Tyneside connurbation,

though a sizeable minority are drawn from smaller towns and villages in Northumberland and County Durham. Compared with other sites the catchment area of Earth Control is wide.

Earth Control is the administrative headquarters of the National Coal Board Northern area. This area covers the Northumberland and Durham coalfields. At these headquarters a very wide range of office services are represented. In recent years the size and range of office functions has changed considerably. During the sixties the policy of the Board was to rationalize coal production which involved the redevelopment of certain collieries and the closure of others. In consequence, certain office services formerly provided at the pit head were transferred to Regional offices of which Earth Control was one. More recently the Board has embarked upon a programme of administrative re-organisation. The effect of this has been to secure a total transfer of area administrative functions to central regional offices. Earth Control fulfils this function for the Northern area.

In practice, the implementation of these plans has had far reaching effects. The scale and concentration of administrative services at Earth Control increased swiftly. The means of discharging these services has been considerably influenced by the introduction of technical changes of which the computerisation of data and information is perhaps the most obvious. In turn the effects of rationalisation on this scale has had implications for the level of office employment at Earth Control. Certainly over the last decade the total number of office workers required to perform this widening range of office services has contracted. What is happening at Earth Control is a continuing process of adapting office tasks to the requirements of the computer. This process is reflected, for example, in the number of clerical tasks which are directly concerned with computerisation:

coding and punching data and interpreting the results. For these
purposes the Coal Board has its own language code, an optical
character reading system, with which most clerks of Earth Control
are familiar. All the administration of wages, materials, costing,
accounts and supplies is handled by electronic data processing methods.
The same process is also reflected in the emergence of shift working
in the Central Computer department as an important means of organising
clerical activities to meet computer requirements. At Earth Control
some fifty operations staff of this department are engaged in day and
night shift work.

This was by far the largest site investigated. Of all companies
it was here that all those predisposing factors for a high degree of
routinisation, formalisation, mechanisation and bureaucratisation were
present. Sheer size and concentration on only administrative business
made these processes possible and viable techniques. But what we
found in this office could be replicated almost exactly in any of the
other regional offices of the industry. It is the standardisation of
office procedures on a national scale that makes this replication
possible. The administrative objectives of the industry are determined
at national headquarters. Thus it is possible for an accounts clerk
at Earth Control in telephone conversation with his opposite in Kent
to communicate information in terms of procedures immediately familiar
to both. Thousands of similar transactions will take place every day,
verbal and written exchanges based upon a uniform office language.
Figure 4 demonstrates the range of clerical functions and their organization.
(Fig. 4 is shown over).

The largest department in Earth Control is Regional Accounts where
150 clerks are employed. Here there are almost as many office workers
as there are in the whole of Neptune Electrics, the next largest group of

Fig. 4   EARTH CONTROL :   Organisation of Administrative Activities

```
                          National Headquarters
                                   |
                       Earth Control – Regional H.Q.
```

Computer Services
Function:
Electronic
Data Processing
Data Preparation
Systems Planning
and Control
External Services

Purchasing & Stores
Function:
Purchasing and
Stock Control
Stock Supplies,
Records, Invoicing,
Contracts

Regional Marketing
Function :
Sales and
distribution
of fuels in N.E.
Region
Export to other
regions both
domestic and
industrial
consumers

House Manager
Function:
Internal
Services
communications
security etc.
Typing Services
Movement of mail
Paperwork and
file storage for
all departments

Regional Accounting
Function:
Finance, Accounts
Wages Control,
Mineworker's
pensions
Debtors, Creditors

Staff Department
Function:
Industrial
Relations and
Personnel Wages

Superannuation
Function:
Pensions

Internal Audit
Internal Audit
Internal
Accounting

Regional Solicitors
Regional Solicitors
Legal

Workshop
Function:
Technical
Services

P.R.O.
Function:
Public
Relations

Geological Services
Function:
Geological
Services

Regional Scientific Control
Function:
Scientific
Services

clerks included in this research.   This merely underlines the scale
of clerical activities at Earth Control.   Other departments, such as
the House Managers and Computer Services departments employ around
one hundred clerical staff.   The remaining departments, though
having fewer clerks, are still large when technical and managerial
staff are included.   Certainly operations are carried out on the
scale usually regarded as being a necessary precondition for functional
specialisation.   To illustrate this we can look at the example of the
Computer Services department.   As well as being an integral part of
regional administration this department also sells its services to
outside clients.   These services include computer time, data
preparation and technical expertise.   Computer Services department
can thus be viewed as a "firm" in its own right responding to the
administrative routines of customers.   This is a superb example of
functional specialisation and rationalisation and contrasts sharply
with the situation at Jupiter Airways or Neptune Electrics where the
organisation of clerical and administrative activities are only
intelligible in relation to the total activity of the company.
Table 5 indicates the Coal Board's grading structure relating to
general clerical, machine operator and computer assistant staff.
This national grading structure is complemented by a national pay
structure.   The fine division is perhaps best illustrated by the
absence of our notations shown in tables for other companies of
"job titles within grades".   At Earth Control grading is the 'all
important' identifier.
(Table 5 is shown over).

    At the time of our enquiries a general administrative re-
organisation was in progress.   Staff at Earth Control and those
brought in from outlying areas because of pit closures were being

Table 5   EARTH CONTROL :   Clerical Grading Structure (1972)

Grades	Nos. of Staff in Grades		Salary Range £ p.a.
	M	F	
General Clerical	53	109	514-1360
Clerical Officer Grade 3	40	38	1330-1490
Clerical Officer Grade 2	48	11	1455-1665
Clerical Officer Grade 1	34	2	1585-1860
Typing and Machine Operator Grade 3	1	44	514-1309
Typing and Machine Operator Grade 2	-	9	527-1322
Typing and Machine Operator Grade 1	-	45	545-1341
Senior Typing and Machine Operator	-	26	574-1379
Computer Assistant Grade 4	6	2	939-1480
Computer Assistant Grade 3	5	-	1455-1625
Computer Assistant Grade 2	7	1	1590-1810
Computer Assistant Grade 1	2	3	1725-2010

redeployed amongst departments in Earth Control. There had been
a reduction in recruitment of new employees into the General
Clerical grade. This was the lowest grade and thereafter
promotion and upgrading was made from within. Clerical officer
vacancies are advertised internally. A local bulletin of vacancies
is circulated and selection is by interview. The lower rate of
recruitment of the bottom grade of clerk, owing to reorganisation
and industry contraction, also indicates stability amongst those
presently employed insofar as this creates fewer prospects for
mobility through promotion. Despite this "doldrum" period for
recruitment and promotion there are periodic short courses covering
such matters as office procedures and a junior administrative training
scheme. There is the usual encouragement to all younger staff to
undertake vocationally oriented further education courses on day
release and evening class schemes. Course and exam fees and cost of
books are all reimbursed. A great deal of training also takes place
on the job and those who are for instance pursuing accountancy
qualifications are allocated a tutor within the appropriate department
to assist them in their studies.

Earth Control is a large office block in which the support
function of clerical and administrative tasks to the production of
coal is not obvious. To the visitor Earth Control appears to have a
life of its own and comes to close to common sense notions of 'the
bureaucracy'. As researchers we were made welcome but access was
by no means free or informal except in the lunch hour period when we
were able to make use of the canteen. Even here employees appeared to
arrive and leave in cohorts, as if they themselves were programmed to
fit the efficient running of the organization.

EARTH SUPPLIES:

Earth Supplies is one of the National Coal Board's largest stores. It is the central store for coal fields in the northern area. For certain items of ironmongery it is the Board's national store. Its function is to meet the material requirements of collieries, workshops, coke ovens and other production activities.

The stores are located administratively as an outpost of the Purchasing Stores Department of Earth Control. Figure 5 illustrates this relationship.

(Fig. 5 and Table 6 are shown over).

Earth Supplies is sited in what was originally a pit village, and all clerical employees live within a two mile radius of the Stores. The centre consists of office and warehouse accommodation. Warehousing occupies most of the site, comprising both out door and enclosedstorage space.

Clerical workers at Earth Supplies are concentrated in sections: the storehouse and stock record section. Thirty four clerical staff are engaged in storehouse and office duties of which eighteen are in supervisory grades. Storehouse clerks are male and their jobs involve handling materials and general warehouse work as well as clerical duties. The shift system is operated in the warehouse area.

Other clerical workers at Earth Supplies are located in an office building, situated close to the main warehouses and stockyards, and are engaged in a variety of duties. These include stock records, typing, purchasing and general administration. The office also houses a regional stock control section and a purchasing section.

The grading and pay conditions at Earth Supplies are similar to those applied at Earth Control.
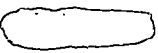
Fig. 5 EARTH SUPPLIES : Organisation of Activities

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        ┌─────────────────┐
        │  Earth Control   │
        │  Regional H.Q.   │
        └─────────────────┘
                │
        ┌─────────────────┐
        │  Earth Supplies  │
        │     Manager      │
        └─────────────────┘
                │
        ┌───────┴────────────────┐
        │                        │
┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│ Stores          │     │ Documentation   │
│ Warehousing     │     │ Stock           │
│ Despatch        │     │ Control and     │
│ Department      │     │ Purchasing      │
│                 │     │ Department      │
└─────────────────┘     └─────────────────┘
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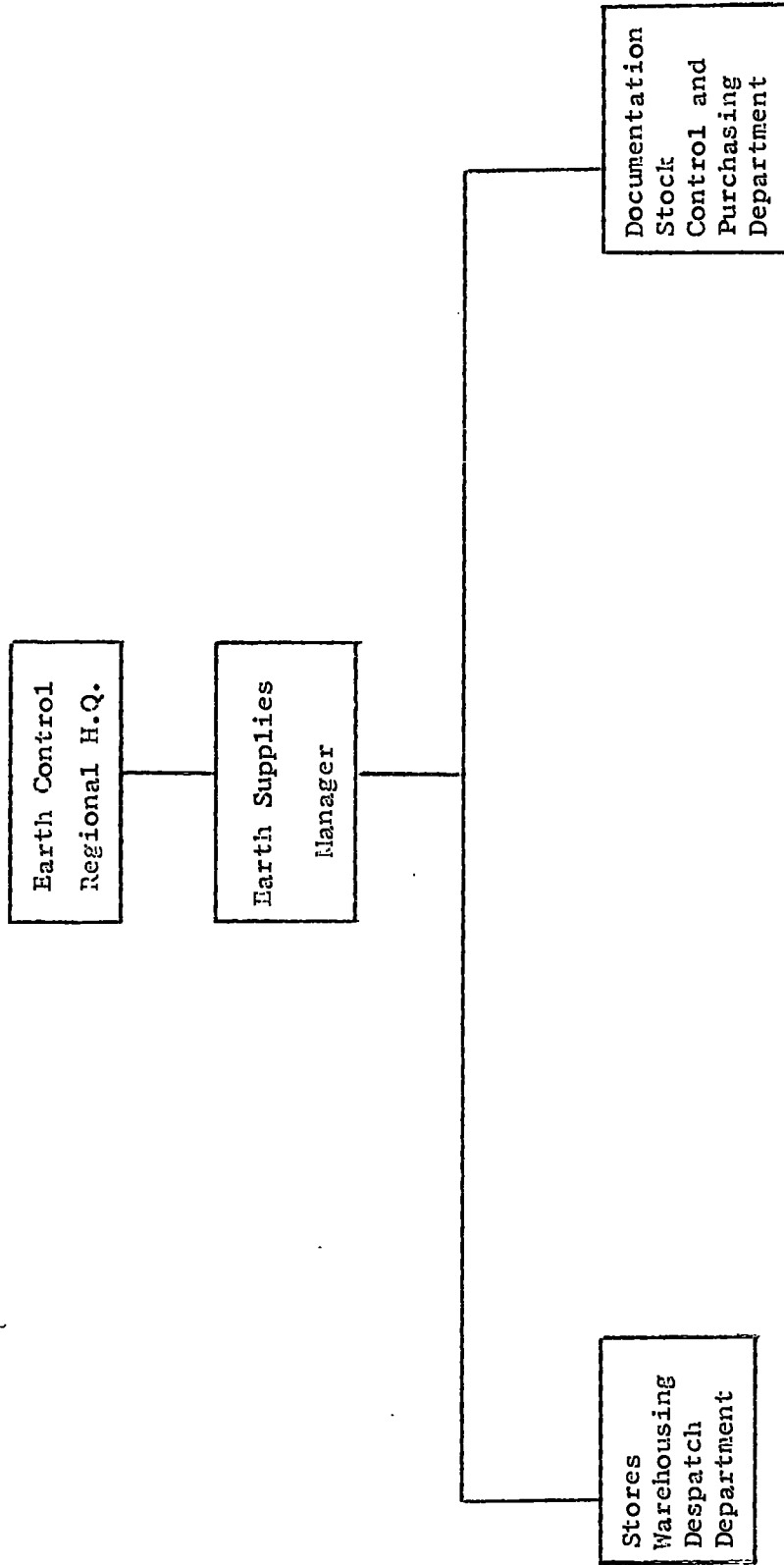
Table 6 EARTH SUPPLIES : Clerical Grading Structure,
(June 1972)

| Grades | Nos. of Staff in Grades | | Salary Range |
	M	F	£ p.a.
General Clerical	28	22	514-1360
Clerical Officer Grade 3	12	-	1330-1490
Clerical Officer Grade 2	11	1	1455-1665
Clerical Officer Grade 1	3	-	1585-1860
Snr. Typist/MO	-	1	574-1379

SATURN SHIPYARDS

Saturn Shipyards, Earth Control and Earth Supplies all represent
long established industries of the north east.   But in Saturn
Shipyards, as in mining, there have been important organisational
changes in recent years.   There are three main shipyards located on
both sides of the river and also some distance away two office buildings.
The area within which these different parts of the firm are dispersed
is about two miles.   This area is not the exclusive territory of the
shipbuilders.   Other firms and industries are nearby, including glass
manufacture, marine engineering and steel construction.   Although the
riverside is predominantly industrial it is interspersed with residential
areas.   These "pockets" of houses and shops were once distinct villages
but are now indistinguishable within an extended urban and industrial
area.   Most of the clerical employees of Saturn Ships live within a
one mile radius of their place of work.   Only a small minority travel
to work over distances of more than one mile from newer housing
developments.   The present organisation of Saturn Shipyards was
developed from an amalgamation of family businesses.   Following the
Geddes Report these businesses combined to form a group which later
was taken over by a national shipping line.   Investment by the new group
produced growth and development after many years of stagnation.   This
was the situation during 1972-74, at the time of our investigation.
Since that time the financial difficulties of the parent shipping
company has led to large-scale government intervention and support
culminating in nationalisation.   Amalgamation involved the centralisation
and modernisation of administrative activities.   For some clerical
employees this   involved moving offices. It has involved learning new
skills since the introduction of computerisation and for some it has required

displacement from an important clerical position in a small firm to
being "one of a crowd" in a large group. Figure 6 demonstrates the
organization of clerical functions.

(Figure 6 and Table 7 are shown over).

Where departments were previously dispersed within smaller ship-
yards they are now centralised and located in new accommodation some
distance from the shipyards. The central accounts department and the
new computer centre are examples. Only the secretarial staff
associated with production management, time office and wages admin-
istration clerks remain in the shipyards. These clerks, all males,
are in daily contact with the shipbuilding manual workers. Like the
progress chasers at Neptune Electrics they work a 40 hour week and can
best be described as works staff. They handle time cards, give out
wage packets and deal with queries about amounts paid. The total
number of clerical and office staff at Saturn Shipyards is small in
relation to the manual work force. As in Mercury Engineering there
are monthly paid staff employees who are excluded from our samples.
Saturn Shipyards define clerical work in limited terms as being made
up of low level routine tasks and, like Mercury Engineering, the
clerical workers who perform these tasks are all weekly paid. At
the time of our enquiries there was no grading structure for this
group of employees. As Table 7 shows some differentiation was made
upon the basis of years of service, and older employees were described
as "senior clerks". Senior clerks were paid higher salaries and in
some cases they held supervisory responsibilities. It was recognised
by both management and employees that a grading structure based upon
job content was needed and during the time of our research a programme
of job evaluation was undertaken. From this scheme a five point grading
structure emerged which was agreed upon and implemented shortly after
we finished our enquiries.

Figure 6 : Organisation of Administrative Activities – Saturn Ships

Financial & Administrative

Director

Accounts Department	Wages Departments located in 3 shipyards	Computer Centre
function: accounts purchasing stock records stock control buying staff salaries central services	function: wages and time cards for shipbuilding manual workers	function: Data processing, accounts stock wages etc.
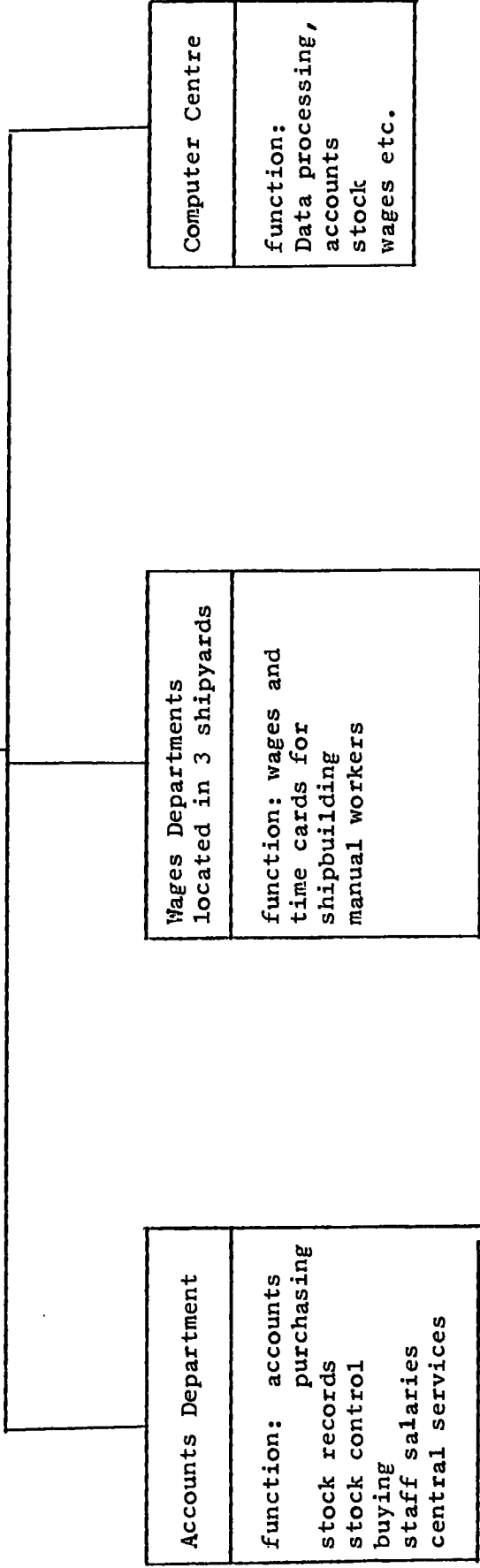
Table 7 SATURN SHIPYARDS : Clerical Grading Structure, (1972)

Grades	Numbers of Staff in Grade		Salary Range £ p.a.		Selected Job titles within each grade
	M	F	M	F	
Senior Clerk	20	-	£1400-1600	-	Cost Clerk Stock Clerk Labour Budget Clerk
General Clerk	34	57	£1100-1400	£900-1200	Typist, telephonist, secretary, comptometer operator Time Office clerk Buying clerk

The situation at Saturn Shipyards is best described as one of change, and perhaps for the office staff one of uncertainty. During the years of re-organisation the overall numbers of office staff had been allowed to decline through "natural wastage". The introduction of new techniques like electronic data processing had offered new job opportunities and new skills for some, but for others no doubt they only served to increase bewilderment and unease. From employment in a small firm employees had experienced rapid re-organisation and had entered a situation involving new personnel in management positions, new techniques of administration, new office buildings and new colleagues. The new structure involved co-operation and integration between former business competitors, the creation of group feelings from small firm loyalties. In a very important sense the changes which took place at Saturn Shipyards had a more direct impact on the office rather than the manual workers. Relocation, redeployment and retraining were aspects of change affecting most white-collar workers in this company. As outside observors we gained the impression that although clerks were now mainly separated from shipyard workers, they were aware of the supportive role of clerical work and that it was regarded as a grim necessity by men and management.

The Trade Unions.

Although this thesis is not concerned with an analysis of trade unions as organizations, it is useful to include an outline of the development and current representation of each as a background to this study of clerks. As has been previously stated the clerks involved in the survey were drawn from three unions - the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff (APEX); the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff (ASTMS); the National Union of Mineworkers, the Colliery Officials and Staffs

Area (NUM COSA).

APEX

In 1972, at their eighty-first delegate conference and special delegate meeting the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union (CAWU) resolved to change their union's title to APEX. The abstract from the agenda of this meeting quoted below specified the reasons given for this change.

"Since the creation of the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union, the membership of the union has changed - new jobs have been created and the climate in which we operate and the degree of challenge from other unions has greatly increased. The purpose of a union name is adequately to describe the range of members and interests represented by the union. The right title for the union will assist existing and potential members to identify more closely with the union... It is believed that a change in union title will assist the union in obtaining more specific publicity in the press and television, and will give members and officials a better chance in new industries and in the growing computer and office specialist field." (8)

This renaming underlines the changing nature of clerical and office work but also demonstrates the pressures felt by a union which had traditionally recruited clerical employees, in maintaining and increasing its membership in a time of technical change. Lumley argues that the threat posed by the introduction of computers in the early 70's gave "clerical employees in particular an incentive to join unions such as APEX, which promise to fight for measures to avoid redundancy and for opportunities for retraining." (9) However some indication of the strain felt by the union in the year immediately prior to the remaming decision in 1972 is given by the fall in membership from 120,079 in 1970 to 118,799 in 1971. (10) In addition although

it has been calculated that CAWU increased its membership by +58%

in the period 1964-1970, ASTMS had been much more successful increas-

ing its membership by +296% during the same period. (11)   Table 8

demonstrates that since 1972, APEX has shown a steady increase in

membership until 1976 when a slight decline is shown.   This is

probably a result of redundancy and a decline in the creation of

new jobs within the present economic climate.   Table 8

TABLE 8.   APEX MEMBERSHIP FIGURES 1970-1976 (12)

Year	Male	Female	Boys	Girls	Associates	Total
1970	58,852	46,657	3,471	13,313	2,786	120,079
1971	52,959	47,721	3,142	13,041	2,936	118,799
1972	53,645	49,301	2,879	11,177	3,019	120,021
1973	55,720	52,055	2,821	10,857	3,145	124,590
1974	59,757	65,103	407*	2,985*	3,328	131,643
1975	61,893	68,735	734	3,772	3,605	138,739
1976	60,775	68,865	566	2,467	3,687	136,354

also shows that APEX has had considerable success in recruiting

women since 1972, and while the union does not provide a breakdown

of membership by occupation, we could surmise that a substantial

proportion of these women will be employed in the computer field.

In addition APEX launched a Campaign for Equal Pay in 1973 through

which it was argued, "we have been achieving a very good press reaction

and have gained considerable publicity and by this a large degree of

public sympathy with our claims in the localities where we have been

pressing the issue of Equal Pay with particular companies." (13)   How

far such a campaign could be linked to increases in the recruitment of

women would be difficult to estimate, but the appeal to women in

clerical and office employment was judged by union officials to be

closely linked to recruitment. (14)

o

The historical development of APEX, from its inception in 1890
as the National Union of Clerks until the present time, provides an
interesting picture of a union attempting to respond to changes in
clerical work and employment.   In this period the union has had to
come to terms with a growing women membership, "first as 'single spies'
but ere long 'in battalions' ", (15) and with membership in many
different industries each having distinctive characteristics.   This
latter problem is referred to by Bain as one of occupational versus
industrial organisation. (16)   For the union the problem consists
in making decisions about how best to represent members' interests in
a situation where a distinctive occupational identity seems lacking
but there are differences according to the industry in which clerks
are employed.   There have been many attempts by the union to resolve
this problem in an effort to adequately represent sections within its
membership whilst at the same time retaining a measure of 'clerical'
occupational identity.   The first attempt came after the first world
war when the union was reorganised on an industrial basis.   Eight
national guilds were established each autonomous with regard to the
industry sector that it represented, with a national General Council
co-ordinating the activities of these guilds.   However this strategy
was not felt to be a success and during this period sections of member-
ship broke away from the union.   In 1932 the guild system was thus
abolished and an organisation established which was based upon geograph-
ical areas.   This method still did not wholly resolve the problem, and
in 1937 membership in the iron and steel industry left to join BISAKTA.
This marked the end of a tenuous relationship first formed in 1920
between CAWU (APEX) and BISAKTA. (17)   Once again an attempt to preserve
an occupational base within an industrial structure had failed.   This
also points to the peculiar situation within which white-collar unions

must work and develop in the industrial field, where manual workers' unions have a longer history and tradition. The present organisation of APEX is still based upon geographical areas but these are overlaid with and supported by Industrial Advisory Councils in Engineering, Coal, Co-operatives, Electricity Supply and Civil Air Transport which function at both regional and the national levels. This represents some concession to sectional interests. In addition full-time officials take on special responsibilities for certain industries.

APEX, as it is now called, is the longest established white-collar union. It was first founded in 1890 as the Clerical Workers Union, was affiliated to the TUC in 1903 and to the Labour Party in 1907, the first white-collar union to do so. (18) It was also the first white-collar union to recruit membership of clerical and administrative staff in manufacturing industries and has made great strides particularly in engineering. At the time at which our survey was conducted engineering and shipbuilding accounted for more than half the existing membership. Civil Air Transport represented a more recent area of recruitment but along with the commercial area was the second highest membership after Engineering and Shipbuilding.

APEX is distinctive among other white-collar unions in two main

TABLE 9
APEX National Membership by Industry - 1974. (19)

Building	786
Commercial	7,233
Co-operative	3,093
Engineering/Shipbuilding	89,962
Food	5,415
Iron and Steel	2,797
Mining	5,538
Rubber	431
Printing	397
Public Services	984
Textile	1,660
Trades Unions	3,032
Civil Air Transport	7,259
Electricity	2,928
Bookmakers	128

respects. Firstly it is a union which has concentrated effort
at recruitment among clerical workers as opposed to other white-
collar employees, although the computer age and the shifts in
definitions of clerical tasks has lead to a change of name and image.
Secondly it has a long and continuing interest in membership in the
industrial field as opposed to the non-manufacturing sector of employ-
ment.

ASTMS

ASTMS came into existance in 1968 as a result of a merger between
the Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives and Technicians
(ASSET) and the Association of Scientific Workers (AScW). As their
names suggest neither of these unions had traditionally focused
attention upon the recruitment of clerical employees. Bain calcul-
ated that in 1963-4 AScW membership comprised approximately a quarter
of qualified scientists, engineers and technologists and the remainder
of the membership consisted of laboratory technicians. In the same
period ASSET membership consisted of approximately half foremen and
half technicians and laboratory assistants. (20) Since the merger
in 1968, ASTMS has continued to expand and to recruit clerks "wherever
appropriate". (21) It is difficult to estimate how significant efforts
to recruit clerks have been in the overall growth of ASTMS, since no
specific figures are available. As Lumley points out ASTMS "continues
to grow not only through the vigorous recruitment of scientific and
technical workers and managers, but also through further amalgamations
with, for example, the Prudential Staff Associations and other
organizations of insurance workers, and the MPU". (22) ASTMS, unlike
APEX, has a longer tradition of representing a variety of specialist

groups within the white-collar labour force, but in recent years both unions in seeking to extend their memberships, have become more 'open'. Lumley, suggests that, "An open union may recruit all types of employees, while a closed union will limit sharply and definitely its area of recruitment. Unions adopt a form which appears to them to best serve their interests, and the relative openess or closedness of a union can alter quite dramatically as leadership and members respond to a changing industrial and occupational balance". (23) Lumley goes on to cite ASTMS as an example of an 'open' union. There is some evidence to show that both ASTMS and APEX are adopting more 'open' policies on recruiting. Landsbury, in a study of management services in British Airways conducted in the early 1970s, found that traditionally APEX had recruited clerical workers at passenger terminals and administrative staff at Headquarters, whereas ASTMS had focused attention on maintenance workers, technicians, foremen and supervisors. He goes on to argue that "in recent years, however, both unions have increasingly turned their attention to middle management levels and specialist areas." (24) In terms of existing levels of membership and the relative increase of ASTMS compared with APEX, it would seem that ASTMS which started from a more 'open' base, has been the more successful union. Table 10 demonstrates the dramatic increase in the overall memberships of ASTMS during the period 1969 to 1975.

Table 10   ASTMS Membership by Sex 1969-1975. (25)

Year	Male	Female	Total
1969	98,000	3,000	101,000
1970	119,800	4,000	123,800
1971	209,400	11,200	220,600
1972	224,050	26,050	250,100
1973	244,100	35,900	280,000
1974	264,900	45,100	310,000
1975	289,000	62,000	351,000

Table 10 also shows that whilst the male membership of ASTMS had more than doubled, the female membership was approximately thirty times larger in 1975 than in 1969. Since ASTMS now represents white-collar employees in insurance and banking, the airways, the universities, the health service as well as in industry it is not surprising to find this remarkable increase in its female membership. In terms of overall memberships ASTMS is well over twice the size of APEX, and clerks who belong to ASTMS share membership with a variety of professional and specialist white-collar groups. That APEX was concerned with the competitive image of ASTMS was evident in an APEX National Engineering Advisory Council held in 1972. (26) Branch representatives complained that the efficiency of APEX was second-rate compared with ASTMS and TASS. They argued that these two unions had published books on the Industrial Relations Act, whereas APEX had not. They felt that competition from other unions presented problems in recruitment and in the everyday running of the union. The two unions they cited as presenting particular problems were DATA and ASTMS.

ASTMS has both a militant and a professional image. Bain quotes the view of a full-time officer of AEU, expressed at the 1966 TUC, which illustrates how the then future leader of ASTMS, Clive Jenkins, and his existing union ASSET were regarded by traditional manual unionists. The official, having made a passing attack on NALGO, said, "I now deal with the contribution made by that anarchistic anachronism, Clive Jenkins ... 'Anarchistic' because he is against everything that is progressive and challenging, and 'anachronism' because he represents people who have run away from the struggle of the workshop floor, who do not want to be associated with manual workers' unions so they join this whatever-you-call-it. In fact, the vast majority of his people are people who have betrayed the manual workers' union ... and, in my

opinion, they are 40,000 Conservatives run by half-a-dozen Clive

Jenkinses." (27)   ASTMS and Clive Jenkins continue to pose a threat

both to manual unions who seek to organize white-collar workers and

to competing white-collar trade unions or professional associations.

As Lumley argues, ASTMS has a "record of militancy" (28) and has

pledged itself to "increase differentials". (29)   The latter policy

and the militant record are both closely linked to the recruitment drive.

The history of ASTMS has been one of mergers, take-overs and inter-

union conflict.   It has not always been able to counter the stubborn

resistance of manual unions, or of employers. (30)   Never-the-less it

must now be regarded as a powerful white-collar union representing the

interests of many diverse occupational groups.   Like APEX, ASTMS has a

long standing interest in engineering and within our study we included

two engineering firms with different union memberships.   Within Mercury

engineering, ASTMS had effected a representation agreement for weekly

paid clerical staff, but not for administrative grades on monthly

salaries.   An important element of the agreement was payment of a

bonus to weekly paid staff which had originally been negotiated for

shop floor supervisors.   In this way union membership was linked to

a bonus system and the interests of clerks were drawn closer to those

of shop floor supervisors than to those of the administrators above

them. (31)   The degree to which ASTMS can effectively represent a

wide range of different white-collar groups is still open to question.

ASTMS, like APEX, has made efforts to overcome the problem of

diverse interests, by adapting the trade union structure to enable

more autonomy at the local level and a greater possibility to voice

sectional interests.   Thus ASTMS operates firstly through the 'group',

which consists of all ASTMS members in a particular factory.   At the

next level, there are branches which consist of sectional groupings

(such as technical or supervisory branches) based on geographical access. Above these are 11 district councils, the annual delegate conference, and the National Executive Council. (32) Lumley argues that "ASTMS is becoming increasingly aware of the diminishing usefulness of district boundaries for matters other than administration, and is moulding its organization to follow companies and industries." (33) The problem is one of developing an organization which is flexible enough to take account of sectional interests without losing the identity of the union as a whole. Although ASTMS has not traditionally represented clerks, we felt it would be interesting to examine the views of clerks within a broader and larger union than APEX.

NUM COSA

In contrast to APEX and ASTMS, COSA represents a different model of union membership for clerks. The main interest we had in including COSA in the study was to investigate further how clerks in an industrial union rated their union membership, since our previous study had been confined to an examination of the clerical branch of I.S.T.C. (34) As with clerks in the steel industry, so also with those in mining, the history of union representation had been one of conflict between the main manual union and competing white-collar unions.

The NUM formerly the Miner's Federation of Great Britain came into existance following the nationalization of the mining industry in 1945. McCormick argues that the most serious disputes following nationalization concerned the representation of clerical employees. (35) The NUM wanted sole negotiating rights for clerks but the National Coal Board recognized CAWU and NACSS (National Association of Clerical and Supervisory Staffs - an affiliate of the Transport and General Workers Union). When the matter was referred to the TUC it was not properly resolved. They recommended that the appropriate union for clerks at divisional level was the NUM,

and for clerks at Headquarters, CAWU. However they made no recommendations for clerks at Area level and below where the majority of clerks were employed. The Board decided to leave it at that. McCormick, points out that fifteen years later in 1960 "They ... (CAWU and NUM) ... frequently organize clerks within the same office and there is still friction between the two unions, particularly in working the negotiating machinery." (36) It was apparent when the 1972 miner's strike occurred that the picture had not changed. COSA instructed its membership to go on strike but the National Executive of CAWU merely instructed its membership not to enter offices if requested not to do so by NUM members on picket lines. In a number of areas CAWU members disregarded this instruction and continued to work. This lead to further conflict between the two unions. Bowen, Elsy and Shaw commenting on this situation quoted a local North Eastern newspaper in which a COSA official claimed, "CAWU must be cleared out of the industry. They have no allegiance to coal. We feel we shouldn't be working beside people like this who regularly break picket lines and blissfully carry on their work as if nothing was happening." (37) The atmosphere of hostility created by the distinctive policies of these two unions during the 1972 strike was readily apparent at Earth Control when we started our investigations.

However it would be wrong to give the impression that inter-union rivalry was a post nationalization phenomenon. The National Union of Clerks (the predescessor of CAWU and APEX) was involved in disputes with the MFGB over recruiting rights in the early part of the century. Lockwood, drawing upon Annual Conference reports, documents that in 1919 "the NUC ... had failed to come to agreement with the Miner's Federation of Great Britain, the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire branches of which were actively recruiting colliery clerks". (38) Will Paynter

also emphasizes that the notion of an industrial union was an

early ideal for MFCB members.. He quotes the example of the 'Miners

Next Step', a document produced by a group of South Wales Miners

Leaders in 1912 in which was stated "that our objective be, to

build up an organization that will ultimately take over the mining

industry, and carry it on in the interests of the workers". (39)

The development of NUM COSA then must be seen against the back cloth

of continuing inter-union conflict over many years.

However whatever initial strength purely white-collar unions

may have had in the industry before nationalization, it is obvious

from current membership figures that COSA is now the predominant

clerical union in the mining industry. As table 9 showed, APEX had

approximately five and a half thousand members in mining in 1974. In

the same year the membership of COSA was almost four times greater.

In the years between 1948 and 1964 COSA increased its membership by

81%. (40) As a result of nationalization policy, the clerical labour

force declined by 20% during the period 1964 to 1972. (41) In the

same period, clerical membership of COSA declined by 21%. (42)

Table 11 shows that COSA membership has continued to decline sine 1970,

and if we consider that in 1959 the membership figure was 32,344, (43)

it is clear that over the last twenty five years the decline has been

substantial.

Table 11   COSA MEMBERSHIP 1970 - 76. (44)

Year	Total
1970	21,443
1971	21,209
1972	19,354
1973	18,305
1974	17,854
1975	17,549
1976	18,051

The decline in membership can largely be explained in terms of the contraction of the clerical labour force. However there is some evidence that the 1972 strike prompted COSA clerks to reassess their allegiance to the NUM. Bowen, Elsy and Shaw discovered that in Earth Control, one-fifth of the Branch membership left COSA before and after the strike in protest against the decision to withdraw labour. They also noted that clerks who wished to rejoin the union after the strike were rebuffed. In addition they quoted a national newspaper in which it was estimated that 900 COSA members had attempted to join CAWU during the period of the strike. (45) It is difficult to estimate whether the loss of a thousand members between 1973 and 1974 was occasioned by the strike but in so far as COSA took a strong line against allowing those who had left to rejoin, it is reasonable to assume that the strike had some effect on overall membership figures.

The strike also provided a test case of the relationship of COSA to the NUM. Will Paynter, former secretary of the NUM put forward his notion of the ideal union structure as one including "all grades, crafts and skills below the level of management, with clerks and other white-collar workers, supervisors, overmen and deputies and apprenticed craftsman, in separate vertical sections within the union to meet their special occupational interests, but subject to the policy decisions and direction by the union as a whole". (46) This suggests a measure of occupational independance combined with solidarity. The tension between these two ideals was demonstrated by the conflict between COSA and NUM at the start of the 1972 strike. COSA does officially have a measure of autonomy within the NUM. It can negotiate directly with the National Coal Board at various levels. (47) However it appeared from the instructions given by the National Executive of the NUM before the official ballet on strike action was conducted in 1972, that COSA was expected to relinquish such autonomy and to accept specific

instructions from the NUM. Bowen, Elsy and Shaw summarized the
events as follows, "the National Executive Committee of the Mineworker's
Union requested that certain COSA members work during the strike to pay
'lying-on wages', supplementary benefits, tax rebates etc. At the
Area Council of COSA, held in January 1972, it was decided that the
NEC be informed that COSA were 'insistent' upon a ballot on strike action
and that if the NUM required certain non-industrial staff to work, 'they
all would or none at all'. Arising from this decision, the NEC then
advised the Area that this decision 'went beyond what was deemed'
necessary' and that there would be a minimum number of clerical staff
detailed to report for duty to conform to union policy. COSA then
informed the NEC in unequivocable terms 'that all clerical membership
will withdraw their labour as from 6am on January 1972'. Clerical
workers complied with this instruction". (48) This provided an
example of the way in which a clerical branch of a manual union can
strive for independance when the wishes of the manual union are deemed
to be unreasonable.

The descriptions of the three unions from which clerks were drawn
for this study are intended to provide background information to the
main body of this thesis. (49) Like descriptions of the firms they
put this study into a context but are not intended to supercede the
views which clerks themselves held of their employing organizations
and their trade unions.

Research Methods

Having given details of the firms and trade unions involved in
this study it is now appropriate to consider the methods employed in
the gathering and analysis of the data.

The Establishment of Contacts

Much of the initial ground work of gaining entrance to the firms was completed by Bowen and Shaw prior to the award made to them by SSRC in January 1973. However the process of gaining access to all the information required, and of being accepted as researchers by the clerical workers who were to take part in the surveys, extended beyond the commencement of the project. Initially management and trade union officials were consulted at divisional and local levels. In each case we explained that the sort of information we required involved company and trade union statistical information as well as questionnaire and interview data from clerks themselves. In addition we requested interviews with full-time trade union officials and attendance at relevant trade union conferences. From management we asked for the opportunity to visit the firms to observe the clerical functions and to talk to clerks and other personnel on an informal basis as well as their permission to administer questionnaires and to conduct interviews. These requests were approved by both trade union officials and management.

However in certain organizations problems arose during the course of the research programme either because management underestimated the amount of work time which was needed for interviews or because trade union officials failed to communicate their acceptance and approval of the research to their members. In Neptune Electrics, for example, the full-time officials of APEX failed to communicate their enthusiasm for the project to the clerical rank and file, although local represent- atives had been informed. As a result the members at first refused to co-operate. They felt that even with official approval for the research, they should have been consulted at the earliest stage. This led to a number of meeting between the investigators, branch officials and

members of the union before local approval to participate was

obtained. In these meetings, it became clear that the initial

resistance shown to the project by clerical employees was symptomatic

of a general disatisfaction with union leadership and communications.

As will be shown later clerks at Neptune Electrics expressed a weak

identification with membership of APEX in interviews. Thus the

problems we experienced of achieving rapport were closely related to

the general malaise felt by clerks in their relationship with APEX

officials.

Similar problems arose in the mining industry first of all at

Earth Supplies. In this case the COSA district official did not

consult the branch representatives at Earth Supplies although he had

done so at Earth Control. The representatives at Earth Supplies

were understandably annoyed but after an informal meeting they agreed

to co-operate. It seemed that they regarded the lack of communications

as a diplomatic error and that it did not represent any wider feelings

of dissatisfaction with COSA leadership. In addition various obstacles

were encountered during the questionnaire and interview stages at Earth

Control and these related more to the existing pattern of representation

than to the research as such. The main problem lay in securing

questionnaire returns from APEX members and in contacting members of

APEX for interviews. The man who was named as the branch represent-

ative claimed that he was only 'filling in until a proper representative

was appointed' and felt he could do little to assist us. This made it

very difficult to contact members for interview especially as manage-

ment withdrew their consent for interviewing in works time after the

first fifteen interviews and we had to arrange interviews in the lunch

hour. The COSA representative gave ongoing assistance and agreed to

help us to contact members even in the informal setting of the canteen.

The questionnaire returns also reflected to some extent the variation

in branch representation between the two unions. The response
from APEX members was low and the district official agreed to use
a meeting of his members at Earth Control to explain the project and
to encourage them to complete questionnaires. He failed to arrive
on time and although the invitation to the meeting had almost full
scale support from members, they eventually drifted away leaving only
a small minority to attend the meeting. It proved impossible to
follow up on APEX questionnaire returns after this episode even though
APEX members were not actively hostile to the research procedures as
clerks at Neptune Electrics had been. At a purely descriptive level
APEX members at Earth Control could be typified as apathetic or even
in some cases a little frightened if we managed to locate them and
ask them to be interviewed. It is unlikely that this could be
understood only in terms of the relationship of members to APEX. In
a situation where strike action had occurred and where APEX members
were regarded as blacklegs by the majority of COSA clerks, it was
probable that they did not wish to be identified or to discuss unionism
even with a group of outside researchers.

Such problems as there were in making contacts and maintaining
them were largely overcome. The episodes which I have outlined
provided valuable insights into members' feelings about their unions
and stimulated much discussion amongst the research team about the
objectives and methods involved in the project. In addition when
crisis meetings were called to iron out problems, we were able to extend
our understanding of clerical views on work and trade unionism, which
together with visits to the firms, formal and informal discussions with
employees, provided us with valuable background information in the
design of the questionnaire and interview schedules. The descriptions
of the firms and trade unions were based on information gathered in this
manner.

The Questionnaire.

In line with classical procedures in survey work, ten per cent of all employees in the organizations was selected and a pilot questionnaire administered. This information was used purely for the purpose of designing the main questionnaire.

The main questionnaire was then administered to all employees who were defined by the firms as 'clerical'. As has been noted before in this thesis there is no global definition of clerical work and as is shown in the firm descriptions there are variations in the number of grades and the types of functions performed by clerks. However this is an important feature of clerical work which is far from homogeneous as even this small study shows. For purposes of both the questionnaire and interview sample we therefore included the firms'own definitions of who was a clerical worker. The decision to administer the questionnaire to all possible respondants (936) was made for two reasons. Firstly in the interests of ensuring anonymity we were concerned not to give the impression that certain names had been selected. Secondly we felt that a prolonged follow-up procedure might strain the goodwill of all involved since the interviews were to follow as a second stage in the programme. In any event it can be argued that sample surveys often fall short of randomness when follow-up procedures are taken into account. The questionnaires were administered through the organizations and returned in sealed envelopes to a central collecting point, such as the personnel department, for collection by the researchers.

The first return rate was encouraging since in most cases the self-selected sample constituted more than a one in five response rate which would be considered satisfactory in terms of conventional sample design. The distribution of respondents by age and sex was checked

in order to compare the self-selected sample with the total population
of clerks in each of the six firms. Where significant deviations
occurred follow-up procedures were employed to ensure a more evenly
distributed sample. Our efforts were concentrated on three firms each
presenting slightly different problems. In Earth Control we were
concerned with the return rate for APEX members rather than the overall
response rate. This proved to be an insuperable problem for reasons
already mentioned although the response rate was increased marginally.
At Jupiter Airways we were concerned to achieve a higher overall response
rate. Male clerks responded well to requests made by union officials
but women did not. The Neptune Electrics return rate remained low
inspite of concerted efforts by management, by full-time officials and
branch representatives of APEX. Fortunately the interviews were much
more successful in this firm.

It would be difficult to claim that the questionnaire samples were
ideally representative. Nevertheless they were sufficiently well-
balanced in terms of age and sex proportions to allow meaningful compar-
isons between firms. In all cases with the exception of Neptune Electrics
a one in five response rate or higher was achieved. The details
of the samples for each firm are provided in Table 11.

TABLE 12   QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLES BY SEX AND AGE*

Firms	Sex	Age Groups			Total
		1	2	3	
Earth Control	Male	21 (74)	9 (30)	25 (95)	55 (199)
	Female	30 (111)	20 (59)	19 (117)	69 (287)
Earth Supplies	Male	2 (10)	2 (2)	11 (43)	15 (55)
	Female	5 (11)	4 (6)	1 (6)	10 (23)
Saturn Shipyards	Male	16 (20)	2 (5)	11 (29)	29 (54)
	Female	8 (43)	0 (6)	4 (8)	12 (57)
Jupiter Airways	Male	6 (17)	2 (9)	2 (8)	10 (34)
	Female	3 (17)	0 (3)	0 (1)	3 (21)
Mercury Engineering	Male	1 (1)	0 (3)	2 (3)	3 (7)
	Female	21 (32)	1 (6)	0 (3)	22 (41)
Neptune Electrics	Male	8 (34)	1 (17)	6 (37)	15 (88)
	Female	6 (44)	1 (7)	2 (19)	9 (70)

* (In each case the total population is shown in brackets. Age groups 1, 2 and 3 refer to ages under 30, 30-40 years and over 40 years respectively).

In each case the payroll data is also provided so that samples may be seen in relation to the total population. The trade union membership of the three unions involved in this study is shown in Table 21. Whereas ASTMS members were drawn from a single firm (Mercury Engineering), COSA members were drawn from Earth Control and Earth Supplies as were also some APEX members. However APEX members were mostly located in Saturn Shipyards, Jupiter Airways and Neptune Electrics which meant that only in regard to these firms could realistic comparisons be made of members within one union. It would have been difficult to design a project, within the scope and budget of the research team, which enabled such comparisons in the case of ASTMS and COSA. Thus it was a deliberate decision to design the project in such a way that inter-union membership comparisons could be made, with intra-union membership comparisons in only one case. Table 12 indicates that if union membership comparisons are to be made these are most realistic in the

TABLE 13 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP AGE AND SEX

AGE	SEX	APEX	ASTMS	COSA	NON-MEMBERS	NON-RESPONDENTS	TOTAL
1 (under 30)	M	35	0	9	6	4	54
	F	19	21	18	15	0	73
2 (30-40)	M	7	0	5	3	1	16
	F	2	0	14	8	2	26
3 (over 40)	M	23	2	22	6	4	57
	F	10	0	10	5	1	26
TOTAL		96	23	78	43	12	252

cases of APEX and COSA since the ASTMS sample is not only small but consists almost entirely of women. In this thesis the data gathered by questionnaire will only be used selectively since the main tool for my purpose was the interview schedule.

The Interview

The interview schedule was completely open-ended in design and was directed at eliciting clerical definitions of their work and trade union situations. The main guiding principles in the design of the interview schedule developed from the theoretical concerns outlined in the previous two chapters. However it must be admitted that in terms of carrying out research the precise elements of 'defining the situation' have yet to be spelt out. As Peter McHugh has noted, "although it is an old idea in sociology, the definition of the situation has usually been taken for granted as a subject of study. Like a faceless bureaucrat, it has been made to work hard; yet it is without much substance in its own right." (50) In order to give it substance in this thesis it is taken to mean clerical understandings of work and trade unionism, as measured in three main ways in the interview schedule. Firstly the schedule was directed at eliciting clerks' notions of clerical work and trade unionism. Secondly it was designed to investigate their evaluations of clerical work and its rewards. Finally it was intended to probe the self-locations of clerks in terms of their key referents. With these objectives in mind the interview schedule was rather unusual in character since it required that respondents give abstract definitions of concepts as well as opinions. Apart from one or two clerks who said things like 'you do ask some funny questions', the majority were willing to give replies to most questions. They seemed to enjoy giving their ideas and views and often commented at the end of the interview that it had been 'interesting' or 'enjoyable'.

In all, 165 interviews were conducted with clerks who were sampled on a quota basis with age and sex as the main variables. The strategy was to obtain at least one in ten representations and where possible more in order to make meaningful inter-firm and intra-firm comparisons. Table 13 gives details of the numbers interviewed in each firm and the proportionate size of each sample. In the final analysis these proportions varied in accordance with the willingness of managements to allow

TABLE 14   INTERVIEW SAMPLES BY FIRM

Firms	Samples	Total Populations
Earth Control	46 (1 in 10)	486
Earth Supplies	15 (1 in 5)	78
Saturn Shipyards	22 (1 in 5)	111
Jupiter Airways	30 (1 in 2)	55
Mercury Engineering	12 (1 in 4)	48
Neptune Electrics	40 (1 in 4)	158
Total	165	936

interviews in works time. However in each case the samples reflected age and sex distributions. Table 14 gives details of the quotas required by age and sex in each case and the final samples. As it shows in most cases the quotas were met with slight variations in some cases where

TABLE 15   INTERVIEW SAMPLES BY FIRM, SEX AND AGE*

Firms	Sex	Age Groups 1	2	3	TOTAL
Earth Control	Male	10 (7)	4 (5)	7 (7)	21 (19)
	Female	14 (12)	6 (9)	5 (7)	25 (28)
Earth Supplies	Male	2 (2)	1 (2)	8 (7)	11 (11)
	Female	2 (2)	2 (2)	- (-)	4 (4)
Saturn Shipyards	Male	4 (4)	2 (2)	5 (5)	11 (11)
	Female	10 (9)	1 (1)	- (1)	11 (11)
Jupiter Airways	Male	10 (10)	7 (8)	2 (2)	19 (20)
	Female	10 (10)	1 (1)	- (-)	11 (11)
Mercury Engineering	Male	2 (2)	1 (1)	- (-)	3 (3)
	Female	8 (8)	1 (1)	- (-)	9 (9)
Neptune Electrics	Male	10 (9)	8 (7)	5 (5)	23 (21)
	Female	12 (11)	4 (4)	1 (2)	17 (17)
Total		94 (86)	38 (43)	33 (36)	165 (165)

* In each case the quota required is shown in brackets. Age groups 1, 2 and 3 refer to ages under 30, 30-40 and over 40 years respectively.

we just exceeded the quota requirements or just failed to meet them by

one case. Four interviewers were engaged to conduct interviews

including myself. (51) These interviewers pilot tested the interview

schedule on clerical workers employed in Newcastle Polytechnic since

by this time in the project it was clear that management would not

allow a pilot phase before the main interviews. This pilot test also

provided the basis for interviewer training during which time I attempted

to standardize instructions and the cues that we would use if necessary.

On this basis an instruction card was developed for use by us all.

This is shown in Appendix 2. As a result of the pilot test the interview

schedule was modified and then administered to clerks in the six firms

during the spring and summer of 1974. By this time the questionnaire

phase of the project was completed.

The Analysis of Data

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire included both pre-coded and open-ended questions.

The open-ended questions were coded after the return of all questionnaires

when the full range of responses was examined and suitable categories

devised. The data was then transferred to computer cards for analysis

by SPSS. (52) The results of cross tabulations by firm, age, sex and

marital status are referred to at various points in this thesis.

The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule represented a challenge for analysis which

many social scientists would seek to avoid. Initially it seemed a

reasonable proposition to transfer the data for computer analysis.

This was done by Valerie Elsy and myself and proved to be an onerous

task. In the first instance when all the interviews were completed

the responses to each question were noted and counted individually.

After this procedure similarities in responses were identified and cross

checked.   On this basis final categories emerged for the purpose
of coding the data.   The main intention in coding was that response
variation should be preserved as far as possible.   In effect we
wished to code but with the least possible distortion to the data.
For this purpose we allocated to each response a single column on
the punched card.   This allowed representation of the whole range of
responses which any individual made in reply to a particular question.

However when it came to analysing the interview data for this
thesis it became clear to me that the coded information was limited
for two main reasons.   Firstly in attempting to preserve wide variations
in responses, the conventional analysis of data by cross tabulation was
often impractical.   Secondly the real quality of responses was largely
lost as a result of fragmentation and the simplistic interpretation
which must follow the attempt to categorize complex wholistic data.
Thus in preparing the analysis of data for this thesis I made little
use of computer print out except to check variations by firm, age and
sex.   I concentrated instead on a more basic form of content analysis
which involved examining the whole range of responses to specific
questions or sections of the interview with a view to understanding
the quality as well as the distribution of types of response.   Thus
as well as tabular representation of responses I have quoted widely from
the interviews.   Such treatment of open-ended data does not easily lend
itself to sophisticated statistical analysis, but what is lost in
numerical accuracy, is gained in the richness of responses and the
depth of understanding which evolves.   However it must be admitted
that the analysis of open-ended data is a lengthy process which requires
great perseverence from researchers who must adopt as open-minded a
stance to the data as is possible without allowing themselves to be
engulfed by it.   In the end if communication of the results is to take

place some systematic presentation is necessary and inevitably this
will entail implicit if not explicit categorization. The experience
of conducting this analysis provided me with a ongoing awareness of
the tensions which exist between the desire to represent the actors
own definitions of situations and the researchers own need to formulate,
categorize and generally make sense of the data.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter details of the research methodology have been
included with a view to clarifying the objectives of a wider programme
of research into clerical attitudes to trade unionism of which the
data used in this thesis was an integral part. Little use is made
of questionnaire data in the chapters which follow because the interview
schedule was specifically designed to relate to the theoretical
perspective developed for this thesis. The profiles of the firms and
trade unions of which clerks were members has been included less as
explanatory and more as informational or impressionistic accounts. As
I have made clear in previous chapters there is little value in subscrib-
ing to a particular view of social reality which focuses upon the actors
definition of the situation and then leaping to another level of explan-
ation which can be typified as structural or lying outside the actors
own frame of reference.

In the chapters which follow I have attempted to avoid such a
contradiction and in this sense it is the clerks own views of the firm
and trade union as well as his notions of the clerical occupation, its
status and rewards which are the main focus of analysis. However such
views will be examined in order to assess how far they are general to
all clerks or more typical of clerks within different firms. In
addition sex and age variations will be examined. It could reasonably
be argued that these are indeed examples of independent variables.

However these are variables which clerks themselves cited as relevant
to their experience of work and which often relate to shared views.
The main objective of the analysis of data is not to search for the
most significant variables in determining clerical attitudes to work
or trade unionism but to consider the relationship between views
within the context of referents which clerks select.

CHAPTER V   DEFINITIONS OF CLERICAL WORK AND OCCUPATIONAL INDENTITY

Introduction

- Bain and Price have recently reviewed the difficulties which social scientists have experienced in developing the most suitable criteria for defining white-collar work. (1)   They suggest that the 'brain-brawn' approach used both by academics and various governments is problematic because it requires the independent definition of 'intellectual' and 'manual' work which is a similar problem to defining 'white-collar' and 'blue-collar' work.   In addition, they suggest, that these distinctions are crude because "there can hardly be any white-collar employment so intellectual in nature that it requires no physical labour, conversely, there can hardly be any manual work that requires no mental effort". (2)   Bain and Price also review functional and eclectic approaches to defining white-collar work which they argue shift the definitional problem to another but equally difficult level. Thus, Croner's solution which involves the classification of white-collar tasks into four functional categories, administrative;   design, analysis and planning;   supervisory/managerial;   and commercial, necessitates the definition of each.   Girod, they suggest, adopts a more eclectic approach.   He argues for distinctions made in terms of the work milieu and the object and function of the work itself.   He maintains that manual workers typically work in a 'mechanical' milieu and white-collar workers in a 'bureaucratic' or 'non-mechanical' work setting.   Bain and Price argue that "the task now becomes to define clearly the difference between a 'mechanical' and a 'non-mechanical' environment, and this is particularly difficult to do." (3)   The authors suggest that studies designed to investigate perceptions of

"occupational universes" would be valuable particularly if linked to
their tentative hypothesis "that the possession of, or proximity to
authority is the major factor determining popular conceptions of who
is a white-collar employee." (4)   As a response to Bain and Prices'
dissatisfaction with objective classification schemes and to the
suggestion that explorations of occupational universes would be val-
uable, clerical employees in this study were asked how they would
define white-collar and clerical work and what jobs they would include
in the white-collar category.   Instead of directly testing Bain and
Prices' authority hypothesis however, it was more appropriate for my
purposes to investigate clerks' definitions in terms of the key refer-
ents they selected.   In doing so it became clear that clerks in this
study were inclined to make distinctions in terms of physical locations
and work tasks for white-collar and blue-collar workers, and that manual
or production workers were selected as the main comparative reference
group.   In later chapters it will also be shown that these clerks did
not identify with management and that they perceived a clear distinction
between clerical work and managerial or supervisory work.   This could
be interpretated as providing partial support for Bain and Prices'
hypothesis.   However, in terms of the key elements of the clerical
occupation, clerks tended to use notions which were similar to those
developed by the theorists who were most criticized by Bain and Price.

The discussion of definitions of white-collar work has not of
course always been posed in terms of distinctions which can be made
between it and other occupations or as the pursuit of 'neutral' criteria
for occupational classifications.   As chapter I of this thesis demon-
strated, a number of writers have documented changes in the structure
and functions of white-collar occupations.   In doing so they have been
concerned to show that clerical work has been robbed of its original

craftsman-like character and can now be defined in terms of routine
tasks similar to typical factory work. Here the assumption is that
clerical and manual work can be thought of as coming closer together
in terms of increasingly fragmented and less potentially fulfilling
work tasks. C. Wright Mills was a major proponent of this view.
He drew a vivid picture of the alienating conditions of office work
which he saw as worse than those of production work. He argued that
"the alienation of the wage-worker from the products of his work is
carried one step further to its Kafga-like completion.... the salaried
employee does not make anything, going year after year through the
same paper routine, he is bored." (5) Bowen and Shaw (6) and Mercer
and Weir (7) in their studies of clerical workers provided evidence
which suggested that Mills may have overstated the case. While both
studies showed that clerks valued clerical work for its perceived
security and good working conditions, they also demonstrated that
clerks could find intrinsic satisfactions in their job such as doing
"a good job" (8) or being involved in "interesting, well defined work
with a reasonable amount of freedom to organize their jobs". (9) Their
results were similar to those of Dale's earlier study in which clerks
approved of clerical work for its security, good and clean working
conditions and lack of physical strain. (10) He also found that the
majority of clerks defined their work as either "very interesting most
of the time " or "interesting most of the time" (11) These studies
suggest that discrepancies may arise between the accounts of an observer
to whom clerical tasks may appear dull and montonous and the perceptions
of clerks themselves. On the other hand all the quoted studies showed
that there were some clerks who felt that their jobs did not provide
adequate opportunities for intrinsic satisfactions. Differences in
perceptions may depend upon differences in actual work tasks but are

more likely to be related to variations in clerks' expectations.

Thus in this chapter, as well as documenting clerical definitions
of white-collar and clerical work and their accounts of job preferences
and satisfactions in work, their views of how they came to be in
clerical work are also included.   It is not suggested that their
expectations on entering clerical work remained static.   Rather
Daniel's view that orientations to work can be plotted in terms of
job choice, staying in the job and job quitting. (12) is accepted as
a partial framework for tapping the occupational identity of clerks.
However, in order to consider the degree to which clerical workers
identified with membership of the clerical occupation, it is essential
to commence with their notions of their 'occupational universe'.

DEFINITIONS OF WHITE-COLLAR AND CLERICAL WORK IN GENERAL

In response to the question of defining white-collar and clerical
work, it was interesting that the majority of interviewees answered
this in terms of <u>clerical work itself</u> ignoring for the most part other
possible categories of white-collar work.   In doing so they were
divided as to whether the distinctiveness of clerical work lay in its
location within an office or in the nature of its tasks, but the
majority saw it as neither supervisory nor productive in nature.   Only
9 (5%) clerks mentioned supervisory tasks as inclusive to clerical work,
whereas 85 (52%) clerks made direct comparisons between their occupational
role and that of manual workers.   Very few, only 7(4%) clerks in all,
made a direct comparison of their work with that of management at this
stage of the interviewing.   We shall see later that when clerks gave
their views of management they indicated very strongly that clerical
and management roles were distinct and separate.   However in considering
a definition of clerical work it was significant that manual workers and

production work emerged as the most salient comparative referents for

interviewees. This was demonstrated by the following responses which

were typical of the range of definitions produced by clerks across the

firms involved in this study, regardless of age or sex.

"Someone who doesn't produce an article or an end product".

"He sits at a desk. Its not manual work. I suppose its brains
not labour".

"Basically office staff. There are also managerial categories.
All non-manual labour".

"Office workers-not factory workers".

"Paper work, documentation and delegating work out as opposed
to manual workers who do their own".

"Its difficult. Anything opposite to manual work like a
person acting in an administrative capacity, but not manual".

"Comes into the category of not actually being production but
only assisting it. Its paperwork - an overhead but its
necessary".

"Behind the scenes work of manual work. Keeping manual work
going."

"A service to the shop floor - to production".

"Its problematic. Many people are classed as clerical but
they also do physical work and supervise manual workers. The
demarcation is ill-defined".

"Its a sedentary job and a writing job too. Tidiness of habit
is important in general clerking. Its a job that needs common
sense and training on the job rather than acumen and a profess-
ional education. It cannot be defined in specific terms. Its
rather like labouring. There are lots of activities".

"The computer age has changed where you draw the white-collar
line. The name of clerical worker is outdated. Now they
are data people, processing people".

"White-collar workers are management. Clerical and office
workers are the slaves".

"Just office work".

"It depends on the industry and location. There are different
clerical functions".

"Administrative work."

In theoretical terms it seemed that two important referents
emerged as those which clerks employed to put boundaries around
their definitions of clerical work.   One was the actual physical
location of their work.   There were in all 83 (50% of clerks
included this referent) references of this kind.   These were not
always posed in contrast to other physical locations like 'the factory'
or 'the shop-floor' but clearly the physical boundary of the office was
a meaningful one in identifying where clerks were placed in their working
lives.   The second type of referent which clerks employed was by way of
comparison with manual and production work.   Whatever the variety of
clerical tasks perceived these could be differentiated, some clerks
felt, from the nature of work which provided the 'end product'.   It
is interesting to note that both types of referent were employed by
clerks in all firms, that they were not mutually exclusive and some
clerks employed both.   Thus whereas more women than men (50 (64%)women
compared with 33 (38%) men) emphasized the physical location of their
work, women were just as likely as men to refer to the distinction
between clerical and manual or production work.   It is important to
recognize that at this stage of the interview clerks were being asked,
not to define their own particular work, but white-collar and clerical
work in general.   At this abstract level it was apparent that shared
definitions emerged across the firms and that clerks focused primarily
upon clerical employment as opposed to considering a wider range of
white-collar jobs.   In this sense it is possible to conclude that
they were thinking in terms of their own particular experience rather
than engaging in more neutral observations of categories of white-collar
employment.

Such a conclusion was partially confirmed by the job listing which
they provided in response to a specific request to list as many white-
collar jobs as they could.   Of the 142 clerks who felt that they could
do this 54% produced firm-based job listings, and 46% produced more

general listings which were however primarily based upon white-collar

jobs in industry. Perhaps more important than the lists themselves

were the people they were thinking of when drawing them up. Of those

(74 clerks) who were thinking of people that they knew when they drew

up their lists, 72% were thinking of people that they knew in work

and 28% of family and friends. Of the remaining clerks in the sample,

68 said that they were not thinking of people whom they knew when

drawing up the list and the remaining 23 clerks said that they were

thinking in terms of the white-collar field as a whole. In drawing

up lists of white-collar jobs then clerks were more likely to use

knowledge that they had gained from their own work experience than

more general sources of knowledge. However this cannot be over

emphasized for when interviewers suggested that clerks may have been

thinking of family and friends when creating their job listings, the

21 clerks who had said this initially (12%) were joined by 49 others who

felt that they probably had been thinking of a relative or a friend or

both. Thus for 70 (42%) clerks, the experience of their families and

friends were valid sources of reference in thinking about the range of

white-collar jobs providing that they were also involved in similar work.

What was important in the consideration of job listing was that even

within the terms of this ostensibly neutral area, clerks were inclined

firstly to draw up fairly narrow lists often only referring to different

types of clerical work. Secondly such lists emerged very largely as a

result of their immediate experience of work and the secondary experience

gained through family and friends. Although it is too early to draw

firm conclusions concerning the occupational identity of clerks, it can

be suggested that clerical workers in thinking about abstract definitions

of clerical work, were giving important clues as to their notions of

some of the important boundaries which included some types of workers or

work and excluded others. For those,who at this stage of the inter-
viewing,did refer to family or friends,this was always in the context
of thinking they were relevant because they also did similar work.
Taking this and other responses together it seemed that being a
clerical worker was itself a significant referent. It meant carrying
out specific tasks which could either be seen to be physically or
psychologically separate from those carried out by management and manual
workers. The degree to which clerks could identify with occupational
membership would depend not merely upon recognizing the existence of a
boundary, but upon their views of experience within it.

THE ROUTES INTO CLERICAL WORK AND JOB CHOICE

In order to consider what clerical employees expected from their
job and work situations it is useful to consider how they felt they had
come into this work and whether they would select a similar job if the
opportunity arose. In responding to the latter question clerks also
gave some useful indications of their existing priorities in work as well
as themselves making distinctions between the sort of jobs they would
select as opposed to those they would prefer.

Interviewees had entered clerical work by a variety of routes. The
most important difference which emerged from their accounts was that
women were much more likely than men to have made their decision while
still at school and to have taken appropriate lessons in shorthand,
typing, book-keeping and commercial studies. 38 (49%) women had taken
this route into clerical employment. Of the remaining 39 (51%), the
majority had still entered clerical work more-or-less as soon as they
had left school either as a result of careers advice or by applying for
jobs they had seen advertized. Only in one firm, Neptune Electrics,
did women report moving into clerical work from the shopfloor, where
almost half the women had come in via this route. Apparently their

knowledge of electronics components was valuable in the job of
technical clerk and this was why such openings were available.
Such a route was not typical for women. Most had experienced a
variety of clerical, typing or secretarial jobs which they had chosen
largely because of work conditions since as far as they were concerned
the types of job available to them were largely similar in different
firms. Women at Jupiter Airways were different in this respect.
They tended to interpret the question 'how did you get into this line
of work' as meaning their existing jobs. This was because for them
clerical work with an airline was rather different from general
clerical work. They had positively chosen to work for an airline
in order to do work which enabled them to 'meet people' or to satisfy
an 'interest in aviation'. 'Meeting people' was for them a priority
in work, which even if they changed jobs would still be paramount.
Thus of the 11 women interviewed, only one suggested an interest in
a different career in ballet and this was a preference rather than
what she would have selected. She, along with all the others would
have selected a similar job. Generally women at Jupiter expressed
preferences which were close to the sort of work they were already
doing - namely "travel agency work" or "working with people." These
women had typically chosen what for them was a particular type of
clerical work and had shaped their priorities through previous
experience of what they considered to be less interesting jobs.

The expressed desire to do work which would involve meeting
people was much in evidence throughout the sample. Clearly for
those who perceived their existing jobs as deficient in this respect
they were citing a limitation of working with paper, machines and
figures. Before, however considering in more detail what clerks'
interests were in work, it is important to stress that most women had

come into clerical work with few fixed ideas of what it would entail

except in so far as educational training had equipped them to carry

out specific tasks. Very few saw their entry as a positive choice.

Only 15 (19%) women said they had 'always fancied clerical work' or

'wanted to work in an office'. For the majority it represented

either a logical step from the sort of education they had experienced

or taking a job which was available at the time. Some of their actual

responses may help to illustrate this point.

> "I went straight from school into an office without any
> thought of anything else."

> "There was a phone call to school asking for applicants."

> "I did typing at school and business studies. I wanted to
> be a nurse or a welfare officer but my parent influenced me."

> "I've done clerical work since I left school. The schools
> plug clerical work."

> "I went to the Youth Employment Centre. They sent me here.
> I always wanted to be a nurse."

> "I left school and looked for a job. I got this because
> there were no other jobs available at the time."

> "By chance. When I left school I didn't know what to do I went
> to an exhibition on employment, then got a clerical job."

> "I've always been a clerical worker sinceI left school. I
> did typing at school."

> "I was trained for it from school."

On reading these responses and most others, with the exception of

women at Neptune Electrics who had come into clerical work from the

shopfloor, it seemed that the majority of women had been directed into

clerical work through the educational system either by direct training

or by the shaping of expectations. In giving their accounts of how

they came to be in clerical work, women revealed more by what they

didn't say rather than what they did. The majority did not represent

it as positive choice but as a decision based upon the consideration of

what job they <u>could do</u> or had been <u>educationally prepared for</u>.
Since there were few older women in the sample it is difficult
to specify, whether, as some writers suggest, clerical work for
women was at one time a distinctive career choice rather than simply
a job.   However the middle-aged group in this sample did not differ
from the younger women in their accounts of entry to clerical work.

The main difference between men and women in this study was that
men gave little indication of specific educational preparation for
clerical work.   By contrast the routes they had taken were many and
varied.   Only 9 (10%) men referred to school experience at all and
here they were not necessarily citing qualifications.   As one respond-
ent said, "I was the supposedly bright boy at school - brain not brawn.
It seemed right to do clerical work" or as another said "I went to
grammar school.   My parents didn't want me to do manual work."   If
qualifications were mentioned these were of a general kind such as
O/L's or C.S.E's.   29 male clerks had come into clerical/office work
straight after leaving school and the rest had entered clerical
employment with either experience of the forces, various forms of
manual employment and other white-collar jobs such as shop work or
sales.   The majority of male clerks, 59 (67%), had then made the
decision to go into clerical work from the perspective of alternative
employment.   For some this represented a positive choice in so far
as they were attracted to the idea of a clerical job but the numbers
representing their decision in these terms was low, 9 (10%) men in all,
The majority gave the impression that they had drifted into clerical
work, acting on the suggestion of family or friends or by accident or
because it was the only job available at the time.   The following
quotations illustrate this interpretation of their decisions to enter
clerical employment.

"I was a supermarket manager. A friend suggested I come here. Its not as I expected though. I'd quit if I had the choice. I feel I've more ability."

"It was a put up job. I knew someone. I used to be in the retail business but I got fed up."

"By accident. I came out of the Forces and came into office work on a temporary basis. I've been here 18 years now. I was a miner before I went into the Forces and would have preferred a manual job after. But the jobs were not easy to get."

"Because of health. I was a self employed builder and had a heart attack. I then took a sedentary job."

"As a result of the war I moved into this area of employment. It was the only type of work available to me at the time."

"I was in the Army for 13 years. The firm applied for me to join them. I was in manufacturing first."

"I was in the mine. The colliery closed and I was transferred here. The management offered me the chance of a staff job."

"Basically it was the only thing going at the time - I was fresh from the R.A.F."

"By accident more than design. I went to the Youth Employment Office. I was just looking for work at the time."

"My father was in mining. He didn't want me to go into the pit so I applied for a clerical job."

"Sheer chance. A friend told me of the vacancy. I was a trainee draughtsman at the time."

"I came in because of being disabled. I had an accident 12 years ago when I was a bakery salesman. Then I came into clerical work."

What was significant about both male and female accounts of their entry into clerical work was that inspite of the different routes they had taken, they rarely gave the impression that they had actively chosen clerical work for its possible intrinsic satisfaction. It was also significant that only one male clerk at this stage represented his choice as a search for status. For most it was merely a matter of getting a job, and for many, although they would have selected a similar type of job again, they would have preferred something different if they had a completely free choice. 100 clerks (61%) expressed a preference for a different job

or career.   There were notable exceptions to this general rule.   I
have already suggested that women clerks at Jupiter felt that their
jobs fulfilled their priority of working in close contact with people.
Thus they were inclined to say that they would select and prefer a
similar job.   Men at the airport also felt that if looking for a new
job this would be preferably with an airline.

For many other clerks in the sample the distinction between
realistic job choice and preferences was a valid one.   Again women
and men differed somewhat in the preferences they expressed.   For
women two types of responses predominated which illustrated the sort
of qualities that they would have liked in a new job, given that they
could make a choice.   These were on the one hand working with people
and on the other an interesting career.   The following comments
indicated these types of response.

> "Its not likely that I'd change my job at my age.   If I
> were starting again it wouldn't be clerical work.   I'd
> be interested in meeting the public - working in a public
> library for instance."

> "Something interesting to make you think.   This job is
> repetitive.   Teaching has variation."

> "Something with responsibility, like dealing with the general
> public, preferably with a small company where you would not
> just be a number but would mean something to the firm."

> "I'd like to be a dental receptionist or I'd love to be an
> air hostess. I'd like to meet people and do something
> different everyday.   Just for a change."

> "More concerned with people - rather than locked in an office
> away from everything else."

> "Clerical again, but something better involving foreign
> languages.   Something artistic."

> "Social work.   I would do voluntary social work if I didn't
> work here."

> "A nursery nurse.   Anything to do with children."

> "Working with children.   It would contrast with this job
> and I would be happy helping others.   Not routine.   I
> could see the results."

These quotations represent a general feeling on the part of women that work should be varied and interesting as well as carrying extrinsic rewards. For them such priorities could be best expressed in work which involved human contact. Men were less likely to see alternative work in these terms. For some, 10 (11%) in all, people-oriented work or work involving 'movement' or 'travel' would have been ideal. The same number 10, (11%) would have preferred skilled manual work in order to have a trade or to work with their hands. Small numbers would have preferred self-employment 5 (6%), working 'outside' 3 (3%), and careers in a chosen white-collar field such as teaching or accountancy 7 (8%). Where no specific alternative work was mentioned by men or women, they opted for a clerical job with more responsibility (9 (10%) men and 9 (12%) women). Although there were variations in the alternative jobs which clerks as a whole would have preferred, they generally expressed a value for interesting and varied work. If we abstract from all the reasons given for selecting a similar or a different job, the need for varied and interesting work was mentioned most frequently, as Table I shows. This was often

TABLE 1   REASONS GIVEN FOR JOB CHOICE (either similar or
           BY SEX   alternative jobs).

In this and some subsequent tables respondents may give more than one response.

	Male		Female		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Interesting/ varied work	31	35	25	32	56	34
Money/security/ better prospects	28	32	21	27	49	30
Work involving human contact	10	11	14	18	24	15
Responsible work	9	10	9	12	18	11
Nice people to work with	6	7	12	16	18	11
Another area nearer home	4	5	4	5	8	8
Don't know/Can't say	11	13	8	10	19	12
TOTAL RESPONSES	99		93		192	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	88	100	77	100	165	100

coupled with a demand for better prospects in terms of money and security, although in all only 32% men and 27% women felt that this was important. If we consider that 98 (59%) of the sample emphasized the importance of interesting and varied work, work involving human contact, and responsible work which could be taken as indicators of intrinsic satisfactions in a job, then the other responses which could be regarded as more extrinsic in quality(monetary rewards, work conditions, working with nice people or living nearer home) were less important in the minds of most clerks. When it came to comparing their existing jobs with other jobs, clerks demonstrated once again that the intrinsic satisfactions of work were of prime importance to them. Table 2 summarizes their responses to the question 'How would you compare your existing job with other jobs?'

TABLE 2   COMPARISON OF EXISTING JOB WITH OTHER JOBS BY SEX

FAVOURABLE RESPONSES	Male N	Male %	Female N	Female %	TOTALS N	TOTALS %
Varied/interesting work	25	29	29	38	54	33
Good pay	12	14	19	25	31	19
Good work conditions	8	9	9	11	17	10
More responsibility/prospects	7	8	1	1	8	5
UNFAVOURABLE RESPONSES						
Boring/uninteresting work	14	16	15	19	29	18
Bad pay	9	10			9	5
Less responsibility/ prospects	3	3	2	3	5	3
Bad conditions	1	1	2	3	3	2
Can't compare	9	10			9	5
TOTAL	88	100	77	100	165	100

Clerks made these judgements in the light of their own experience of other white-collar jobs or other similar jobs which they observed in their firms or knew about from friends. In these terms the majority clearly made favourable comparisons (57%) although the grounds for doing so varied. What was interesting about both the favourable and unfavourable responses was that the majority of clerks in each case compared their jobs in terms of its potential for intrinsic satisfaction. However Table 2 also demonstrates that given the priority for fulfilling work, which clerks had expressed in their job preferences, only 33% were prepared to define their existing jobs as varied or interesting. Here it must also be remembered that they were making a comparison with similar jobs and not with idealised careers. Thus this was a realistic assessment of what clerical work could provide. At this level more clerks opted for a comparison of clerical jobs in terms of extrinsic rewards like pay and work conditions. Nevertheless the issue of whether their job was interesting or boring was clearly a central one and this reflected the earlier reasons given for job preferences where the majority of clerks demonstrated their value for intrinsic satisfaction.

A reasonable interpretation of clerical responses to questions concerning job evaluation is that while they expressed a priority for work offering intrinsic satisfactions, they were on the whole doubtful about whether clerical work could be fulfilling in this respect. In a later chapter on status, clerical views on the inherent value of their work is further explored. As well as feeling that their work was misunderstood and undervalued by significant others, they also expressed doubts as to whether clerical work now could sustain the intrinsic interest which it had held in the past. Thus while clerks were able to delineate an occupational boundary which separated them from manual workers and management, they were expressing an ambivalent identification with

clerical tasks.   The sense of belonging to a separate occupational group, was none-the-less, supported by the feeling that these tasks were distinctive and could only be fully appreciated by other clerks like themselves.

CONCLUSION

Clerical workers in this study indicated that they held notions of a clerical 'occupational universe' which transcended specific work situations.   Clerical work was seen to be distinctive in terms of its location in an office and in terms of its tasks which were not directly related to an end product.   In thinking about their occupational boundaries clerks contrasted their work with that of manual workers and by implication with that of management (rarely was clerical work defined as supervisory in nature).   In this sense clerical workers approached the problem of defining clerical work in a similar manner to that of various academics.   Clerical workers did not tackle this problem in terms of their proximity to management and authority which Bain and Price suggest as a possible theme around which distinctions could be made.   However, in so far as they perceived their tasks as non-supervisory in nature, it could be argued that clerks viewed their position in the authority hierarchy as fairly low.   Other findings in this study would support this interpretation since clerks held well defined notions of the gap which existed between themselves and management.   Thus for them, being a clerk was very different from being a manager and this no doubt was related to distinctions they made concerning authority as well as tasks.

Within the 'occupational universe' which clerks defined, their feelings about clerical tasks were closer to those predicted by C. Wright Mills than by later research findings.   Fewer clerks in this study were prepared to define their work as interesting or varied than had been

found in other studies.   It is difficult to explain why this should

be the case.   The answer may lie partially in the kinds of questions

which have been asked in various surveys.   Questionnaire data

collected in the same firms in which clerks were interviewed for this

study, showed that when respondents were asked directly whether their

jobs were interesting, fairly interesting or uninteresting, only 20%

were inclined to report uninteresting jobs.   In a separate question,

however, only 46% of questionnaire respondents said that they were

satisfied with opportunities for interesting work and 52% with

opportunities for varied work.   Interview data showed that even fewer

clerks, 33% of the sample, defined their existing jobs as varied or

interesting.   The two samples were not of course identical and it may

have been that the self-selected questionnaire sample was biased in

favour of respondents who felt that their jobs were interesting.

Whether or not this was the case, when clerks have been (as they

were in the questionnaire we used) asked to evalutate their existing

jobs, there is no way of knowing what comparative referents they are

using.   Also a direct question may lead to a defensive response.   The

clerks who were interviewed for this study were not only asked to make

a comparison but were also asked to indicate what comparative referents

they had used.   In this respect the majority judged their existing job

in comparison with other clerical jobs and within these parameters

fewer clerks than in other studies, perceived their jobs as interesting

and varied.   While these results tend to challenge the earlier conclus-

ions of Bowen and Shaw, and Mercer and Weir, concerning the potential of

clerical work for either fulfilment or craftsmen-like involvement,

strict comparability of results is not possible.

Given that clerks indicated an ambivalent identification with clerical tasks, the question remained of what kept them in clerical work. From their own accounts of entering clerical work and their evaluations of their existing jobs, it seemed that the majority had not selected and pursued clerical work in any case for its potential intrinsic satisfactions.

In this respect these clerks were strikingly similar to those studied by Dale who reports "many clerks have not deliberately chosen a clerical career at all. Of the 208 interviewed, 147 began their career in a clerical appointment, and 97 of these have not seriously considered any other type of work. The other 50 became clerks as second best to their original choice." (13) However in order to unravel the reasons why the clerks in this study, whose preferences were for more fulfilling work, remained in the clerical occupation we must now turn to their views of the work situation and occupational rewards. Thus far it would be fair to suggest that their orientation to work was not primarily instrumental (in terms of priorities) but that their own realistic assessments of clerical work entailed the recognition that to be a clerk meant lack of fulfilment and a turning towards the extrinsic rewards of the job as an alternative way of defining their relationship to it. Crozier made a similar point in connection with his study of a clerical agency where he found that the execution of boring, repetitive tasks was not closely related to expressions of work satisfaction. He argued that "in their personal comments, employees tend to minimize the (alienating) nature of their work, and emphasize rather those aspects of the situation that are not beyond the reach of human will." (14) In the following chapters clerical identification with their occupation is examined through their views of their firms, work conditions, management, earnings and promotion.

CHAPTER VI   <u>CLERICAL VIEWS OF THE WORK SITUATION AND OCCUPATIONAL</u>
<u>REWARDS</u>

<u>Introduction</u>

In this chapter the views of clerical workers concerning their

firms, work conditions, managements, promotion and earnings will be

examined.   This will provide further understanding of clerical

interests in work and enable some assessment of the role which

extrinsic rewards played in their occupational identities.   A major

objective of this chapter is then to interpret the satisfactions and

dissatisfactions which clerks experienced in work.   An equally

important objective is to focus upon clerical aspirations and to

examine the ways in which clerks defined their relationships with

management and manual workers.   There have been relatively few

attempts to investigate the occupational interests of clerks but

previous findings have suggested that clerks put a high premium on

security and a steady income in work.   D. Weir commenting on the

findings suggests that "this emphasis is quite compatible with the

conventional view of the clerk as a sober, steady and rather unimagin-

ative kind of person." (1)   Such a view he argues has lead to "a

general 'myth' of clerical behaviour" (2) as both career-orientated and

individualistic.   As against that myth, there is the equally potent

notion, propogated by C. Wright Mills, of the clerk who, frustrated in

his strivings for status, redefines his relationship to work in largely

instrumental terms.(3) However, what is common to most observations of

clerical workers is the widely held assumption that they identify their

interests with those of management and seek to move upwards, whether in

a sober or more dramatic manner.   With this idea in mind, it is hardly

surprising that the equally plausible theory that clerks feel that they

are members of a separate occupation with distinctive interests has

rarely been tested.   In any event the emphasis on the upwardly aspiring

clerk has lead to a rather narrow focus in many studies upon the particular areas of promotion and management or class identification.

A recent example of this type of approach can be found in Weir's article, where he stresses the importance of promotion for clerks and asserts that "'promotion' ... is a concept which illuminates the unique position of the clerk in the class structure." (4)   However he eventually argues that attitudes towards promotion are mediated by organizational structure. Based upon his own findings of clerks in private industry and in the public sector, he concludes "it is clerks in the public sector organizations who tend to identify with management more, they perceive more clearly what they have to do to obtain promotion and they are more confident of attaining top positions". (5)   In this analysis promotion as a concept has apparently illuminated features of the work situation and the relationship between clerks and significant work groups rather than between the clerk and the class structure. The interesting aspect of Weir's findings is that they once again call into question a homogeneity of interests amongst clerical workers. Further analysis of his results on clerks working in private industry also leads Weir to question the myth of the upwardly aspiring clerk. He suggests that "it is not clear that the view of society held by white-collar workers is any more 'hierarchical' than that held by members of the working class ... The wants and expectations of the white-collar worker are typically of a rather short-term nature, and are not structured necessarily around the notion of career advance." (6)   On the basis of his own findings concerning clerks in the public sector it seems unwise to generalize from clerks working in private industry to all white-collar workers. It may well be that clerical workers enter different working situations in order to

fulfil different priorities. Thus those who go into the public sector where exam systems and grading schemes are clearly defined may be more career minded than those who enter private industry and possibly move around in order to find the best working situation in terms of pay and conditions. On the other hand Weir has quite rightly challenged the uniform notion of the clerk who necessarily wishes to rise into management ranks.

Dale before him and Bowen and Shaw in a later study both offer evidence which could be interpreted as denoting the clerk's passivity about promotion prospects. Bowen and Shaw's findings show that clerks in the steel industry were all working class identifiers, perceived their promotion prospects to be poor but that when given an opportunity to list ideal characteristics of a job, "good promotion prospects" appeared low in order of priority. (7) Dale in his study of clerks in industry, the majority of whom were lower middle-class identifiers, found that the great majority of his clerks were prepared to remain as clerks "whether chosen for promotion or not". (8) The problem with these and other studies is that little attention has been paid to the meaning of promotion for clerks. It is important to disentangle what level within the hierarchy clerks aspire towards. My own data suggests that they may seek promotion mainly within the context of their own occupation either through re-grading schemes or by obtaining a higher clerical job. In addition it is important to investigate how clerks perceive the system of promotion since this is closely allied with their views on management. Dale found that when clerks gave opinions about the determinants of promotion, 48.8% placed merit first, 26.6% placed influence second and that on a weighted list of all opinions influence was clearly second. (9) He concluded "this belief in influence is a bogey which the most progressive management will find it hard to exorcise,

and it is likely to continue even where scrupulous promotional
practices exist" (10). The belief in influence or unfair practices
in promotion is more predominant amongst the clerks in my study and
it would seem to have wider significance than the 'bogey' which Dale
suggests, for it is closely related to an oppositional view of manage-
ment and a wish to close clerical ranks.

The investigation of clerical views on promotion and their
identification with either management or manual workers still requires
considerable attention although it is by no means a new area. In
addition it is possible to treat promotion as one of a wider set of
interests which all have a bearing on the question of whether clerks
identify with management, manual workers or neither. Thus clerical
views on work conditions and earnings will encompass comparisons
which they make both in terms of their own work experience and what
they feel they can reasonably expect, and in terms of significant
others whom they select as a yardstick. Previous findings of clerks'
attitudes to their conditions of work and earnings have suggested that
they are not particularly critical about these aspects of work. Dale,
for example noted that his clerks were not really dissatisfied with
earnings and that "salaries, whilst never as high as the recipients
would like to see them, do not appear to be a main cause of contention."
(11) However as Barlowe (12) and Bowen and Shaw (13) have shown,
attitudes towards pay cannot really be understood in isolation. As
suggested earlier in this thesis we can better understand the feelings
of clerks about their pay, if we take account of its relative signif-
icance for them. Thus the expectation that clerks will be anxious
about closing differentials between their, and manual workers' incomes
will only be confirmed if clerks perceive such a comparison as relevant
and meaningful. The clerks studied for this thesis did not appear to

do so. Their income aspirations were modest and they tended to
compare themselves with other clerks like themselves. The general
finding that clerks were favourably disposed towards their employing
firms and their work conditions, suggested by Dale, (14) C. Wright Mills,
(15) Bowen and Shaw (16) and Goldthorpe et al (17) amongst others can
either be interpreted as a sign of loyalty to the firm allied with a
desire for career advancement, or as an indication that for many cler-
ical workers the relationship they feel towards work must largely be
posited in terms of extrinsic rewards. Further understanding of
clerks '. views of their employment situations can be gained firstly by
considering them in the context of their evaluations of the intrinsic
satisfactions to be had in their jobs, as was shown in the previous
chapter. Secondly it is helpful to contrast the views of male and
female clerks in order to establish how far an instrumental orientation
to work is essentially a female characteristic. The study of women
clerical workers is important since they are in the majority in this
occupation and some attention will be given to their views of the work
situation and occupational rewards in this Chapter. In addition
attention will be paid to the interests of clerks in different work
situations with a view to establishing what interests are held in
common and might therefore be characteristic of other clerks and what
interests are shared by clerks within firms.

THE FIRM AND WORK CONDITIONS

In the main clerks were satisfied with their firms and the work
conditions provided. In response to open-ended questions on what
they thought of their firm and work conditions, they indicated that
these were important sources of satisfaction in clerical work and that
it did in effect matter where a clerk worked in terms of important
rewards like pay and conditions of employment. As Tables 1 and 2

indicate few clerks were critical of where they were located with
the exception of those at Saturn Shipyards.   For these clerks the
main concern was their poor level of earnings although men in

Table 1   JUDGEMENTS OF THEIR FIRMS BY FIRM AND SEX

JUDGEMENTS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
CRITICAL	M	4	19	6	55	3	16	-	-	4	17	2	18	19	22
	F	6	24	4	36	3	27	-	-	2	12	1	25	16	21
FAVOURABLE	M	17	81	5	45	16	84	3	100	19	83	9	82	69	78
	F	19	76	7	64	8	73	9	100	15	88	3	75	61	79
TOTAL	M	21	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	25	100	11	100	11	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100

Table 2   JUDGEMENTS OF THEIR WORK CONDITIONS BY FIRM AND SEX ٠

JUDGEMENTS		EC		SS		JA		ME		NE		ES		TOTAL	
CRITICAL	M	-	-	5	45	3	16	-	-	3	13	2	18	13	15
	F	3	12	4	36	2	18	2	22	2	12	-	-	13	17
FAVOURABLE	M	21	100	6	55	16	84	3	100	20	87	9	82	75	85
	F	22	88	7	64	9	82	7	78	15	88	4	100	64	83
TOTAL	M	21	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	25	100	11	100	11	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100

particular were also critical of management and uncertain of what the
recent take-over might mean for their futures.   Some of their own
responses illustrate their anxieties.

   "No, its not a good firm.   It seems to me its not what you

   know or how good you are at the job but who you know and who

   you spend your social time with.   To me that's wrong.   The

   conditions leave a lot to be desired - they could be a lot

   better".

"I think the office staff aren't getting the same rises as
the men in the yard.   The conditions aren't bad but there
is still a lack of organization."

"Haven't seen any evidence of it yet (being a good firm).
We get the minimum that they are obliged to give.   We
don't get anything above that.   The working week is fair
enough but holiday allocation has deteriorated in recent
years."

"Its early days yet.   Its only a year since the takeover.
It seems less parochial than (the old firm) but I can't say.
The new consortium have improved things a little.   We
expect a good deal from them.   They couldn't be any worse
than the old firm.   It was a family concern, dogmatic.
They opposed, or tried to anyway, union recognition."

"Up to now we've not had much dealings with the new group.
The low wages are probably the fault of the union rather than
management.   We need better rises."

Although only half of the clerks at Saturn Ships expressed these
and similar sentiments those who were not critical, both men and
women, were not particularly positive either.   Thus they tended to
judge the firm and conditions as "fair", "reasonable on the whole",
"about the same as other firms I've worked in" and "alright".   Such
responses could be contrasted, for example, with those emerging from
Neptune Electrics where clerks obviously felt very positively that
they were well rewarded for their work compared with other firms in
the area.   Thus they evaluated their firm and working conditions as
"excellent", "the best in town", "above average" and "very good".
In particular they mentioned pay, holidays and general working
conditions as being favourable.   Of the minority who were critical

this was less in terms of general policy or management and more in

terms of poor promotion prospects. However the majority were agreed

that their pay and working conditions were highly favourable. At

Mercury Engineering there was even less tendancy to be critical. Here

as at Neptune there were strong expressions of satisfaction with pay

and working conditions. In addition however 65% of clerks at Mercury

also expressed the belief that their relationship with management

was good. They felt that they were on friendly terms with manage-

ment and that management appreciated them. This was seen to be an

important aspect of rating their firm just as was the monetary

rewards. Thus they said things like,

"Yes its a good firm. The wages are good. The attitude

to everyone is friendly. We call managers by their first

name. The conditions are very good - better than others on

the same industrial estate".

"Yes I think they are very good. They seem to care about

their staff more than a lot of firms I've worked for."

"Yes, because I think you are considered as a person. We

have a happy little office".

These feelings of a personal relationship with the firm and easy

communication with management were clearly valued by clerks at Mercury

Engineering and in terms of rating their firms and conditions this

was an exceptional response. At Jupiter Airways, although a few

clerks made reference to the 'family atmosphere' and the possibility

of 'personal relationships', there were mixed feelings about comm-

unication with management. Men at Jupiter, like men at Saturn Ships,

demonstrated more awareness of the changing organizational framework

of the firm but they seemed hopeful that expansion would follow, lead-

ing to better promotion prospects. However the majority response

from both men and women at Jupiter was that inspite of poor

promotion prospects, it was still a good firm to work for in

terms of pay and conditions. The following quotations illustrate

the range of responses at Jupiter Airways.

"I enjoy working for them. There's not much promotion

here at the moment but if expansion comes along it will

get better".

"Yes it is a good firm now. Three years ago it was not

so good. Since the unions came in conditions have

trebled through sheer negotiation - no industrial trouble.

We have good management/worker relationships".

"If you work for money yes. The wages are good. Comm-

unications are bad within the company".

"Yes and no. Yes because its small and personal. No

because they don't back up improvement suggestions".

"Yes. The salaries are good. Promotion is limited but

its fair".

"Yes. They pay reasonably well. They're quite good

with staff meetings and prepared to negotiate with the

unions".

"Yes. We get good pay and perks. Some of the staff are

O.K. Some who are higher up tell tales. The conditions

are all pretty good".

Clerks at Jupiter, although in some cases expressing mixed feelings

about communications and conditions, were on the whole personally

satisfied.

The majority of clerks at Earth Supplies and Earth Control were

also of the opinion that the National Coal Board was a good employer.

Women were more likely than men to make this judgement in financial

terms although both were equally likely to stress their good

working conditions. At Earth Control where the numbers in the

sample allowed a reasonable comparison between the sexes, 19% of

the men compared with 52% of the women said that theirs'was a good

firm to work for in terms of good wages. Men on the other hand

were more likely to mention the security of working for a nation-

alized industry and the opportunities for training which the Board

encouraged. As one respondent put it, "It's a nationalized

industry. They don't go down the drain. The conditions are very

good". Only 2 clerks at Earth Supplies and 1 at Earth Control

perceived pit-closures as threatening to their jobs. Where

redundancy had been experienced it was felt that the Board had been

very good in providing an alternative job. Few clerks expressed

dissatisfaction with the firm or conditions and at this point there

were few direct criticisms of management. Of the 6 women at Earth

Control who were critical of the firm, 3 complained about imperson-

ality and "being a cog in the machine" but still felt that their

working conditions were very good, and 3 complained about "bad

organisation". On the whole the impression given by the responses

at Earth Supplies and Earth Control was that working for a large,

nationalized company lead to better conditions and prospects.

Indeed in making their evaluation of the firm most clerks working

for the N.C.B. went on to compare it with smaller private concerns.

The following quotations illustrate the range of responses from

men and women at Earth Control, which in turn reflect the similar

feelings expressed at Earth Supplies.

Women

"Yes its a good firm in all sorts of ways - salary,

working conditions, they look after their staff and

the hours are good".

"Yes. They're understanding about time off. We get

good money, good hours".

"Yes the conditions are good. But you can't express

yourself through the work - you're just a cog in the

machine".

"Moneywise yes. Otherwise no - its very badly organized".

"Yes. I'm well paid. They found me another job when I

was made redundant. The holidays are good".

"Yes for holidays and wages".

Men

"Yes. It seems to have fairly good relations between

bosses and lower grades. Looks after employees well -

with redundancy problems for example".

"Very good working conditions. We get good wages and

good opportunities for further education".

"It's O.K. if I was prepared to be settled and not

ambitious. If security was the most important thing

to me. The conditions are all very good".

"Yes its much better than being in a Solicitor's office.

A nationalized industry pays better".

"Yes. The Board is expanding and merging. The

prospects of promotion in the next year will be fairly

good".

"The N.C.B. treats its employees well but the decision

making process is poor. There are too many referrals to

Headquarters".

It was interesting to find that in an industry where the clerical
labour force had been reduced by 20% between 1964-1972, clerical
workers either defined their relationship with the firm in terms
of security or at least did not perceive insecurity or threat to
their jobs. Overall they were satisfied with their firm and work
conditions.

MANAGEMENT

Taking all firms together it appeared that the clerks least
satisfied with their lot were those at Saturn Ships. In evaluating
their firm they had hinted at their dissatisfaction with management
and in a subsequent question asking directly what they thought of
management they emerged as those clerks who were most critical of
management, although clerks in other firms also expressed some dis-
satisfaction in this respect. Nevertheless as Table 3 illustrates
fewer clerks at Saturn Ships said that their management was good.
It also demonstrates that clerks at Mercury Engineering and Earth
Supplies were different from other clerks in terms of perceiving
their management as satisfactory. In both cases the feeling was

Table 3   EVALUATIONS OF MANAGEMENT BY FIRM

EVALUATIONS	EC		SS		JA		ME		NE		ES		TOTAL	
		%		%		%		%		%		%		%
ALL THOSE SAYING,'GOOD', FAVOURABLE OPINIONS	14	30	4	18	10	33	9	75	11	28	9	60	57	35
ALL THOSE SAYING 'POOR', CRITICAL OPINIONS	32	70	18	82	20	67	3	25	29	72	6	40	108	65
TOTAL	46	100	22	100	30	100	12	100	40	100	15	100	165	100

expressed that their managers were helpful and humane. This had

already been stressed by Mercury Engineering clerks as a major

source of attachment to the firm. They clearly valued a personal,

friendly atmosphere which they felt their managers were largely

responsible for creating. Clerks at Earth Supplies were similar in

this respect and since they were mainly men it seemed that the value

placed upon a considerate management was not specifically a female

response as the responses from Mercury Engineering might have suggested.

This was further substantiated by the major criticism which emerged in

all other firms that management was too distant leading to gaps in

communication. This criticism was usually levelled at local manage-

ment but in the case of Jupiter Airways 50% of those who were critical

of management suggested that their local managers were alright but that

top management in London was not. For them it was a question of

decisions being taken at a remote level and being imposed upon their

own managers and themselves. At Saturn Ships, however, only 17% of

those criticizing management were concerned with top management. They

were chiefly expressing a grievance against local management which they

felt did not recognize the interests of clerical workers and did not

understand or appreciate their work. Such feelings were clearly

related to their concern over pay and the belief that management valued

production workers more highly than their clerical staff. In this

sense there was evidence of a 'them/us' attitude amongst clerks at

Saturn Ships which can be seen in the following comments.

Women

"I haven't got much to do with them except the people I

work for. I suppose they do their work but I don't see why

they should get cars bought for them".

"Since the takeover its better than the previous firm.

The trouble is there are too many bosses. In this office

there's only supposed to be one and yet others give us

instructions as well. We're still treated like office

juniors".

"There are too many directors, too many bosses and heads of

department. They think they can just tell you what to

do when its got nothing to do with them".

Men

"Poor. The men at the top don't know what the men at the

bottom are doing. They don't understand the job. They

give orders out but they haven't got a clue what they are

asking. There's no proper organization. Somehow the

job just gets done - haphazardly in a lot of cases."

"Don't think anything of them. I don't respect them.

They don't treat people right - treat them more like a

machine than a person. There's a lack of communication

between workers and management".

"So-so. In some cases its square pegs in round holes.

Two of them just happen to be sons of shipbuilders".

"The present management have more progressive ideas about

the future of the industry. They have promised better

conditions for industrial workers as the firm prospers.

I haven't heard a thing about the same for clerical workers".

"The senior management are very good. But the lower

management aren't - most aren't qualified to show the likes

of me what to do".

These statements illustrate the considerable degree of resentment

felt by men and women at Saturn Ships when thinking about their

relationship with management. It was evident in several areas
of the interview that these clerks were much more disenchanted
than others even where complaints were levelled against management
by clerks in other firms.

In Jupiter, Neptune and Earth Control the numbers of clerks
proferring some criticism were quite high, about 2/3 in each case.
As we have already noted one of the main complaints coming from
Jupiter concerned top management. However there were also some
complaints coming from 30% of the sample directed at local management
in terms of poor coordination and lack of support. The following
comments illustrate these types of complaints.

Women

"They could be more understanding. They are not poor but when
we do need help it is not given job wise. There is not enough
backing generally. We are often condemned before all the
facts are known".

"There are one or two loopholes which need correcting. With
respect to the managing director and the airstaff we are the
underdogs. This is a general management attitude".

"Complete lack of backing in whatever you do. You're called
out for mistakes but never praised. A feeling of non cooper-
ation runs through all departments".

"We don't get a lot of support from management. We are only
here when things go wrong - then morale gets low. There is
no praise when things go right".

Men

"The local management is very poor. There have been cases
in my office where three or four people have put forward a
good case but they are not willing to listen".

"Very poor. They lack foresight and adventure. There's
a general apathy. The higher you go the more vulnerable
you are to this. If a man gets to the top of the ladder
where does he go from there? He looks down on others".

"Top management is excellent. The fruit in the middle of
the tree is a bit off. There are many reasons, personal
gain for one. Our management has to run to a budget even
if people have to suffer. He gets a feather in his cap".

"Local management leaves a lot to be desired. We don't get
the backing we should".

These responses did not of course represent the majority view at
Jupiter since 2/3 of the sample either felt that management was good
or that local management were ineffective because the power was
centered in London. However from the previous comments it was
clear that some clerks at Jupiter Airways felt resentment towards
their immediate managers. In the type of work concerning schedules
and flight delays it seemed that some clerks expected more support
from their local managers than they felt they were getting. For
them it was not so much a matter of management coming up with the
goods as at Saturn Ships, but a desire for a more united and better
coordinated effort in work between themselves and management.

At Neptune and Earth Control most of the criticisms took the
form of there being a distant relationship between clerks and managers.
Indeed for some clerks it might be too strong to suggest that they were
being critical since they tended to comment on this distance as if it

were merely a fact in their working lives. Certainly there were far fewer resentful comments emerging in these two firms. It was as if the gap between management and clerical workers was well forged and to a certain extent accepted. Only one male clerk at Neptune, for example, expressed dissatisfaction with the way in which management treated clerks. As he put it,

"On the whole management is bad. They don't look after
the people working for them. If they did they would get
a better return. They would build up loyalty. It drives
us into the union. There are no merit rises now. The
staff now have to join a union".

This man in his early fifties was appalled that clerks should need a union in this way. However his was a lone voice at Neptune in criticizing management for the clerks loss of prestige. Other criticisms made at Neptune were that communications were bad and that management did not know enough about the range of clerical jobs involved. However such specific criticisms were in the minority. In the main clerks simply said that 'they had no close contact with management', 'management kept themselves to themselves', and that 'they were distant'. Similar feelings were expressed at Earth Control as the following typical comments illustrate.

Men

"I've never really had much insight on it. I couldn't
say what was good and what was bad about it. It never
does enough to annoy me."

"I have little dealings with it. It has been efficient
the times I've had to deal with it".

"You don't see much of them or know what is going on at all.
I can't say. Clerks at the bottom have no contact with
them".

"I don't think much about them. I don't have much contact
with them".

Women

"I don't know a great deal about them but what I do know I
don't think much of - but I doubt if I could do any better".

"We have little contact with management - first the occasional
'hello' on the corridor. There is a gap between clerical
staff and management. The only time we meet is at Christmas".

"People in charge of departments don't know what goes on".

"We don't have much to do with them. They don't put themselves
in our place. For example they are rearranging the Computer
building and we have to move into another building meantime.
This is inconvenient for the typing pool and the people they
work for".

It was the case that younger clerks were more likely to see management
as distant in the manner illustrated by the quotations. Older
clerks were more inclined to put forward a grievance concerning
changes which had lead to cuts in such things as Christmas parties
or the cleaning of the building. No really strong criticisms
concerning managements treatment of clerks emerged. The sense of
resentment which coloured evaluations made by most clerks at Saturn
Ships and a minority at Jupiter Airways was missing at Earth Control.

The questions of whether clerical employees related to management
as an identification referent can now be raised. It seemed that in
all cases the feeling that management and clerks were separate
occupational groups was evident even where a close association with
management was experienced. There was little expression of a desire
to be one of 'them'. They were rather seen as a key interaction
group who could facilitate or block the achievement of clerical

interests. Such interests either related to the carrying out of clerical work tasks or the attainment of better work conditions and pay. The notion of separation varied from firm to firm, ranging from a belief that management were able to bridge the gap through friendly and personal approaches to a belief that management were distant and remote. Only in the case of one firm, Saturn Ships, had the latter belief hardened into a 'them/us' attitude although there were signs of this emerging at Jupiter. It would be difficult to argue, however, that such an attitude represented a defence against a desire to identify with management. Rather managers were being critizised for not carrying out their role which meant in effect recognizing the problems and interests of clerical workers and acting accordingly. This being the case it is useful to turn to the issue of promotion, since if clerks did not identify with management and aspire to management ranks, this raises the question of whether promotion would be of less signif-icance to them than is usually reported of clerks.

CLERICAL VIEWS ON PROMOTION

When examining clerical views on promotion it became readily apparent that there were interesting differences between male and female clerks which transcended their employment situations with the exception of male clerks at Saturn Shipyards whose perception of their own promotion prospects was more like that of women than other male clerks as Table 4 shows. Women were almost unanimous in the view that their own promotion chances were limited and substantially more women felt this than did men. The responses of women were tempered in one-fifth of the cases in each firm by the statement that they weren't interested in promotion anyway. Fewer men said this although some did. At Earth Control 3 (14%), Jupiter Airways 2 (11%), Neptune

Table 4   JUDGEMENTS OF OWN PROMOTION CHANCES BY FIRM AND SEX

JUDGEMENTS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
LIMITED	M	12	57	10	91	11	58	-	-	10	43	6	55	49	56
	F	21	84	10	91	9	82	7	78	13	76	2	50	62	81
REASONABLE	M	9	43	1	9	8	43	3	100	13	57	5	45	39	44
	F	4	16	1	9	2	18	2	22	4	24	2	50	15	19
TOTAL	M	21	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	25	100	11	100	11	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100

Electrics 2 (9%) and Earth Supplies 3 (27%) of the men said they weren't interested in promotion.   No male clerk at Saturn Shipyards, the great majority of whom were dissatisfied with their promotion prospects expressed lack of interest in promotion.   However the numbers of clerks who did not want promotion were very small constituting 15 (19%) women and 10 (11%) men overall.   The reasons given from men as well as women included 'liking the present job', 'not wanting the responsibility' and 'not wanting to take the job home'.   These responses were just as likely to come from the unmarried as well as the married women.   In this sense there was little direct evidence that women were not interested in promotion for family reasons.

The majority of women in all the firms repeatedly mentioned the constraints of their jobs and the limitations of their qualifications and skills as factors which made their prospects dim.   Many felt that it depended on another women leaving, and with the exception of a few, they expressed awareness of their position at the bottom of the hierarchy.   The following quotations illustrate the way these women viewed their positions at work and their chances of promotion.

"I would have to work harder because I'm a woman. I would

need more qualifications than a man of the same age and

standard."

"If I stay down here there's nothing to be promoted to. We're

all classed as secretaries. That's it."

"In my office there's not much chance for promotion. Jobs

are set out for women and men. Jobs for women are the lowest.

"Not as good as a man's, but because I've got 'O' levels a bit

better than other girls in our office but only in a limited

way".

"I'm not likely to get promotion. I'm a machine operator and

I'm not likely to get another job."

"I have no chance of promotion because I'm the only girl on the

invoice section so therefore I'm going to be last".

"I won't be promoted. I only have qualifications to do my

present job so promotion is out. I could change jobs though".

"There isn't any chance of promotion. Its a dead-end job,

above us are engineers".

"Someone would have to leave".

"My chances of promotion? Not very good. Practically nil.

"I've been married for three and a half years. They're expect-

ing me to leave anyway".

"My chances are nil. If the supervisor gets early retirement

I could put in for it. Its the only way for promotion".

"For girls there's not much chance. Women supervisors jobs

are few and far between".

"Two pregnancies and one death would improve my chances".

These responses indicated that women either perceived their chances
to be limited as a direct function of their sex or more indirectly
in terms of their specific qualifications or jobs. These factors
together with the perceived lack of available opportunities meant
that promotion was an unlikely prospect for most women. Similar
findings emerged from questionnaire data where a clear majority of
women were in favour of equal promotion chances for men and women
(97% of all responding) but a substantial majority expressed dis-
satisfaction with opportunities for promotion (62% of all responding).
In addition almost half of the women attributed their poor promotion
prospects to either discrimination by management against women or to
men receiving favourable treatment (48% of all responding). This
latter finding can be compared with the substantially lower proportion
of men who felt this to be the case (26% of all responding). Both in
interviews and in questionnaires the majority of women regardless of
age or marital status reported dissatisfaction with their promotion
prospects which suggests that the view of women clerical workers as
purely instrumentally attached to work which is predominant in the
literature has to be revised. Women in considering their promotion
prospects were just as likely to report dissatisfaction as men (62%
in each case in the questionnaire) and in the interviews as Table 3
demonstrates they were far less likely to perceive their promotion
prospects as reasonable (19% of the women as compared with 43% of the
men). While age group differences were unimportant in relation to
these perceptions for women, there were significant differences by
age for men as Table 5 illustrates.

Table 5 demonstrates that whereas 80% of the women in whichever
age group judged their promotion prospects to be limited, men were less
likely to make this judgement the younger they were. This effect was

TABLE 5   JUDGEMENT OF PROMOTION CHANCES AS LIMITED OR REASONABLE
          BY AGE AND SEX

JUDGEMENTS		AGE GROUP 1 (under 30 yrs.)		AGE GROUP 2 (30-40 yrs.)		AGE GROUP 3 (over 40 yrs.)		TOTALS	
			%		%		%		%
LIMITED	M	12	32	14	61	23	85	49	56
	F	45	80	12	80	5	83	62	81
REASONABLE	M	26	68	9	39	4	15	39	44
	F	11	20	3	20	1	17	15	19
TOTALS	M	38	100	23	100	27	100	88	100
	F	56	100	15	100	6	100	77	100

most pronounced in the comparison of the youngest age group of men,

the majority of whom (68%) felt that their prospects were reasonable,

and the oldest age group of men of whom only a small minority felt

hopeful (15%).   The difference in male and female hopes was illust-

rated most dramatically by the finding that almost as high a percentage

of women in age group 1 (80%) as the men in age group 3 saw their

promotion prospects as limited or non-existent.   The youngest women

clearly did not share the optimism of young male clerks.   For the small

minority of women, 15 or 19% of the sample, who felt that they had a

reasonable chance of promotion, they placed their hope in either regrad-

ing, moving within the company to another job, or gaining further

qualifications.   Similarly men who viewed their promotion prospects as

hopeful also stressed these factors as important.   In addition, as we

have already noted, men in Earth Control and Jupiter Airways were likely

to draw their hopes from future restructuring of their organizations, as

well as the other factors.   When commenting on promotion, however, there

was little indication that either these or other male clerks were thinking

of movement into the management hierarchy.   At Earth Control for

example the notion of promotion was qualified to mean regrading by

39% who felt that they had a reasonable chance of promotion.   Only at

Jupiter did men refer to a managerial post, the position of Duty Officer,
as a theoretical possibility but in practice their promotion would
effectively stop below that level since there were only six duty
officers and as one respondent put it they themselves were "stuck".
In general when male clerks referred to promotion, whether or not
they had experienced it, and whether or not they saw their chances
as reasonable, they like women were thinking in terms of promotion
within the clerical ranks. Men, however, and particularly young men,
did not feel as unable to move up the clerical hierarchy as did women.
The following selected comments demonstrate the views of men who
perceived their promotion chances as reasonable.

"Here it has been fairly good. All the positions in the Board
are advertised internally and subject to interview. I've
never been turned down yet".

"I'm capable of doing all supervisory work within our clerical
branch I will keep on applying for vacancies higher than mine".

"It all depends on my examinations. They're reasonable compared
with the older generation who work here".

"Very good because of my age, experience and education".

"In the job I'm in now I have a better chance. In my other job
there was the supervisor and five others and so there were no
promotion chances".

"I'm satisfied. I've been here fifteen months and I've had
two rises and one promotion. The prospects in the next year
are good".

"Good. Since I came here I have been promoted from assistant
catering officer to a clerk."

"I'd have to be here another year or so before I'd have a chance.
There's not much promotion in terms of the job but an upgrading
is likely".

"They must be very good. I'm the next highest qualified

person in the department and one of the few young men left".

"Fair. I've just been promoted. In this department there

are a lot of changes going on such as upgradings".

"Good. I started at the bottom and have got so far up".

(Previously a shopfloor worker).

These comments were typical of male clerks who viewed their promotion

chances as reasonable. Perhaps more interesting than the reasons

given or hopes expressed for good promotion or regrading possibilities

were the comments made by male clerks who felt that their prospects

were fairly dim. Apart from age, men were most likely to stress the

lack of available opportunities. They were far less likely to point

to limitations created by their specific qualifications which tied them

to a particular job or type of work as women had. This is best

demonstrated by the views of male clerical employees themselves.

"The same as everyone else. Promotion is possible but it takes

time - waiting for dead men's shoes".

"In the present environment my chances are limited because

of the organizational structure. Opportunities don't exist".

"Only if someone leaves or dies".

"Disillusioned. I've put in for a couple of jobs and I

thought I had done well in the interviews but I never seemed

to get anywhere. Maybe its because I'm narrow minded. I've

never tried other departments".

"I can't go any higher because of my age. They want younger

people because they can learn quicker".

"Bad at my age I've refused to move to different places".

"None. I'm fifty. In another five years or so they'll be

putting me out to grass".

"Nothing at the moment. I'm as far as I can go. I'm

the only one doing the job. I'd have to move jobs. I'm

stuck in a vacuum".

"Very slim. I'm the youngest in the section. There are

four between myself and the Head of Department and I don't

think any of the inbetweens have any intention of leaving

in the near future".

"The only chance is dead men's shoes".

"This is a dead end job".

Certainly these views convey a feeling of being blocked but

generally, those men who did not refer specifically to their age,

perceived the block to lie in organizational arrangements. Unlike

women, who as we noted in Chapter V felt that they had been trained

for or directed into specific jobs and had then discovered that this

in itself was a limiting factor to promotion, male clerks usually

observed that there were simply no jobs available which would enable

promotion. However the same feeling of being held down in the

clerical hierarchy emerged albeit for a smaller proportion of men

in the sample. In this context, as Table 4 has indicated, the

responses of male clerks at Saturn were more like those of women in

the sample than those of men in other firms. In addition their

feelings of resentment towards management were further articulated

when considering promotion policy within Saturn. Table 6 demonstrates

that more men at Saturn felt that such a policy was based on favouritism

alone. This is even more the case when adding in responses which

linked favouritism with personal characteristics. 82% of male clerks

at Saturn Shipyards compared with 24% at Earth Control, 32% at Jupiter

Airways, 52% at Neptune Electrics and 27% at Earth Supplies considered

promotion policy to be either completely or partially based on 'being

in' with the management.   Two respondents at Saturn indicated that

this issue had recently been brought to the fore.   They said,

> "It's not ability, it's who you know here.   A recent
>
> vacancy was filled by an unpopular person who is well
>
> connected.   He is a blue-eyed boy.   This is normal
>
> practice here".

> "There's been a lot of bother here lately.   People say
>
> that clerks with good prospects don't get the jobs.
>
> People who do more for management get them".

In addition when considering their own poor promotion prospects which

as we have noted men usually saw in terms of lack of available opport-

unities three men at Sunderland Ships made direct reference to

favouritism as the following quotations indicate.

> "Nil.   Pre-merger managers favour their friends".

> "My job has a very low status.   It has diminished over
>
> the years.   You might call it reverse promotion.
>
> Younger men do well, but its the favourites who win
>
> all the time".

> "My age is against me and my face doesn't fit".

Although, as Table 6 indicates, there were expressions that

promotion policy was based upon 'blue-eyes' and was unfair in all

firms, clerks did not usually consider their own promotion prospects

in this context.   At Saturn Shipyards however the view that 'who you

know' was the key to promotion was much more widely shared and seemed

to be yet another dimension of their disenchantment with a management

whom they felt did not take account of their interests.   By contrast

clerks in Mercury Engineering and Earth Supplies who expressed positive

feeling about their managements were disinclined to see promotion

policies as being based on favouritism.   The interesting aspect of

Table 6   JUDGEMENTS CONCERNING FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCED PROMOTION
IN THEIR FIRMS BY FIRM AND SEX

JUDGEMENTS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
WHO YOU KNOW	M	3	14	4	46	4	21	-	-	9	39	2	18	23	26
	F	8	32	3	27	1	9	-	-	4	23	-	-	16	21
WHO YOU KNOW AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	M	2	10	4	36	2	11	-	-	3	13	1	9	12	14
	F	2	8	3	27	-	-	2	22	2	12	-	-	9	12
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS eg. QUALIFICATIONS, ABILITY, EXPERIENCE, SEX	M	16	76	2	18	13	68	3	100	11	48	8	73	53	60
	F	15	60	5	46	10	91	7	78	11	65	4	100	52	67
TOTALS	M	21	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	25	100	11	100	11	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100
THOSE WHO REFER TO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN	M	4	19	1	9	-	-	1	33	5	22	2	18	13	15
	F	13	52	4	36	-	-	4	44	4	24	1	25	26	34

the responses which did emphasize 'being-in' with management was that
in most cases these could be interpreted as a criticism of other clerks
as well as management.   In this sense it was not surprising to find
that the majority of clerks did not perceive their own promotion
prospects as depending upon currying favour.   But it was also further
evidence that they held a notion of an occupation which ought to have
certain rules concerning promotion which deviant clerks were breaking in
collusion with management.   The following comments from both men and
women provide a basis for this interpretation.

"Carrying tales and drinking with the boss".

"It depends not on what you know but on who you know.
If you're a good drinker you will do better".

"In my experience its not because a clerk does a job well.
This can hinder promotion because they are relunctant to
move him. It depends on how well his face fits and
political motives. New jobs are decided before they go
on the board. This is unfair but probably true in any
organization".

"Promotion depends on if you have relatives in high posts or
if your eyes are blue".

"In some cases when there's a senior union representative in
a department they offer promotion to get them out. Its a
condition of promotion that they pack up the job they are
doing. It happened to one of my predecessors. I am
resisting this situation now. I don't like the idea of
being bought off - I have been told of a supervisors job.
I would rather have a person get promotion on merit"
(Neptune male union rep.)

"The Board have no definite management policy on promotion.
It depends on age and falling into the right slot at the
right time but Freemasons do particularly well here".

"Often it depends whose face fits and who won't cause trouble".

"You can work for promotion but you may not get it - you need
a leg up".

"It leaves something to be desired. Its based on favouritism and
how well you sell yourself verbally".

"No one notices if you are working hard or not I don't

think.   It depends who you are well in with.   I don't

really know - I've just heard the other girls talking".

"If your face fits - if you're friends with people you

can get on".

"Strings are pulled at times - if you are well-in".

Although the notion of the 'blue-eyed syndrome' was only expressed

by a sizeable majority in one firm - Saturn Shipyards - it was

interesting that as a high a percentage of men (40%) and women (33%)

referred to it in the light of their beliefs concerning their own

promotion prospects.   It could be interpreted as yet further proof

that to get on in clerical work, was, like the lack of available

opportunities, outside their control.   After all if you haven't got

'blue-eyes' or a 'face which fits' there's not a lot you can do about

it.   On the other hand, as I suggested earlier, such comments suggested

that if clerks were getting on it was partially by devious means.

Table 6 also includes the numbers of clerks who felt that there

was discimination against women in their firms.   These figures are

extracted from the inclusive area of 'personal characteristics' in the

table.   They indicate that women were generally more likely to perceive

promotion policies in these terms, 34% of the women compared with 15%

of the men.   The numbers of women who believed that women did not get

on as easily as men clearly varied by firm.   In Earth Control and

Mercury Engineering more women felt this to be the case and at Jupiter

Airways neither men nor women were of this opinion.   If we recall the

sort of comments which women made when assessing their own promotion

chances, in which they noted their lack of transferable skills and being

tied to a specific job, it seemed that only in the case of Earth Control

was there a widely shared view that in any event the firm's policy on

promotion decreed that women should not get on. One respondent

expressed in the following sarcastic form, "I don't really know

(about the firm's policy on promotion). It depends on the girl.

If they've got the push they can get on, after about fifty years!

It's a man's paradise". If we take the numbers of women who felt

that the firm's promotion policy was based upon qualifications,

experience or ability, (whether or not they added the comment that

it depended also upon 'who you know', but excluding those who felt

it depended entirely upon 'who you know'), then the responses of women

at Earth Control were even more interesting. Only 4 (16%) of these

women perceived promotion policy to be based on qualifications,

experience and ability. They were followed by women at Saturn

Shipyards 4 of whom felt this (36%). In the other firms the numbers

of women who perceived promotion policy to be based on these more

neutral criteria were significantly higher 9 (53%) at Neptune,

5 (56%) at Mercury, 3 (75%) at Earth Supplies and 10(91%) at Jupiter.

In the light of this analysis the women who emerged as most critical

of their firm's policy on promotion were those at Earth Control and

Saturn Shipyards since they believed promotion either worked on a

system of favouritism or sex discrimination. For the rest of the

women in the sample the belief that they had not got the qualifications

or general skills to move upwards was consistent with the view that

promotion policy required such attributes. Whether or not women were

conscious of discrimination against their sex as regards promotion,

their major reference group for assessing their own promotion prospects

were other female clerks.

As Table 7 demonstrates, when clerks were prepared to compare

themselves with another(s) in judging their own promotion prospects

these were other clerks even when age was mentioned. There were only

Table 7   REFERENTS USED BY CLERKS WHEN JUDGING OWN PROMOTION PROSPECTS BY FIRM AND SEX

REFERENTS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
OTHER SIMILAR CLERKS	M	11	52	6	55	9	48	3	100	16	70	5	45	50	58
	F	21	84	7	64	9	82	7	78	12	71	2	50	58	76
YOUNGER CLERKS	M	4	19	3	27	1	5	1	5	5	22	3	27	16	18
	F	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
OLDER CLERKS	M											1	9	1	1
	F											1	25	1	1
MANUAL WORKERS	M	-	-							-	4			1	1
	F	1	4							-	-			-	-
MANAGE- MENT	M	1	5			1	5							2	2
	F	-	-			-	-							-	-
NO COM- PARISON MADE	M	5	24	2	18	8	42	-	-	1	4	2	18	18	21
	F	2	8	4	36	2	18	2	22	5	29	1	25	16	21
TOTAL	M	21	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	25	100	11	100	11	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100

two references to being worse off than people in managerial posts and one to being better off than manual workers.   This once again supports the interpretation that clerical workers considered themselves as belonging to a separate occupational group and that promotion meant in effect movement up a clerical hierarchy.   Of the 58 women who referred to similar others, 35 (60%) thought of 'other girls in the office', 'other women clerks', and 'women in the firm'.   The rest like the men either said 'people like me' or 'other clerks'.   When clerks refused to make a comparison they either felt that they could not answer this or that they could only use themselves as referents. However, a sufficiently large number of clerks did make a comparison, which taken together with the rest of the responses to the section

on promotion justifies the conclusion that clerks, whether or not
they were hopeful about their own promotion chances, tended to make
their judgements in the light of what they thought other similar
clerks were or were not achieving. If they had made either
comments about or comparisons with people in management perhaps more
male clerks would have expressed dissatisfaction but clearly such
comparisons were not seen to be relevant. Women were different in
the sense that while they identified in the main with other female
clerks, they could use male clerks as a significant referent and in
those terms define their promotion chances as poorer as some did (34%).
However the majority of women did not express the problem in this manner
but rather saw the problem as one of being a particular type of clerical
worker such as a typist or a machinist.

In conclusion it can be argued that in the main clerical concern
about promotion opportunities was limited to aspirations for getting on
in the clerical field. It is in this sense that we can understand the
anxiety expressed by some clerks that within a context of few opportun-
ities for clerks, some of their colleagues were getting on illicitely.
No complaints were levelled at other management policies such as bringing
in graduates at the lower end of the management scale (which was an
increasing practice in Neptune Electrics and the National Coal Board)
and thus providing another block upon clerks' ability to rise into
management ranks. My interpretation of the responses of clerks to
questions concerning promotion within the context of the rest of the
interview was that they did not expect promotion to be a vehicle for
crossing the gulf between themselves and management but rather for
rising to the top of the clerical hierarchy which in most cases meant
either a particular type of clerical job such as cost clerk, or chief
cashier or to a level of supervision directly concerned with the organ-
ization of clerical tasks. Supportive evidence for the limited aspirations

of clerks with regard to promotion came from their views on earnings.

EARNINGS

We have already seen how questions concerning the firm, work
conditions, and management produced a variety of responses one of
which was either satisfaction of dissatisfaction with pay. In this
section it is intended to explore more fully how far clerical employees
were concerned about their earnings particularly in relation to manual
workers.

First of all it is important to consider some of the parameters
which clerks used for making judgements about their earnings. These
were elicited by asking how they would define a satisfactory standard
of living, a minimum, and a maximum standard of living. Tables 8, 9
and 10 show the range of responses to these issues. In some cases
interviewees gave more than one response and the tables are arranged to
show the incidence of responses by sex. They illustrate the variety
of definitions which clerks used, some offering a specific monetary
response and others relating the definition to satisfactions or dissatis-
faction which they themselves felt. In addition others offered more
abstract definitions such as 'having enough to live in comfort' or
having particular possessions. Although this presented problems for
analysis, what is shown by the tabular representation of responses is
that on the whole clerks were fairly modest in their definitions. In
Table 8 for example we can see that 36% of responses were of the order
that a satisfactory standard of living could be defined in terms of their
own earnings. Women were twice as likely as men to offer this response
and men were three times as likely to answer the question in terms of
their own dissatisfaction with their standard of living and pay. However
almost as many men (22) expressed satisfaction as dissatisfaction (25) and
the majority of male responses did not focus upon anxieties about levels
of earnings or their standard of living. Few clerks referred to problems

Table 8   INCIDENCE OF RESPONSES CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF A
SATISFACTORY STANDARD OF LIVING BY SEX

RESPONSES	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL	%
WHAT I EARN NOW/CONTENTED	22	25	38	49	60	36
ENOUGH TO PROVIDE COMFORTS	17	19	19	25	36	22
NOT SATISFIED/ COULD DO WITH MORE MONEY	25	28	8	10	33	20
HAVING PARTICULAR GOODS/HOUSE AND CAR	8	32	14	18	22	13
£2000-2500	20	23	3	4	23	14
£1000-1500	7	8	9	12	16	10
LIVING ON ONE WAGE IF WIFE DIDN'T WORK	1	1	4	5	5	18
DON'T KNOW	2	2	1	1	3	2
TOTAL RESPONSES	102		96		198	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	88		77		165	

which might ensue if they had to live on only one wage.   Those who

did were 1 married man and 4 married women (out of a total of 50 married

men and 38 married women).   This suggests that this particular problem

was not predominant in the minds of clerks although it must be admitted

that they may have simply counted joint earnings as providing them with

a decent standard of living.   The most interesting responses were those

relating to specified earnings, which even in the case of mens' definitions

were low.   Although more male clerks than female clerks defined a satis-

factory standard of living in a higher salary range, as Table 8 shows,

they were still only mentioning earning between £2000-2500.   In addition,

Table 9   INCIDENCE OF RESPONSES CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF A
MINIMUM STANDARD OF LIVING BY SEX

RESPONSES	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL	%
THE BARE NECESSITIES OF LIFE	24	27	35	45	59	36
1000-1500	15	17	15	19	30	18
1500-2000	18	20	10	13	28	17
WHAT I'M GETTING NOW	11	13	6	8	17	10
BEING COMFORTABLE/ ABLE TO MAKE ENDS MEET	7	8	4	5	11	7
DON'T KNOW	13	15	14	18	27	15
TOTAL RESPONSES	88		84		172	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	88		77		165	

when it came to defining a 'maximum' standard of living as Table 10
shows, men were inclined to see this as coming to fruition for those who
earned more than £2000, and conversely a 'minimum' standard of living
was seen to occur for those earning less than £2,000 as is shown in
Table 9.   Although the majority of responses fell into other categories
it was interesting that when salary ranges were mentioned these were
fairly modest.   It was also evident that when defining a 'maximum'
standard of living, few clerks saw this in terms of the priviliged few.
Only 3 clerks mentioned people in the professions and 2, people in the
upper classes.   For the most part they saw this as unattainable or
very difficult to define but if it meant anything then this referred
mainly to improvements in the quality of life such as 'having a bigger
house', 'having a newer car' and 'having more than one holiday a year'.
This could be contrasted with the majority view of a 'minimum' standard
of living which was defined as having the bare necessities of life.

Table 10   INCIDENCE OF RESPONSES CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF A
            MAXIMUM STANDARD OF LIVING BY SEX

RESPONSES	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL	%
UNATTAINABLE	29	33	24	31	53	32
IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE/POSSESSIONS	24	27	20	26	44	27
STANDARDS VARY, ITS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY	18	11	19	25	37	22
£2000+	20	12	5	6	25	15
£1000-2000	3	2	8	10	11	7
PEOPLE IN THE PROFESSIONS	2	2	1	1	3	2
BEING UPPER CLASS	2	2	-	-	2	1
TOTAL RESPONSES	98		77		175	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	88		77		165	

Very few clerks felt that they themselves were living at a minimum standard of living.   Given the parameters which clerks themselves used in defining a standard of living, it was not perhaps surprising to find, that when asked more directly about their own earnings, the majority of clerks were satisfied although there were considerable variations in judgements depending upon age and sex.

In response to the question, 'do you feel your present earnings enable you to live in the way you would like' the majority of clerks said yes.   Table 11 demonstrates that this was the case, but that women were more likely to express satisfaction than men, and that men in Saturn Shipyards, Jupiter Airways and Neptune Electrics were the least likely to do so.   Compared with other women, those at Saturn were more divided over whether their earnings enabled them to live in the way they would have liked.   The expressions of dissatisfaction at Saturn merely

Table 11 EXPRESSED FEELINGS ABOUT EARNINGS BY FIRM AND SEX

FEELINGS		EC		SS		JA		ME		NE		ES		TOTALS	
			%		%		%		%		%		%		%
SATISFACTION	M	14	67	5	45	10	53	2	67	12	52	7	64	50	57
	F	19	76	6	55	10	91	7	78	16	94	3	75	61	79
DISSATIS-FACTION	M	7	33	6	55	9	47	1	33	11	48	4	36	38	43
	F	6	24	5	45	1	9	2	22	1	6	1	25	16	21
TOTALS	M	21	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	25	100	11	100	11	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100

reinforced the comments made by these clerks in other areas of the
interview, that they were concerned about their levels of pay. Although
Table 11 demonstrates that there was some difference in male and female
responses to this question, it was also interesting to find that the
most dissatisfied clerks of all were older men.   Table 12 demonstrates
this and also shows that older women in Age Group 2 were much more
likely to feel dissatisfied than younger female clerks.   Men in Age
Group 3 were almost as likely to express dissatisfaction as those in
Age Group 2.   The youngest clerks whether male or female were in the
majority of cases satisfied with their earnings.   Age can be taken to
be a significant variable in assessing earnings since, as a general rule,
more uses are found for income with the development of family responsib-
ilities. This was evident when the responses of married and unmarried
male clerks were examined.   Thus 26 (52%) of the married men were dis-
satisfied with their earnings compared with 12 (32%) of unmarried men.
Women, however, did not differ in this respect since 8 (18%) of married
women compared with 8 (24%) of unmarried women expressed dissatisfaction.
But of the married women who were satisfied that their earnings enabled
them to live as they would have liked, 7 (24%) qualified this to mean
joint income.   Apart from this, however, age was a more significant
variable in women's judgements about their earnings than was marital

Table 12   EXPRESSED FEELINGS ABOUT EARNINGS BY AGE AND SEX

FEELINGS		AGE GROUP 1 (under 30 yrs.)		AGE GROUP 2 (30-40 yrs.)		AGE GROUP 3 (over 40 yrs.)		TOTALS	
			%		%		%		%
SATISFACTION	M	30	79	9	39	11	41	50	57
	F	46	82	9	60	6	100	61	79
DISSATIS-FACTION	M	8	21	14	61	16	59	38	43
	F	10	18	6	40	-	-	16	21
TOTALS	M	38	100	23	100	27	100	88	100
	F	56	100	15	100	6	100	77	100

status.   Here, however, we should remember that in most cases women were satisfied with their earnings and that older women were still much more likely to express satisfaction than older men. The oldest women in Age Group 3 were the least dissatisfied group of all but the numbers are too small to afford generalizations.

Given the variations in judgements concerning their own earnings it is now important to examine these in the context of the referents which clerks used.   To some extent the responses to the questions concerning standard of living illustrated that clerical aspirations in respect of earnings were not high.   However much more convincing evidence of this emerged in their responses to questions concerning whom they felt was doing noticeably better than them, whether manual workers were, and if so ought manual workers to be doing better.   The majority of clerks did feel that there were others doing noticeably better than them, 67 men (76%) and 55 women (71%).   Those clerks who did not feel that others were doing noticeably better than them tended to refer to friends or people at work on the same level as them or in the same department as them.   When it came to a specific question which directed their reference to manual workers the majority of these clerks changed their judgement and did feel that they were worse off.   However such an

assessment of their situation vis a vis manual workers did not

arise spontaneously and within the framework of significant others

whom they selected, namely friends and colleagues at work they did

not feel worse off. Those clerks who did feel that others were

doing noticeably better than them used the referents which are

shown in Table 13. In all 148 referents were mentioned by the 122

clerks who felt that others were doing better than them and the table

merely records the frequency with which they were used, some clerks

mentioning more than one. Part of the interest in analysing the

Table 13   CLERKS' PERCEPTIONS OF THOSE PEOPLE DOING NOTICEABLY BETTER THAN THEM BY FIRM AND SEX

SELECTED OTHERS		EC		SS		JA		ME		NE		ES		TOTAL	
			%		%		%		%		%		%		%
MANUAL	M	8	53	5	45	-	-	-	-	9	50	3	43	25	37
	F	3	16	2	22	-	-	1	13	2	17	1	33	9	16
CLERKS	M	10	67	6	55	11	79	-	-	9	50	5	71	41	61
	F	12	63	7	78	4	100	7	88	7	58	2	67	40	73
MANAGERS	M	-	-	-	-	3	21	2	100	1	6	1	14	7	10
	F	4	21	1	11	-	-	1	13	2	17	1	33	9	16
PROFESSIONS	M	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	1	14	3	4
	F	4	21	-	-	1	25	-	-	1	8	1	33	7	13
OTHER	M	1	7	-	-	1	7	-	-	1	6	1	14	4	6
	F	1	5	-	-	2	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5
TOTAL RESPONSES	M	20		11		15		2		21		11		79	
	F	24		10		7		9		12		5		67	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	M	15		11		14		2		18		7		67	
	F	19		9		4		8		12		3		55	

responses to this issue lay in whether clerical employees would

spontaneously refer to manual workers as being better off. As Table 13

demonstrates the majority of clerks thought in terms of other white-

collar workers rather than manual workers. In addition there were

81 references to other clerks doing better either inside or outside

of their firms and this was a majority response since it was given

by 66% of all those who felt that others were doing better than them

(122). Compared with this only 28% of these clerks referred to

manual workers and even less, 13%, to managers as being rivals in this

respect. Given that the 43 (26% of the total sample) clerks who did

not feel that others were doing better than them related this judgement

to their position vis a vis other clerks it seemed that the majority of

clerks (whether or not they perceived others as doing better than them)

used other clerks as their significant reference group. As with

promotion prospects, so with earnings, the main comparison referents for

clerks were people whom they believed were in the same occupational

group.

However when clerks were guided to make a comparison of their

earnings with those of manual workers it became clear that clerical

employees did feel that they were worse off. Table 14 summarizes

their judgements in this respect. It was rather surprising to find

that 81% of the sample judged manual workers to be better off than

Table 14 CLERICAL JUDGEMENTS ABOUT WHETHER MANUAL EMPLOYEES WERE
BETTER OFF THAN THEM BY FIRM AND SEX

JUDGEMENTS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOYAL	%
YES	M	20	95	10	91	12	63	1	33	21	91	10	91	74	84
	F	18	72	11	100	8	73	9	100	12	71	1	25	59	77
NO	M	1	5	1	9	4	21	2	67	2	9	1	9	11	13
	F	5	20	-		2	18	-		4	24	1	25	12	16
DON'T KNOW	M	-		-		3	16	-		-		-		3	3
	F	2	8	-		1	9	-		1	5	2	50	6	7
TOTAL	M	21	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	25	100	11	100	11	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100

them in the light of their initial spontaneous comparison of them-
selves with fellow clerks. We might have expected them to have
mentioned manual workers straight away if there were any deeply held
feelings of relative deprivation vis a vis manual workers. In order
to understand how clerks viewed their position in relation to manual
workers we have to consider not just how many felt that manual
workers ought not to be better off than them but also the qualifications
they made to their judgements. However in crude terms Table 15 illust-
rates that the majority of clerks (whatever their reasons) felt that
manual workers ought to be doing better than clerks. Only 49 (30%)
of interviewees felt that manual workers ought not to be earning more
as compared with 21 (12%) who felt that they should be on a par with

Table 15 CLERICAL JUDGEMENTS CONCERNING WHETHER MANUAL WORKERS
OUGHT TO BE BETTER OFF THAN CLERKS

JUDGEMENTS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
YES	M	15	71	4	36	14	74	-	-	11	48	5	46	49	56
	F	16	64	6	55	7	64	6	67	6	35	3	75	44	57
NO	M	5	24	4	46	5	26	2	67	8	35	4	36	28	32
	F	5	20	5	45	3	27	1	11	6	35	1	25	21	27
SAME	M	1	5	3	28	-	-	1	33	4	13	2	18	11	12
	F	3	12	-	-	-	-	2	22	5	30	-	-	10	13
THEY DON'T DO BETTER	M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	F	1	4	-	-	1	9	-	-	1	4	-	-	3	3
TOTAL	M	25	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	21	100	11	100	11	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100

manual workers and 93 (56%) who felt that manual workers were justified
in earning more than clerks. Even amongst those clerks who felt that
manual workers ought not to be better off very few implied that clerks
ought to be earning more because of holding more important or respons-

ible jobs or because of having higher qualifications. Only 19 (12%) of the sample felt that clerical qualifications, skills and responsibilities ought to carry greater rewards than manual tasks. The following responses illustrate these feelings which came from a minority of clerks.

"No definitely not. They may work harder but they've never had to go to college to get their training".

"No. They are not trained".

"No. One main reason is that with all the qualifications which clerical workers have, their basic salary is much less than manual workers".

"On the whole no. Most clerical workers study and have qualifications".

Other clerks who felt that manual workers ought not to be doing better than them were less categorical in their judgements and were either inclined to move nearer to a position of stressing interdependence and equality between themselves and manual workers or to see the issue as one of general fairness. The following quotations demonstrate such views.

"Not necessarily. You've got to state the trade and what the job is valued at. Every man should have a living wage irrespective of age".

"No because I think both are needed in a company as much as another. Without the one the other wouldn't exist".

"Every job is important. They couldn't work if we didn't do our bit. I don't think they should be doing better really".

"No I don't think so. Each job has its own compensations."

"No everyone should have a decent standard of living whatever they do".

"No. Clerical workers do generate work for manual workers".

Such responses, represented the main types of 'no' response, which were scattered throughout the firms and could be interpreted as a plea for clerical work being treated as being as important as manual work. One respondent from Neptune Electrics put this even more graphically when he said, "No. Both can't work without the other. It's false for managers to think that the sun shines out of production workers".

However specific references to the interdependence of clerical and manual work came from only 14 clerks (8%) in all. The majority of the sample perceived the justification for manual workers to earn more than them to lie in the very different nature of their work. Even those who felt that their earnings should be "in line" or "on a par" with manual earnings did not particularly see this as a function of interdependence. Manual earnings also provided a reasonable standard to which they could aspire as clerks as the following quotations illustrate.

"I think we should be more in line with one another. In this firm the tradesmen on a recent agreement have got good wages, £40 basic. We'll never catch up. Our basic is £30."

"I don't see why they should do better than us but I don't see why we shouldn't be the same".

"I think we should be just about equal. They are needed the same as we are and should be paid the same".

"The differentials have been eroded. No they shouldn't get more than us. We should be on a par. We should work and link together".

"I like to see them get on but I don't think they should get better . We should all get the same chance".

"I think we should be on a par. Its a different type of work. Neither can be done without".

As Table 15 indicates only 20 clerks (12% of the total sample)
expressed a direct belief that they should be on a par with manual
workers, although as I have suggested some of the "no" responses could
also be interpreted as implying that this should be the case.   Even
taking these into account, however, the majority of clerks felt that
given the different characteristics of manual work it ought to carry
higher rewards.   Table 16 indicates the justificatory reasons which
clerks offered for their judgements that manual workers ought to be
better off.

Table 16   JUSTIFICATORY REASONS GIVEN FOR MANUAL WORKERS TO BE
          BETTER OFF THAN CLERKS

REASONS	No.	%
THEY WORK HARDER	27	30
THEY WORK IN BAD CONDITIONS	20	22
THEY DO PRODUCTIVE WORK	15	16
IF THEY HAVE SKILLS, A TRADE, THEY DESERVE MORE	13	14
THEY WORK LONGER HOURS	8	9
THEY DO PHYSICAL WORK	7	8
THEY DO BORING WORK	6	7
THEY HAVE MORE RESPONSIBILITY	2	2
THEY HAVE LESS SECURITY	2	2
TOTAL RESPONSES	100	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	91	

If we consider the reasons as being of types, either those which
stress merit or those which stress compensation, it was clear that
the latter type were offered less frequently.   Thus 'working harder',

'they produce', 'if they have skills' and 'they have more respons-

ibility' together were mentioned by 60% of respondents as compared with

notions of compensation such as 'working in bad conditions', 'working

longer hours', 'physical work', 'boring jobs' and 'less security' which

together were mentioned by 48% of respondents. The following selected

quotations illustrate both types of response.

MERIT

"Yes they work harder and have more responsibility like a miner".

"Yes.   People need things which they can touch, use and eat.

The best designed bridge in the world is no good if its only

on paper".

"Yes.   In the past white-collar worker was higher graded but

I see nothing wrong in the manual worker overtaking them.

After all, they produce.   Without them there's no industry".

"Yes because I'm an ex-manual worker myself.   Clerks are

usually self-opinionated, blue eyed boys, busy doing nothing".

"Yes in some jobs, because they work a lot harder".

"No reason why not just because someone wears a white-collar.

The manual worker produces.   We wouldn't have a job without

them".

"Yes, they put more effort into it - sort of sweat and toil.

It affects their health.   We don't take risks although I

suppose we could have a mental breakdown".

"Yes they are skilled".

"Depends on the job they do.   Skilled workers deserve more

and producers deserve more".

"Yes because to be honest I think they do a lot more considering

the hours we work".

COMPENSATION

"Yes.   They normally have worse conditions of employment than

we do.   They have more boring jobs than we tend to have".

"Yes. My husband is a mechanic. He comes home tired and
filthy. He should be paid more".

"Yes, definitely. They work much harder, have a lot more
to put up with and they work longer hours".

"Yes. Its much more strenuous. They really have to work
for it. Its physical".

"Yes. The conditions aren't as good. If they want comfort
and not money then they should be clerks. But if I was a
manual worker I would want more money".

"I don't mind a manual worker getting more than me for doing
dirty, dangerous, injurious work".

"It is fair. If they're prepared to do that work they should
be paid for it."

"For the amount of hours they do yes".

"They ought to be paid a higher basic wage so that they don't
have to put in so many hours".

What was striking about these views was the considerable degree
of sympathy and understanding clerks felt for manual workers and also
the expression that they didn't mind being relatively worse off because
there were enough justificatory reasons to make a comparison between
clerical work and manual work somewhat irrelevant in terms of rewards.
The anxiety which clerical workers ought to have felt in terms of the
literature, for closing differentials, only appeared in any substantial
form in one firm, Saturn Shipyards, where as we have seen considerable
anxiety about earnings had already come to the fore. Even here
distinctions were not being sought between themselves and skilled
manual workers but they wanted some improvement in terms of clerical
earnings vis a vis a wide gap which they now felt existed between
themselves and all shipyard workers. Thus 7 (64%) of the men and 4 (36%)

of the women expressed some concern over the ⟨size⟩ of the gap which they felt existed. These responses were not as likely to emerge in other firms. Some of the actual quotations from Saturn illustrate how they felt.

"Yes if they have a trade but an ordinary women working as a cleaner in the shipyard can earn more than a clerical man".

"They do work harder but clerks are paid really low".

"Yes, the tradesmen do produce the ships. Whether the differences should be so great is another matter".

"They work a slightly longer week. I don't want to say that they don't deserve more but differentials are collosal".

"I think we should be level. Approximately seven years ago a boilermaker's and a clerk's wages were very similar. Now there's a differential of £12 per week on the basic rates and they have prospects of better earning potential".

Although not all clerks at Saturn phrased their concern over earnings in the above manner this type of response was much less likely to emerge in other firms even where close physical proximity to manual employees existed. Thus only 1 (5%) men at Earth Control, 1 (9%) at Earth Supplies, 1 (5%) at Jupiter Airways, and 4 (17%) at Nepuune Electrics expressed concern over widening differentials.

From the analysis of the data on earnings the chief anxiety expressed by clerks seemed to be concerned with their own position vis a vis other clerks rather than relative to manual workers. This result can be interpreted as a further expression of identification with membership of an occupation which was perceived as being qualitatively different from manual occupations whether skilled or not. The interesting finding that the majority of clerks felt that manual workers should be earning more than them was consistent with their own modest aspirations concerning their own levels of pay. Even

more important, however, were the doubts expressed by all but a
few of the sample (19/12%) about the skills, demands and value
of clerical work. As we shall see in the chapter on status such
doubts were further articulated in clerical views concerning status
definitions and judgements about their own status. They had already
been voiced when clerks had considered their priorities in work and
had revealed their doubts about whether clerical work could sustain
interest and involvement. Although it was not a prime objective to
consider their views on earnings as contributing to this theme, it
appeared that the considerable degree of acceptance that manual
workers ought to be better off, added yet another level of understanding
about clerical employees'identification with membership of their
occupation. The highest aspiration concerning earnings was to be
the same as, or on a par with, manual workers and this was consistent
with views expressed about promotion where there was little evidence
of a desire to move into the ranks of management. Both with regard
to earnings and promotion clerks apparently thought of themselves as
belonging to a separate occupational group with distinctive problems
and interests. In this sense their most salient identification
referent was the clerical group from which standards for appraising
their own situation and rewards in work were drawn.

CONCLUSION

The majority of clerks were favourably disposed towards their
firms and work conditions and only clerks from Saturn Shipyards
seriously disrupted that pattern of responses. They were anxious
about earnings and less inclined to perceive their employers and
general work conditions as satisfactory. Their view of management
was much more likely to be oppositional than those of clerks in
other firms although they were by no means unique in criticising

management. However, in two firms, Earth Supplies and Mercury Engineering the majority of clerks felt that they had a good relationship with management whom they judged to be helpful. Whatever the particular judgements made of management there were no strong expressions of identification with them. The responses indicated that clerks shared a notion of managers having their job to do and clerks having a separate, if related function. Thus while management could be seen to bridge the gap by being helpful, this was in a sense seen to be a favour on their part. This was the nearest to an expression of identification with management but although there was some subsequent evidence to suggest that clerks at Earth Supplies did feel close to management, it could be interpreted as a feeling of satisfaction with a management who were seen to do their job well. In general clerks in this study perceived management as a key interaction group who could facilitate or block clerical interests. Some support for a broad interpretation of the results to mean that clerks did not identify with management or for that matter manual workers comesfrom their views on promotion and earnings.

Women were more likely to be dissatisfied with promotion prospects than men, thus suggesting that women clerks cannot be seen to be less concerned about promotion than men. In addition they were more likely to see their poor prospects to be a function of their sex and their limited clerical skills. Men who were dissatisfied saw their poor prospects to lie simply in the lack of opportunities available to all clerks. Male clerks at Saturn Shipyards again emerged as a group who were grossly dissatisfied about their own promotion chances and the promotion system operating in their firm. They were far less likely to see promotion as dependent upon personal characteristics than other clerks whether male or female. The results of the analysis of views on promotion demonstrated sex differences which transcended the firms

and some differences within firms, the most striking group in terms
of dissatisfaction being men at Saturn Shipyards. However, there
was little evidence that clerks as a whole differed in the comparative
referents they used. In the main they chose similar others for
comparison or in effect their own experience as a clerk. It seemed
that a reasonable interpretation of these results was that clerks
were thinking about promotion within the context of clerical work.
Thus whether satisfied or dissatisfied with promotion prospects
or systems of promotion they were considering a clerical hierarchy
and not a ladder leading into management. It may be that earlier
studies are dated in the sense that clerical work has become more
bureaucratized and thus the notion of a clerical hierarchy is now more
possible. On the other hand clerical identification with management
has been more often taken for granted than researched. Where it has
been investigated, as was suggested in the introduction to this chapter,
it has been seriously brought into doubt.

As with promotion, so with earnings, the majority of clerks held
modest aspirations and tended to compare themselves with similar
others. When asked to consider the relationship of their earnings to
those of manual workers the majority of clerks felt that to be a clerk
meant to be worse off. However the expected reaction, that this would
be a deep source of dissatisfaction for them was not generally forth-
coming. The majority of clerks felt that manual workers either ought
to earn more because of the nature of their work, which they perceived
as different in many respects from clerical work, or they ought to earn
the same. Clerks in Saturn Shipyards were again different in this
respect. For them the manual comparison was potent and was related
to their general feelings that they were badly off as clerks with a
management who cared little for their interests. Their anxieties
were then expressed in terms of the relative deprivation of their

occupational group vis a vis manual workers. It will be seen later
that these clerks, more than any others felt the need of a strong
union to represent their interests. However what was common to all
clerks was the notion that clerks, manual workers and management were
different and separate occupational groups. Whereas management was
an essential interaction group whose power was recognized, manual
workers were seen to be far less threatening than might be expected
from all that has been written about clerks. If clerks ever felt
worried about the closing differentials between theirs' and manual
workers' earnings, it would seem from this study, that they have
accepted that the race has been lost. They expressed, over the
range of issues discussed in this chapter, the feeling that their
sense of occupational identity came more from a sense of separation
from management. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, when
clerks considered the way in which both management and manual workers
regarded them, their identification with the clerical occupation was
stronger the more they perceived both groups to be unappreciative and
critical of clerks.

In conclusion, it would be difficult to sustain a view of clerical
workers' interests which was either predominantly career oriented or
instrumental. While the clerks in this study expressed an ambivalent
identification with their occupation in terms of work tasks, they did
not as C. Wright Mills predicted, turn entirely to an instrumental
definition of their relationship to work. They were concerned with
career advancement insofar as this meant improving their lot as clerks
but this did not apparently lead to an unquestionning loyalty to the
firm since many clerks were critical of management. Although they
were generally satisfied with their employment situation this could
not be taken to mean that they were entirely instrumental since their
requirements for satisfactory occupational rewards were modest and

tempered by their belief that clerical work could not really command high rewards. Perhaps the interpretation that clerks are steady, sober individuals who make the most of belonging to an occupation whose worth they themselves doubt might be nearer the mark. However when Lockwood writes of the blocks to a union of clerical and manual workers in terms of their lack of common interests, and when he along with many other writers emphasizes the marginal position of the clerk in the class structure or the clerk's intermediate position in work, it is doubtful whether the idea that clerks could have separate interests which set them _apart_ but not _above_ manual workers could ever have been imagined. Yet on the basis of clerks' accounts summarized in this chapter it seems that this is a serious possibility and that this may give a new meaning to the debate on the proletarianization of clerks. In the following chapter the focus is upon status which enables further analysis of this argument.

CHAPTER VII   <u>CLERICAL VIEWS ON STATUS</u>
<u>Introduction</u>
       The concept of status has occupied a central position in
sociological analyses of clerks and trade unions.   There is wide-
spread agreement that the clerk's prestige or status has declined
during the twentieth century leading to a dependence (if not fully
conscious on the part of clerks and even if hotly resisted by them)
upon trade unionism.   These arguments will be rehearsed more
directly in the next chapter.   In this chapter attention is focused
upon clerical definitions of status.   The main intention is to explore
the 'subjective status' of clerical employees, defined by Hyman as "a
person's conception of his position relative to other individuals". (1)
Any emphasis on 'subjective status' or 'subjective class' has typically
le d to ratings of occupations with the subsequent location of self-
accorded status or class.   Clerical workers in this study were not
required to follow this procedure.   They were asked for their concepts
of status, for their ratings of their own and clerical work status and
for their views on how others typically regarded them.   The attempt
to elicit their own notions of what the word status meant was made not
just to provide an anchorage for their subsequent judgements about their
own status, but also to clarify commonsense meanings of a concept which
is far from clear in sociological writings on the subject.   Status
can be used to refer to a person's position in society, his class
position, his life style, or his prestige or value in the eyes of others.
L. Reissman noted similar problems associated with the concept of class
when he wrote "there is some confusion in the definition and empirical
determination of class, which has been taken to mean status, economic
position, power, ideology, associations and various combinations of
these". (2)

In the field of white-collar studies, and perhaps in the popular imagination, the clerk is typified as a person who strives to achieve status. Thus he is commonly thought of as someone who wishes to keep his distance from manual workers both socially and occupationally. V.L. Allen expressed this point of view strongly when he wrote, "A prime distinguishing mark of those in white-collar employment has been their striving for prestige. This has always been so. They have possessed social aspirations but have had limited means of achieving them. Unlike members of the upper class they could not claim prestige as their birthright; nor could they, like the captains of industry, base it on power and authority. So they sought it in the only way that was open to them - by concentrating on social differences; by relating prestige to appearances ... and they sought to consolidate this separation by segregating themselves both physically and socially from manual workers". (3) The assumption here is that the lower orders in white-collar occupations wish to identify with those in higher white-collar positions and that they therefore strive to achieve the marks or symbols of success already enjoyed by those whom they seek to emulate. Dale expounds a similar view of clerical workers. He argues that "aspirations derived to some extent from their close everyday contacts with members of higher income groups draw them upwards, and personal limitations, loss of some of the differentials which distinguish them from the manual groups, and the steady erosion of their small savings by inflation, pull them down. It is because of their marginal position, with its underlying implications of frustration and uncertainty, that clerks are so frequently concerned to assert their 'middle-class' status, thus opening themselves to working-class accusations of snobbery". (4) Such a view echoes the vivid picture drawn by C. Wright Mills of the new little man striving to get to the top whose "psychology can often

be understood as the psychology of prestige striving" (5) and yet
who is faced with the dilemma that "every basis on which the
prestige claims of the bulk of the white-collar employees has
historically rested has been declining in firmness and stability" (6)
The view of the clerk as a status seeker is really a view of an
employee whose occupational rewards, both material and psychological,
are discrepant with his aspirations.   It is also a view of an
individual who has what Lockwood terms "a natural impulse ... to
orient himself to the middle class". (7)   When the clerk is depicted
as striving for prestige, deluded in his struggle and as Mills puts
it "more often pitiful than tragic", (8) the concept of status is
used at a psychological level.   It refers to aspirations rather than
realities and is linked to the supposed reference groups of the actors
concerned.   It can of course be related to behavioural observations
such as dress, accent, family size, leisure activities, voting behav-
iour and so on.   But it is used to refer to the clerk's conception of
where and what he wants to be in society.

The concept status has however been used more objectively to
elaborate the clerk's existing class position.   Often class and
status become analytically indistinct.   Lockwood, for example suggests
the distinction that "class focuses on the divisions which result from
brute facts of economic organization.   Status relates to the more
subtle distinctions which stem from the values that men set on each
others activities". (9)   He argues, however, that class and status are
closely related because the dominant class legitimizes its position by
ensuring that those qualities and activities which are closest to its
own are most highly valued.   Thus for Lockwood status is closely
associated with class position, so much so, that when writing of the
status situation of the modern office, he deals with this almost entirely

in terms of the 'marginal' class position of clerks. Thus he writes of the nineteenth century clerks who "less than a master but more than a hand, was poised precariously between the middle and working classes proper". (10) In spite of erosions in the traditional differentials between manual and clerical work (brought about Lockwood suggests by the increasing value put upon production work, the development of education for all, the feminization of clerical work, and increasing numbers of entrants to clerical work coming from the working classes) the clerk in the twentieth century is still depicted by Lockwood, as experiencing 'status ambiguity'. (11) This derives from the clerks continuing marginal position in the class system which seems at this juncture in Lockwood's analysis to depend less upon the 'brute facts of economic organization' and more upon "the structure of industrial organization and especially of the relations of authority in the enterprise". (12) Thus the clerk who has traditionally borrowed authority and prestige from those above him, is seen by Lockwood as continuing to do so inspite of a decline in relative income vis a vis manual workers. At this point it is unclear whether it is the clerk's inherited status gained from traditional proximity to the boss which is a factor determining marginality in the class system or whether Lockwood has shifted his definition of class from an economic to an authority base. In any event Lockwood uses the concept status in a variety of ways ranging from objective to subjective inferences. At times class and status appear to be synonymous.

Empirical studies of clerks have tended to follow Lockwood's lead in this respect. Thus efforts to investigate the status problems of clerical employees have typically rested on analyses of the clerk's position in the stratification system. Dale, for example, examines clerical status primarily in terms of class definitions. His starting

point is that "in the public mind, social prestige is closely
related to occupation, and as a group, clerical workers occupy
a position between the working and the middle class". (13)
Evidence for this assumption is provided, Dale suggests, by the
finding that over half of his sample of industrial clerks placed
themselves in the lower middle class. In addition he presents
data concerning the perceived relative class position of clerical
work to other occupations. (14) Here the major finding was that
clerks were most likely to perceive clerical status/class as similar
to that of salesmen, foremen or carpenters. Dale then switches his
definition of status from the all embracing class concept to other
possible determinants of status without reconciling these different
approaches. Thus he examines status as a function of earnings,
education, and father's occupation. In addition he includes data
derived from an open-ended question (which I borrowed from him)
concerning whether the status of clerks had changed over the last
half century. (15) Here the definition of status must come from
clerks themselves and while Dale includes tabular data giving the
reasons offered by clerks for either an increase or decline in status,
he does not draw attention to the types of definitions of status which
clerks implied in their responses.

While his clerks apparently invoked a range of determinants of
status, from earnings, to education to work factors, they like the
clerks in this study did not apparently refer to social class directly.
This does not mean, however, that at a deeper level clerks would not
perceive a relationship between social class or social position and
factors affecting their status. As I am able to show by allowing
them to commence with their own notions of status, including their views
of what constitutes a high and a low status, clerks typically thought of

status as a position in society which derives from a position in work. This provides some support for Dale's initial assumption that "in the public mind, social prestige is closely related to occupation." (16) For those who would regard the clerical definition of status 'as a position in society' as synonymous with a definition of status as a class position, it would seem that clerks in this study believed that their occupational status determined their class position. However they rarely used the term 'class' in the interview situation and when ranking their own status this was done in the context of those whom they perceived as holding higher occupational positions than theirs' and those in lowly work positions or indeed out of work. Both in these terms and in terms more directly connected with self-rated class (questionnaire data) clerks in this study failed to confirm previous theories concerning marginality in the class/status system, status ambiguity or status panic. With regard to self-accorded class position, questionnaire data showed that the majority of clerks defined themselves as working class as Table 1 shows. (17) This contrasts with Dale's earlier findings where

TABLE 1 SELF LOCATED CLASS POSITION BY SEX

CLASS	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL	%
MIDDLE CLASS	15	12	15	12	30	12
LOWER MIDDLE CLASS	33	26	27	22	60	24
WORKING CLASS	65	51	61	49	126	50
NON-RESPONDENTS	14	11	22	17	36	14
TOTAL	127	100	125	100	252	100

out of a total of 208 clerks, 64 saw themselves as middle class, 108 as lower middle class and only 33 as working class. Dale's sample did not differ substantially from our questionnaire sample in terms of social origins since 45% of his clerks had fathers who were in

professional, managerial, supervisory or technical occupations,
compared with 40% of ours; and 55% of Dale's clerks reported
father's occupation as manual compared with 60% of our's. (18)
As I have suggested earlier in this thesis studies concerning
class identifications and social origins of clerks tend to produce
inconsistent results since clerical work is far from homogeneous
and it is likely that the meaning of terms such as working class
could vary from one geographical or industrial setting to another.
However, rather than concentrate upon clerical notions of class
as Mercer and Weir for example have done (19) I decided to focus
in interviews directly on the concept of status following the
assertion made by Lockwood that "among no other class of the popul-
ation has the image of status operated so powerfully to inform the
behaviour of its members."(20)

Finally to return to Hyman's view of subjective status as
"a person's conception of his position relative to other individuals",
it was essential, in an area where assumptions (usually untested)
have been made about clerical identifications with management, the
middle class or simply those above him, to investigate more thoroughly
whom he compared himself with and identified with in status terms.
The investigation of the key referents employed by clerks was a
central concern in this research, and Hyman's definition of status
was more appropriate than any other class or status definition for
an exploration of how clerks viewed themselves in relation to others,
and what kind of status imagery they felt that they invoked in others.
In previous chapters arguments have been put forward to suggest that
clerks saw themselves as belonging to a clerical occupational group.
In this chapter the main concern is to examine through their eyes,
what status problems they experienced as clerks.

THE MEANING OF STATUS

In order to consider how clerical workers defined their own status and the status of clerical work in general it was first of all essential to elicit their wider notions of the meaning of status. This was done by asking them 'what the term status meant to them', 'how they would define a low status' and 'how they would define a high status'. As Table 2 shows 41% of the male

TABLE 2 DEFINITIONS OF STATUS BY FIRM AND SEX

DEFINITIONS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
POSITION IN LIFE/IN	M	11	52	5	45	8	42	-	-	5	22	3	27	32	36
GENERAL	F	10	40	5	45	4	36	3	33	7	41	2	50	31	40
POSITION	M	10	48	5	45	6	32	2	67	10	43	3	27	36	41
AT WORK	F	5	20	4	36	6	55	4	44	3	18	1	25	23	30
LIFE	M	5	24	4	36	1	5	2	67	8	35	3	27	23	26
STYLE	F	5	20	2	18	-	-	2	22	4	24	1	25	14	18
NOTHING/ DON'T CARE	M	2	10	-	-	6	32	1	33	2	9	4	36	15	17
FOR IT	F	3	12	1	9	1	9	1	11	3	18	-	-	9	12
CLASS	M	1	5	2	18	1	5	-	-	2	9	3	27	9	10
POSITION	F	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	24	-	-	6	8
TOTAL RESPONSES	M	29		16		22		5		27		16		115	
	F	25		12		11		10		21		4		83	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	M	21		11		19		3		23		11		88	
	F	25		11		11		9		17		4		77	

clerks and 30% of the female clerks defined status as a person's position at work. It was interesting to find that women at Jupiter Airways were the most likely to define status in this way. This could be interpreted as a reflection of their own experience of the more glamorous and fulfilling clerical work, as they saw it, at

the airport.   Their response was all the more notable since men
were generally more likely than women in each of the firms to
define status as a position held in work.   If we discount firm
and sex variations, 36% of the sample defined status in this way.
The rest, apart from those who could not or would not attempt a
definition, thought of status in terms of more general categories
such as 'a position in life', 'a class position' or the symbols of
success demonstrated in a person's 'standard of living' or
'possessions'.   Thus the majority view was that status meant a
person's position in society, if position in life or in general,
class position, and life style are all taken to express this view.
As a means of articulating this notion of a person's position in
society it was clear that social class was used comparatively
rarely.   Nevertheless the idea that status referred to a ranked
position, whether in the wider society or in work, was clearly
expressed.   Within the total range of responses the main interesting
age difference which emerged was that the middle-aged group of male
clerks were those most likely to see status in work terms and the
oldest group of men were least likely to do so as Table 3 illustrates.
Although the numbers were small in each case, it could be inferred
that for men between the ages of 30 and 40 years achievement in work

TABLE 3   DEFINITION OF STATUS AS WORK POSITION BY AGE AND SEX

DEFINITIONS		(under 30 yrs.)		(30-40 yrs.)		(over 40 yrs.)		TOTAL	
			%		%		%		%
POSITION	M	16	42	13	57	7	26	36	41
AT WORK	F	16	29	5	33	2	33	23	30
OTHER	M	22	58	10	43	20	74	52	59
DEFINITIONS	F	40	71	10	67	4	67	54	70
TOTAL	M	38	100	23	100	27	100	88	100
	F	56	100	15	100	6	100	77	100

would be more of a priority because of their position in
the life cycle. The importance of a position in work was, however,
stressed by the majority of clerks when they considered the meaning
of a high and a low status. A high status was generally seen in
terms of a responsibility or achievement in work and a high level
of earnings, and a low status as being out of work, on social security
or on low wages. In neither case did many clerks refer to social
class. Only 13 (8%) clerks defined a high status as belonging to
the aristocracy, the gentry or the upper classes. The numbers were
even less when it came to defining a low status since only 7 (4%)
respondents thought of this as meaning 'working class' or 'lower
class'. The general pattern was for clerks to define status in
abstract terms as a kind of social ranking which ultimately derived
from a position in work and the monetary rewards associated with
different kind of jobs. Typically a 'manager' or a 'director' were
cited as examples of high status. In the case of low status, clerks
were less likely to mention specific jobs and more likely to stress
unemployment and poor wages. However when they did refer to jobs,
only 10 (6%) thought of manual type jobs compared with 28 (17%) who
said 'clerks', 'office workers' or 'my job'. A small minority
24 (15%) felt that they could not define status in the first instance,
but only 5 (3%) refused to respond to give their views on what a high
and a low status meant to them. Such views demonstrated that if
clerks were to be conceptualized as status anxious then this would be
in the context of what they felt about their relative position in work
and the rewards associated with clerical work.

While clerical employees as a whole expressed dissatisfaction with
promotion prospects, it has been shown in the previous chapter, that
this did not mean that they aspired to move into the ranks of manage-

ment. Their complaints were levelled at the prospects within the clerical occupation which they perceived as having a clear cut-off point dividing it from management. In addition they were critical of systems of promotion and this criticism was more often voiced by those who expressed doubts and anxieties about management. On the basis of these results it would be difficult to argue that clerks were 'status anxious' in the sense of wishing to enter management ranks and having that desire frustrated. On the other hand, their views of management both with regard to promotion and in more general terms suggested an expression of status anxiety which took the form of feeling undervalued by management, both in terms of their occupational tasks and rewards. Again it is worth repeating that the majority of clerks were satisfied with their earnings and that where they experienced relative deprivation this was in comparison with members of their own occupation rather than with manual workers or management. The data on promotion and earnings was interpreted to mean that clerks both identified with other members of the clerical occupation and used them as a key comparative referent in judging their own progress within the occupation. The question of whether clerks identified with management, manual workers or felt separate from them can be further pursued in terms of their views on their own status and the status of clerical work generally.

SELF-RATED STATUS

The self-ratings of status, summarized in Table 4, immediately followed the clerks' own considerations of what a high and low status meant to them. The majority of clerks whether male or female thought of themselves as between high status persons such as managers and those whom they perceived as holding a low status because of low wages or unemployment. It should be noted that they were not saying they

TABLE 4 SELF RATED STATUS BY FIRM AND SEX

RATINGS		EC		SS		JA		ME		NE		ES		TOTAL	
			%		%		%		%		%		%		%
MIDDLE, AVERAGE INBETWEEN	M	11	52	4	36	8	42	1	33	9	39	4	36	37	42
	F	12	48	5	45	4	36	4	44	8	47	1	25	34	44
LOW/ NONE	M	4	19	6	55	2	11	1	33	5	22	1	9	19	22
	F	4	16	3	27	2	18	2	22	1	6	1	25	13	17
HIGH/ IMPROVING	M	1	5	-	-	4	21	-	-	6	26	2	18	13	15
	F	1	4	-	-	3	27	-	-	3	18	1	25	8	10
OFFICE WORKER STATUS	M	-	-	-	-	4	21	-	-	2	9	-	-	6	7
	F	2	8	3	27	2	18	1	11	2	12	1	25	11	14
WORKING CLASS STATUS	M	2	10	-	-	-	-	1	33	1	4	1	9	5	6
	F	3	-	-	-	1	9	-	-	4	24	-	-	8	10
MIDDLE CLASS STATUS	M	-	-	1	9	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
	F	1	14	-	-	1	9	1	11	-	-	1	25	4	5
THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE/EVERY-BODY IS THE SAME	M	2	10	1	9	1	5	-	-	2	9	2	11	8	9
	F	1	5	-	-	-	-	1	11	3	18	-	-	5	6
DON'T BELIEVE IN STATUS	M	1	5	-	-	-	-	1	33	1	4	1	9	4	5
	F	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
TOTAL RESPONSES	M	21		12		20		4		26		11		94	
	F	25		11		13		9		21		5		83	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	M	21		11		19		3		23		11		88	
	F	25		11		11		9		17		4		77	

were in between the middle and working classes or, within the context
of work which was the main context they used to judge high and low
status, that they were in between management and manual employees.
They felt that they were located somewhere between those 'badly off'
as they saw it, and those with higher work positions than those held

by clerical workers. Again very few clerks thought of their status in class terms. Only 13 (8%) judged their status to be working class and 6 (4%) as middle class. Of the small number, 21 (13%), who felt that their status was high only one person made a direct comparison of his status with that of manual employees. Indeed the evidence on reference groups employed in self-ratings of status suggested that clerks once again used predominantly the clerical group. It must be admitted that 51 (31%) of the sample resisted the idea that they ever made comparisons or said that comparisons were odious. Of the remaining 114 clerks, the majority selected immediate and similar others for comparison. Thus 62% of selected referents were family, friends, colleagues at work and people in similar jobs. Colleagues at work were usually cited as people they worked with or other clerks. Another 10% of selected referents were manual workers; 11% 'people in higher jobs'; 14% 'people with a better standard of living'; and 3% 'people less well off'. In all, only 24% of selected referents were of people in higher positions or who were better off than respondents. On the whole clerks were opting for comparisons with others who were close to them in everyday relationships and who were similar to them, as they saw it, in status. Thus they were thinking of people with whom they tended to identify rather than with contrasting or competing groups. The definition of status and the judgement of their own status was then carried out within parameters where clerks were not likely to consider threats or to produce feelings of dissatisfaction.

It is useful, however, to consider those clerks, albeit a minority, who did feel that their status was low or non-existant. Of the 32 clerks who said this, men (26%) were slightly more likely to do so than women (17%) but these responses were evenly distributed across all age groups. What was interesting about this response was that

it was most likely to emerge at Saturn Shipyards where the majority of male clerks were inclined to see their status as low and to see this as a function of belonging to an occupation with little status. For these clerks their own work position appeared to offer little in the way of status as the following selected quotations illustrate:-

"In this job? None at all. Very few people in work of

the general office type have".

"We're the lowest of the low at the moment. We can't get

much lower".

"Low. It annoys me at times when I see a man in the yard

making twice as much money".

The response at Saturn was consistent with other views expressed by clerks there about promotion, earnings and management. In other firms the numbers of clerks who felt that they were of low status was small and if this response was judged to be an expression of status anxiety we would have to conclude that it was rarely in evidence with the exception of clerks at Saturn Shipyards where it must also be noted that no one felt that they had a high status.

JUDGEMENTS OF CLERICAL WORK STATUS

In judging the status of clerical work in general clerks at Saturn Shipyards were also more likely to see it as low and declining. The pattern of responses to the question of clerical work status was similar to that produced by self-ratings of status as Table 4 demonstrates. There was a slight shift in judgements with fewer clerks defining clerical work status as 'average'. However, similar small numbers saw the status of clerical work in class terms, 11 (7%) seeing it as middle class and 9 (5%) as working class. Again few clerks overall were inclined to view their occupation as carrying a high status and those who felt that it's status was low were also in the minority. As

TABLE 5   JUDGEMENTS OF CLERICAL WORK STATUS

JUDGEMENTS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
AVERAGE	M	4	19	2	18	6	32	1	33	6	26	3	27	22	25
	F	10	40	3	27	9	82	2	22	5	29	1	25	30	39
LOW/ NONE	M	6	29	7	64	3	16	1	33	8	35	3	27	26	30
	F	4	16	5	45	–	–	4	44	3	18	–	–	15	19
QUITE HIGH	M	5	24	–	–	4	21	–	–	2	9	4	36	15	17
	F	3	12	–	–	–	–	2	22	3	18	1	25	9	12
DECLINING	M	1	5	5	45	1	5	–	–	2	9	2	18	11	13
	F	2	8	–	–	1	9	2	22	1	6	–	–	6	8
MIDDLE CLASS	M	1	5	1	9	–	–	1	33	–	–	1	9	4	5
	F	3	12	1	9	1	9	1	11	–	–	1	25	7	9
WORKING CLASS	M	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	–	–	1	1
	F	4	16	1	9	1	9	–	–	2	12	–	–	8	10
DEPENDS ON THE CLERICAL JOB	M	3	14	1	9	–	–	1	33	1	4	1	9	7	8
	F	3	12	1	9	1	9	1	1	2	12	–	–	7	9
NECESSARY JOB	M	2	10	–	–	5	26	–	–	2	8	–	–	9	10
	F	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	11	–	–	–	–	1	1
DON'T LIKE IT/ CAN'T SAY	M	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	9	2	2
	F	3	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	6	1	25	6	8
TOTAL RESPONSES	M	22		15		19		4		22		15		97	
	F	32		11		12		12		17		4		88	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	M	21		11		19		3		23		11		88	
	F	25		11		11		9		17		4		77	

can be seen from Table 5 the question of clerical work status produced

a variety of responses including the idea that clerical work was not

in any case homogeneous and that status depended upon the clerical

job, and the belief that the status of clerical work was closely allied

with its functional necessity. This latter idea was to recur and

to be articulated by many more clerks when they later revealed

what they felt managements' images of them were. The reference

to a deterioration in clerical work status was hardly mentioned at

all by clerks until a historical perspective was deliberately

invoked by the question of whether clerks now have as much status

as they had 50 years ago.

In response to this question the majority of clerks felt that

a loss had been incurred as Table 6 shows. More women than men said

that clerks now had less status and slightly more men felt that clerks

TABLE 6   JUDGEMENTS OF PRESENT CLERICAL WORK STATUS COMPARED WITH
           CLERICAL WORK STATUS 50 YEARS AGO BY FIRM AND SEX

JUDGEMENTS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
LESS	M	15	71	8	73	7	37	1	33	11	48	5	45	47	53
	F	14	56	6	55	11	100	5	56	14	82	2	50	52	67
MORE	M	3	14	2	18	9	42	-	-	4	17	6	55	23	26
	F	7	28	2	18	-	-	3	47	2	12	2	50	16	21
THE SAME	M	2	10	1	9	3	16	2	67	5	22	-	-	13	15
	F	2	8	2	18	-	-	1	11	1	6	-	-	6	8
DON'T KNOW	M	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	13	-	-	4	4
	F	2	8	1	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	4
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	M	21	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	23	100	11	100	88	100
	F	25	100	11	100	14	100	9	100	17	100	4	100	77	100

now had more. The responses within firms did not particularly relate

to other views on status which had been expressed. Thus all the women

at Jupiter Airways noted a decline in status over the past 50 years but

only 18% of them had rated their own status as low and none had judged

the contemporary status of clerical work as low. Although men at

Saturn Shipyards were more likely than men in most other firms to see

clerical work status as having declined, they were no more likely

to say this than men at Earth Control who had not expressed anything

like the same concern over the current status of the clerical worker.

Perhaps the responses summarized in Table 7 indicate that even if

clerks did perceive a decline of status for clerical workers this

was not necessarily a source of concern for them personally but some-

thing which they accepted as an outcome of changes in the structure of

the clerical occupation which had as it were debased the currency.

Some support for this interpretation came from the reasons which clerks

gave for the decline in status.   Table 7 indicates the reasons offered

for the loss of clerical work status and it shows that clerks were less

inclined to view this decline as a function of manual workers gaining

TABLE 7   REASONS GIVEN FOR THE LOSS OF CLERICAL WORK STATUS OVER
            THE PAST 50 YEARS   BY FIRM

REASONS	EC		SS		JA		ME		NE		ES		TOTAL	
		%		%		%		%		%		%		%
ALL WORKERS ARE THE SAME NOW	14	48	7	50	7	39	4	67	11	46	3	43	46	46
CLERKS NOW 'TWO A PENNY' LESS INTELLI-GENT/EDUCATED	11	40	2	14	13	72	1	17	7	29	1	14	35	35
PRODUCTION WORK NOW VALUED	6	21	3	21	2	11	3	50	5	21	2	29	21	21
WORK MORE MECHANICAL/ ROUTINE	1	3	3	21	-	-	-	-	1	4	1	14	6	6
CLERKS UNCHANGED/ LOWLY STILL	1	3	2	14	1	6	1	17	1	4	1	14	7	7
TOTAL RESPONSES	33		17		23		9		25		8		115	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	29		14		18		6		24		7		99	

on them and more as a function of changes in clerical work itself.
Thus 46% felt that whatever distinctions had existed had now disappeared
and that clerks were simply workers like other workers,and 35% saw the
decline in terms of the increase in the numbers of clerks who would
now be less special in terms of education or intelligence. These
responses could be taken as evidence of the proletarianization of
clerks who in the main seemed to accept that a loss of status had been
incurred without being particularly resentful about it. Even those
who felt that clerks had lost out at the expense of manual workers
did not always express this in hostile terms. In order to justify
these interpretations it is useful to include some of the actual
quotations from clerks. These are drawn from all firms to illustrate
that the reasons given for a loss in status were more likely to be
phrased in terms of features of the clerical occupation itself than
in terms of the closing differentials between manual workers and clerks.

"The man who used to work in the colliery office used to be
thought a lot better than a man underground. The man in
the pit was the lowest. The man in the office was looked up
to in village life. This doesn't apply now".

"Less status now because manual workers have gained on
him. The clerk has been caught up with, smothered and
overwhelmed".

"Less now. The nature of clerical work has changed over the
years. Fifty years ago it was not so routinized. The
work was more important. In my working environment the
whole office works for the computer".

"Fifty years ago a clerk was respected by everyone. Jobs
must have been more interesting then. There were no
computers and adding machines".

"Clerks had more status then. Jobs were hard to get. You had to be exceptional to have a clerk's job. Now clerks are two-a-penny."

"Less now because manual workers have improved. Clerks have stagnated".

"Years ago clerical work was a profession. Now its a function".

"There was not as much clerical work then. If you got a job as a clerk you were looked on as someone of a higher status than an ordinary working person".

"Anyone can be a clerk now. Years ago you needed a few brains".

"No because looking back, then a clerk was about the only job you could get. You had to know somebody or have money. Nowadays they're two-a-penny these jobs".

"Fifty years ago clerical work was special because there were fewer clerical jobs and more manual jobs then. With automation there are more clerks".

"There are more opportunities to do office work so the status has gone down".

"No. Young lads don't go in for clerking now. There's too much money elsewhere. It was a status symbol 30 to 40 years ago but not now".

These quotations illustrate that clerical employees judged the decline of status of clerical work to be a function of changes in the structure of labour force. Indeed they echoed the words of C. Wright-Mills when he argued that "if everybody belongs to the fraternity, nobody gets any prestige for belonging". (21) However whether this realization is necessarily associated with 'status anxiety' can still be questioned. Since few clerks in this study perceived their loss

of status in terms of advances which manual workers had gained
at their expense, it would be too simplistic to argue that any
strong sense of relative deprivation emerged and that 'status
anxiety' arose from comparisons made with manual workers.   For
many more clerks, the historical referent brought to mind changes
in clerical work which had altered its character.   It was now
less demanding and less special since in effect anyone could do
it.   Such feelings could be interpreted to reflect anxiety about
occupational identity rather than a concern over their slipping
position which they seemed to have accepted had slipped.

DEFINITIONS OF PUBLIC IMAGES OF CLERKS

Further evidence that clerks were concerned about their
occupational identity and the imagery which clerical work evoked in
others came from their replies to questions concerned their perceptions
of other people's images of them.   In the first instance they were
asked to consider how they thought the general public viewed them.
The majority 120 (73%) felt that others viewed their work in pejorative
terms, as 'routine', 'easy', 'soft' or 'parasitic'.   Only a small
minority, 18 (11%) believed that clerical work was regarded favourably
by others.   The remaining clerks, 27 (16%) felt that public images
varied, that sometimes they were favourable and sometimes disparaging.
Of the 120 clerks who felt that public images were undoubtedly
unfavourable, 36 (30%) referred spontaneously to manual workers'
images.   Such clerks were to be found in all the firms and were as
likely to be female as male.   However there was a tendancy for younger
clerks to invoke manual employees as the important public holding
disparaging views.   The following quotations illustrate the types
of images which clerks felt others held of them both good and bad.

"A lot of male manual workers think you sit on your backside all day and do nothing. This is wrong. If you don't come home covered in dirt they think you've done nothing all day".

"Other people in the clerical profession know what its about. Manual workers think clerks get more money for less graft".

"They think clerks do very little work - that they're there as ornaments - no energy involved. Only clerical workers know what they do".

"Unless you are in clerical work there is a tendancy to think that the job is easily performed and requires no effort. Workers think its not strenuous. I disagree because its mentally tiring".

"It depends on the person looking at clerical work. Older people like my grandparents still think its something to strive for. Younger people don't view it with a lot of respect. They think there are more important jobs to be done".

"A warped one. Pen-pushers sitting behind desks".

"A lot of people think its a cushy job. A lot more think it is more glamorous than it is".

"They think he is a little chap with a bowler hat who comes home at the same time every night and pecks his wife on the cheek - that this is the same every day of his life. They're wrong!"

"My hourly paid friends think its a hell of a status to be on the staff. I don't agree with them".

Two points are worth making about these and the other comments made
by clerks.   The first is that clerical workers believed that the
nature of their work was misunderstood by outsiders even when they
were thought to hold favourable views.   Secondly many interviewees
defined the general public in terms of specific referents like "friends",
"older" and "younger" people, and "manual workers".   However, which
ever referent was used the general feeling was that unless a clerk it
was impossible to understand clerical work and its value.   In a
separate question where they were asked what image their friends
held of clerical work the same view was expressed.   Only if their
friends were clerks were they held to understand what clerical work
involved.

In order to pursue the images which clerical workers believed
significant others in the work place held of them, they were asked to
specifically consider manual workers and management.   Now that manual
employees were drawn to their attention, the 36 clerks who had mentioned
them spontaneously (in the context of the 'general public') as holding
disparaging views, were joined by the majority of the sample.   Only
9 (5%) clerks felt that manual workers held a favourable image of them.
For the rest manual workers were held to have little appreciation of
clerical tasks and were likely to portray them as being on a "cushy
number" and carrying out little or unnecessary work or as one respondent
put it "leeches on industry".   On the whole clerks felt that manual
workers accorded clerks little esteem and that this arose out of their
ignorance of what it meant to be a clerk.   They felt that manual
employees did not recognize their worth and in this sense the feeling
of being undervalued in the workplace was expressed vividly.   Such a
feeling was shared by clerks in all the firms investigated and suggests
that any identification of their interests with manual workers was unlikely

to emerge. Rather the notion that manual workers looked down on clerks was likely to reinforce feelings of being separate and distinct as an occupational group. This was much in evidence in the responses since clerks continually identified with other clerks as the people who knew what it was all about. This process was further reinforced in some firms when it came to considering management's imagery of clerks.

There were interesting differences within each firm with regard to managements' images, and it is worthwhile considering each separately since the responses illustrate as much what clerks thought of management as of what they felt management thought of them. At Saturn Shipyards, where, as we have seen, clerks were more likely to judge their own status as low and that of the clerical occupation as poor, their invocation of management images took the form of vitriolic complaints. The following quotations illustrate the point:

"We are a necessary evil to them as shown in the annual clerical salary review. They tell us that compared with manual workers we are low down".

"As a tool to do all the rough work while they sit back and take the credit".

"They (management) hold a similar view of us as do the work people by their efforts to grind us into the dust - to keep our wages at at a minimum".

"They think we are just here to fill in time. We are immaterial as far as they are concerned. Its all for the men in the yard".

"Seem to think you are an evil necessity. They know they need you but they don't really want to know".

These comments from Saturn were typical of general feelings there. Only one women felt that the management image was good. The rest felt that management either recognized them as a necessity or were totally un-

sympathetic. Such views can be contrasted with those emerging from Mercury Engineering where the majority opinion was that management appreciated clerical work. Only one clerk felt that management held a poor image of clerks. However in only one firm was there an expression of identification with management. This was Earth Supplies where clerks made such comments as, "Hard to say - we're so closely connected - certainly within this industry", "good image because its part and parcel of the organization", "Excellent", "Highly of them. They feel they cannot do without them". Such feelings as this were not shared by clerks at Earth Control whose comments suggested a distance between themselves and manual workers and management. As one person put it "At Earth Control we are isolated. At the colliery we were appreciated". In addition clerks in Earth Control were more likely to mention their subservience to management. The following quotations illustrate this point:

"We do as we're told by management".

"We're there to act on orders".

"Sometimes they're dictatorial. They don't know the
basic jobs".

"They see us as necessary to carry out the menial tasks
of their function".

"They look down on us".

Only 3 (7%) clerks from Earth Control felt that management understood the clerical function and appreciated it. For the rest management were either seen to accept clerks as necessary or to hold unsympathetic images of them. Similar views were expressed by clerks from Neptune Electrics who like Saturn clerks were also more aware of being classed as second to production workers.

Within Neptune only 2 (5%) clerks felt that management appreciated them, 7 (18%) thought they held favourable views, and 6 (15%) conceded that they were recognized as performing an essential function. For the rest management was seen to hold disparaging views which clerks resented as the following comments demonstrate:

"They don't know enough to form a view - they form a cockeyed view".

"Management here doesn't even recognize clerks".

"They don't mix with us".

"They have no use for clerks - production is all important. We're a necessary evil".

"Two-bit clerks".

"They look after the shop floor workers but not clerks. We're the 'cinderellas' of industry."

"They think we're slaves. We are used by them. Management status comes from my work. If it goes well management get a pat on the back. If badly - management 'passes the buck'."

"We're disregarded. They're for production here".

At Jupiter Airways views were mixed with 9 (30%) clerks subscribing to the view that management did not value clerks, 5 (17%) seeing some recognition in the necessity of their work, and the rest feeling that management either held a good image of them or appreciated their problems. They were however much less likely to stress distance between management and themselves and did not mention the production or manual worker as a threat in this respect at all. The following comments illustrate the range of views expressed here:

"They've got to have them to keep things going. They aren't really interested in 'little people'. Managers take the credit".

"They don't seem to value us".

"Treat them as slaves".

"They know what its like. They realize the tensions
and that it isn't a mundane job".

"Ours is a first name industry".

"They do more for the aircrew side of things. The
ground staff are the poor relations.

"They know about our jobs. They have worked in
similar jobs".

"They think a lot of them . Employed to look after
them".

"A good image".

While clerks seemed to share a common view of both the poor
public image of their occupation and of manual workers'low regard
for clerical work, there was more variation in their assessments of
management imagery of clerks. These variations were closely
related to ways in which clerks had earlier defined their
relationship with their management. Thus in all the firms,
except Earth Supplies, clerks had noted a distance between them-
selves and management. In only one firm, Mercury Engineering
was there a feeling that management attempted to overcome the gap
which existed by being friendly and pleasant. In both Earth
Supplies and Mercury Engineering, clerks also felt that management's
images of them were appreciative and good. At Earth Supplies this
was considered to arise as a result of their close association with
management. Clerks at Jupiter Airways varied amongst themselves
in their notions of how management regarded them but overall the
majority felt that management did appreciate them and held a good
image of clerks. While they had earlier been critical of manage-

ment within the airline it should be remembered that criticisms had been mostly directed at a system of management where power and control was centered in London. Clerks who had been most critical of their immediate managers were also those who felt that management had little regard for workers to whom they owed more gratitude. These expressions came through very strongly at Saturn Shipyards, but also from Earth Control and Neptune Electrics. In these firms the feeling of separation from management was pronounced. In giving their accounts of management imagery of clerks, they were once again expressing the belief that they were not recognized for the work they did and that this lack of appreciation was often accompanied by ignorance on the part of management of what it meant to be a clerk.

As we have seen most clerks believed that manual workers did not appreciate or understand what clerical work entailed. This confirmed the picture which had been steadily unravelling through the interviews that clerks did not identify their interests with manual workers whose work they perceived to be both different in quality and value. Here we must remember their rather surprising views on relative earnings where the majority of clerks felt manual workers should be earning more than them because of the nature of their work. For those clerks in the sample, mostly located at Saturn Ships, Earth Control and Neptune Electrics, who also believed that management did not appreciate or esteem them, the feeling of belonging to a separate underpriviliged group was brought to the fore. This was more pronounced at Saturn Ships and Neptune Electrics where clerks clearly felt that management disregarded them and valued production workers at their expense. At Earth Control such interpretations were rarely offered. For clerks there it was more a matter of working in an authority relationship where they were the underdogs to a

management who were both distant and dictatorial.

Conclusion

In this chapter the main focus of attention has been the clerk's views on status since it has often been asserted that this is the key which unlocks the door to an understanding of white-collar trade unionism. Clerks have been typified as status seekers against a background of losing ground. It has been suggested that they aspire to management ranks and that inspite of changes in the clerical occupation, they still select management as their key identification referent. Nevertheless, it is held that the clerk's position is marginal and that frustration and anxiety follow the difficult, if not impossible, attempt to retain middle class status. As I have suggested earlier in this chapter these arguments are often confused by the way in which writers shift from one definition of status to another. However the view of the clerk as experiencing status anxiety is common, and it is useful to consider how far and in what sense clerks in this study conformed to such an image.

In the first instance it would be difficult to argue that these clerks either aspired to management ranks or used their management as a key identification referent with the possible exception of clerks at Earth Supplies. Generally speaking the sense of separation from management was complete, whether or not they were seen in hostile terms. They were seen, rather, as a key interaction group who could enable or thwart the clerical function. At the same time, clerks did not identify their interests with manual workers but this did not seem to arise from a desire to maintain status distance from them. Clerks defined status in the

main as a work position which determined a position in society
and within the context of work they did not apparently uphold
a picture of clerical work being valued more than production
work. If anything, they expressed doubts as to whether this
should be the case. The notion of marginality, as Dale expressed
it, had to do with factors pulling the clerk upwards and pressures
pushing him downwards - pressures which he wants to resist.
Clerks in this study did not conform to this idea of marginality.
In terms of Hyman's definition of status, it seemed that the clerk's
conception of his position relative to others put him on a par
with manual workers, without however the accompanying feeling that
clerks and manual workers were in any sense identical. Their
sense of occupational identity was firm in terms of their belief that
their work was neither managerialnor manual. It was further
strengthened by the belief that only by being a clerk is it possible
to understand what clerical work entails. Thus the clerical group
was the most powerful identification referent for clerks. This
emerged consistently throughout the various questions in the
interview.

Yet these clerks did express anxieties about how they were
regarded by others both in the work place and in the wider community.
The anxiety revolved around the value of clerical work, and since
clerks themselves had expressed on several occasions their own
doubts about both its value and intrinsic interest, the worth of
their occupational activities was clearly in question even in
their own minds. This led, as I suggested earlier to ambivalent
identification with clerical work. In this sense their own
ambivalent identification with clerical tasks and their status
concerns seemed to merge to produce what could be termed occupational

identity anxiety.' This seems, in the light of their views,
to be a more adequate descriptive concept than that of 'status
anxiety' or 'status panic'. If this is the case, then the
dynamic underlying their union identity is unlikely to be
defensive in terms of maintaining prestige and more likely to
be the desire for protection of their separate interests which
they believe are little understood or appreciated by the general
public, by manual workers and in varying degrees by management.
In the next chapter it is proposed to examine the relationship
between occupational and trade union identity.

CHAPTER VIII   <u>THE CLERK AND TRADE UNION IDENTITY</u>
<u>Introduction</u>

The relationship of clerical workers to trade unions has been typically depicted as 'instrumental' or 'pragmatic'. It has been asserted that the clerk like other white-collar workers, will only embrace membership of a trade union, rather reluctantly, in so far as individualistic strategies for improving his position are no longer possible. C. Wright Mills argued "In the union or out of it, for it, against it, or on the fence, the white-collar employee usually remains psychologically the little individual scrambling to get to the top, instead of a dependent employee experiencing unions and accepting union affiliation as a collective means of collective ascent ... The main connection between union and individual is the fatter pay check ... Unions 'instrumentally' accepted, are alternatives to the traditional goals of success. They are collective instruments for pursuing individual goals". (1) This judgement of the white-collar employee is echoed by many other writers and is based on the explicit or implicit notion that "unionism objectively means a declaration of collective independence, and, correspondingly, a tacit acceptance of individual dependence". (2) Thus it is widely assumed that total identification with unionism requires principled commitment to 'collectivism'. White-collar workers, for class and status reasons, are judged to fall short of this kind of commitment because of their desire for promotion and a generally 'individualistic' orientation to work. Sykes, for example, argues that clerks "set the highest value on individuality ... their interests lie in raising their own status as individuals, not working through a trade union to raise the status of all clerks". (3) Strauss insists that the motive for joining a trade union is defensive. Thus he argues that white-collar workers join unions, "not because they

reject middle-class aspirations, but because they see unionism as a better way of obtaining them". (4)   But whether the white-collar employee is seen as the reluctant joiner or as the pragmatic member, it is generally assumed that he is a qualitatively different union member than the blue-collar worker.

Studies of clerks are few and far between and those which have investigated clerical attitudes to trade unionism are far from united in their findings.   Mercer and Weir, in their study of white-collar workers in Hull, come out partly in support of the 'instrumental' white-collar trade unionist. (5)   Basing their interpretation on the responses of clerks, public employees, technicians and draughtsmen they argue that "it would perhaps be accurate to characterize them as displaying a limited instrumentalism, a "conditional assent" not to the values necessarily, but to the possible efficacy, of trade unions in obtaining tangible benefits for their members". (6)   Sykes in a comparative study of 96 clerks and 118 manual workers in a Scottish Company found that they were sharply divided on attitudes to promotion and trade unionsim. (7)   The majority of clerks favoured promotion and felt that they had a reasonable expectation of being promoted whereas manual workers did not want it and felt that there was no chance of promotion for them.   While clerical workers approved of trade unions in general, they did not feel that they were appropriate for clerks. Manual workers favoured unions for themselves and clerks.   The clerks valued promotion, aspired to management and rejected collectivism.   At the time of the survey they were members of a Staff Association of which management approved and although judged to be weak, was favoured by clerks.   Subsequently clerks in this Company did join a trade union and Sykes felt that this could be explained by diminishing opportunities for promotion brought about by management's management trainee scheme.

Thus they appeared to act in the manner described by Strauss, in order to defend their individualistic interests.

Dale's study of industrial clerks in the private sector, also provided support for the clerk's antipathy to collectivism. The majority of his respondents felt that they could improve their position more by personal training and qualifications than by collective action through a union. Out of his total sample of clerks, 25% were union members. (8) In their later study Mercer and Weir quote exactly the same figure for clerical union membership amongst their sample. (9) Thus Dale, and Mercer and Weir draw their evidence for principled objection to collectivism from non-union members, although the main reason given by Dale's clerks for not joining was that 'they saw no reason for joining' (10) and by Mercer and Weir's white-collar workers 'that they didn't need one', (11) reasons which are recognized in each study as possibly rational within the context of the employee's work situation. The majority of union members in Dale's sample felt that the only benefits of their union membership were salary increases which non-members shared as well. He concludes that trade unionism was not an appropriate expression of clerical interests and that the reasons for slow growth of clerical unionism in manufacturing industry include "The tradition of individuality, close association with management, the comparatively small working unit, class and political beliefs." (12)

Thus far it appears that researchers have found support for the widely held belief that clerks and other white-collar workers resist the idea of collective action, even when they are members of trade unions. However other studies provide contradictory findings. Bowen and Shaw's study of steel clerks provided an image of a working class clerk, passive about his promotion prospects and committed to trade unionism. (13) The most important reason for joining a union given by

these clerks was the belief that "clerical workers like any other
workers should be represented by a trade union" (14)   All were
members of the Iron and Steel Trade Confederation and it was on
the question of whether this union adequately represented them that
clerical workers divided. Those clerks (70 out of the total sample
of 149) who were anxious about their position relative to manual workers
and who were generally job and work dissatisfied felt that separate
white-collar representation would better serve them. It was not
a question of wanting better promotion prospects or a wish to identify
with management which appeared to underly this concern, but rather a
feeling that they were slipping too far behind the manual worker both
in status and earnings. They did not want more status than the manual
worker but they wanted to be on a par with him. It was the case that
steel clerks as a whole identified more with manual workers than with
management and in this sense they did not fit the stereotype of the
'individualistic' employee presented so often in the literature, and
as we have seen supported by some researchers. Here we must remember,
however, that clerical employment is not homogeneous in character.
Several writers, Lockwood among them have pointed out that the distrib-
ution and type of union membership has varied according to different
work situations. Lockwood believes "that the degree of contact with
manual workers and their unions is one condition of the work situation
of the non-manual worker which has affected the distribution of member-
ship within clerical unions, and which goes some way to explain why
certain groups of clerks have become strongly organized". (15) Of
course Bowen and Shaw's study was limited in that it investigated
clerks living and working in an isolated steel town where they had
experienced long contact with the working class traditions of a craft
based industry.

However other studies have demonstrated that questions can be
raised about the assumed differences between the white-collar and
the blue-collar trade unionist.   Dufty (16) in an Australian study
of railway clerks, clerks drawn from a large trading organization
(retail clerks), and shop assistants, found that railway clerks (all
of whom were unionized) closely resembled the skilled manual workers
he had previously studied in their attitudes towards trade unionism.
They made favourable comments about their own union and valued trade
unionism.   The majority felt that all clerks should be unionized.
Only one third of the retail clerks were union members and they were
less united in their attitudes towards their own union, although the
major criticism was that the union was ineffective.   Like non-union
members, however, they were more apathetic and ignorant about union
affairs than the railway clerks who identified closely with union
membership.   Bain, Coates and Ellis (17) question the supposed diff-
erence between manual and non-manual attitudes to work and trade union
by quoting studies which suggest that the manual worker does not nec-
essarily hold a collectivist view.   They say, for example, that 'Sykes
having elsewhere stressed the strong sense of individualism among white-
collar workers, found among a sample of 'navies' in the civil engineering
industry that great importance was attached to individual independence
and lack of permanent attachment to either employers, unions, or even
fellow employees.   The solution to any kind of grievance was to seek
work elsewhere rather than attempt to remedy the situation collectively
in the offending work situation."(18)   They also quote the work of
Goldthorpe and of Runciman who found that manual workers could just as
easily be typified as 'individualistic'. (19)   What these studies
suggest is that any approach which assumes that manual work is homog-
eneous is just as open to question as those which made a similar assump-
tion about clerical work.

A more direct attack upon the 'individualistic-collectivist' typology comes from the recent work of Cook, Clark, Roberts and Semeonoff.(20)   They argue that these may not be ideologies but rather strategies which both white-collar and blue-collar workers can select according to the situation and the likelihood of achieving their interests.   They found that among their sample of 474 economically active males, blue-collar union membership was much higher than white-collar membership (78% compared with 36%).   However they argue that "membership, or non-membership of a trade union, broadly or narrowly defined, is probably not a valid measure of an occupational group's commitment to collectivism". (21)   They suggest that the operation of the closed shop may force manual membership without there being any moral commitment to collectivism.   In addition they suggest that white-collar workers may join professional associations or other organizations than a trade union in order to express collectivism. The authors present evidence to show that blue-collar workers are slightly more likely than white-collar workers to cite principled objection to unionism for not joining a union.   The majority of white-collar workers felt indifferent, and blue-collar workers simply put it down to not having been asked.   Dale in his study of industrial clerks found that only a small minority (13.9%) disliked unions on principle (22) and in Cook et als study this again was a minority response (20% for white-collar workers and 28% for blue-collar workers). (23) They also question the conclusions of Goldthorpe, and Mercer and Weir that white-collar workers view trade unionism in pragmatic or instrumental terms by pointing out that "whilst it would seem reasonable to assume that white-collar workers are basically instrumental in their approach to unionism, we believe that this is equally true of blue-collar unionists". (24)   They found that white-collar and blue-collar

workers agreed on the goals of the union but divided on appropriate
strategies for achieving such goals. Thus the majority in each case
believed that the union should work for 'social justice', but white-
collar workers were slightly more inclined to a strategy of co-operation
with management (87% white-collar compared with 75% of blue-collar).
The really divisive issue was that of union power where white-collar
workers were more concerned that union power should not get out of
hand. (25) Whether, of course, reservations about union power indicate
that white-collar workers feel that some collective strategies are
inappropriate depends upon the parameters of the concept of collectivism.

In general this seems to be the major problem in making sense of
the literature and disparate research findings. The precise elements
of individualism and collectivism are ill-defined. The precise meaning
of instrumentalism is also lacking. It can be broad enough to cover
any use of a trade union to achieve any ends, even as it were a collect-
ive end, or narrow enough to specify particular ends such as salary
increases. In general the whole thrust of the literature seems to be
concerned with the kind of problems which the clerk, among other white-
collar workers, presents to an existing labour movement which is assumed
to be collectivist and unitary. Where authors have noted the possible
separate interests of clerks they have seen these as a block to the
full immersion of the clerk into the trade union movement. Lockwood
for example suggests that on the whole clerical unions have been modelled
on working-class trade unions and that the clerical membership has
generally acted like working-class members. But, he argues, "at the
same time all the unions have striven to maintain their identity as
clerical unions, and have constantly been aware of their specific
interests as non-manual workers. They have, as a result, been unwilling
to submerge themselves in larger unions with predominantly manual-worker

membership". (26)   It is however questionable whether clerical unions
have been more guilty of guarding sectional interests than manual
unions which also vary in their representation of heterogenous
interests.   Lockwood could only make the above statement on the rather
shaky assumption that manual unions and their memberships are homo-
geneous.   This of course relates to his notion of union character
which was discussed earlier. (27)

My main thesis is that in order to understand the clerk-as-trade
unionist it is essential to consider his interests in work as he
perceives and defines them.   This is not dissimilar in orientation
from the work of Lockwood or Mills except that I have been less concerned
to articulate the clerk's class identififation and more concerned with
his occupational identity.   In pursuing the clerk's relationship with
trade unionism it seemed inappropriate to commence with a typology of
union attitudes or orientations.   However in order to make some
comparison of the clerks in this study with others the questions of
'instrumentalism' and 'individualism' have been explored.   But the
notion of an instrumental identification with union membership will
only be applied to those clerks who perceive their union membership
primarily as a means to achieving better salary and work conditions
through the method of union negotiation.   With regard to the
'individualist-collectivist' debate it seemed most appropriate to
take a broad definition of the meaning of unionism, rather than to
start with assumptions about blue-collar union ideologies.   Thus the
definition supplied by Mills that "unionism objectively means a
declaration of collective independence, and, correspondingly, a tacit
acceptance of individual dependence" (28) provided a useful standard
against which clerical responses could be judged.   In the main my
objective was to be sufficiently flexible to allow different types of

identification with union membership to emerge.   In a general sense
the findingssupport all the previous researchers in that a variety of
definitions of clerical relationships to trade unionism emerged ranging
from limited to full commitment.   There was however little evidence
of total rejection of unionism as some of the earlier studies
suggested.

However, as has been documented in earlier chapters, the clearest
difference between my own and previous findings was that clerical
workers did not aspire to be part of management and that they held a
clear notion of themselves as a separate occupational group with
separate interests.   They did not identify with manual workers, not
because they felt superior, but because they perceived a clear separ-
ation of work interests between themselves and manual workers.   Even
more surprising was their feeling that manual workers, because of
the work they did, should earn more than clerical workers.   To this
extent the clerical workers in this study were not consistent with the
widely accepted stereotype of "the little individual scrambling to get
to the top". (29)   Thus the springboard for understanding their views
on unionism is rather different although as will be seen the variations
in views concerning their relationship to the trade union can best be
explained in terms of judgements concerning management and their position
vis a vis manual workers which other researchers have noted.   Thus
whether they perceive management as a trustworthy interaction group
(enabling them to carry out work tasks and rewarding them adequately)
is a significant factor.   In addition whether manual workers are con-
sidered as an unfavourable comparative referent (providing a vivid
contrast to the clerk's position which is judged to have slipped too
far) is also a key factor.

In order to explore the trade union identity of clerks, their
views of what a trade union means to them, the meaning of union
membership and their evaluations of their own trade union are explored.
The data is complex as presumably are the issues for clerks.   On the
whole previous studies have over simplified the relationship of
clerical workers to trade unions, and it is hoped that this study at
least provides a corrective to such over simplification.

Finally this study differs from many others to the extent that
it is predominantly an investigation of clerical trade union members.
As has been noted in Chapter IV on the research methods, the majority
of clerks in the sample were trade union members although the level of
unionization differed from firm to firm.   Overall, however, it was much
higher than in previous research on clerical unionism.   This seems to
be consistent with the real increase in white-collar unionization since
1964 documented by Bain and Price.(30)

The table below illustrates the number of trade union members out
of the total sample in each firm, on which the following account is based.

TABLE 1   TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP BY FIRM AND SEX

		EC	SS	JA	ME	NE	ES	TOTAL
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	M	21	11	19	3	23	12	88
	F	25	11	11	9	17	4	77
TOTAL NUMBER OF UNION MEMBERS	M	16 76%	11 100%	19 100%	3 100%	22 96%	10 83%	81 92%
	F	23 92	8 73	11 100	9 100	16 94	3 75	70 91

CLERICAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TRADE UNION

In response to the question 'what does the idea of a trade union
mean to you?, clerks revealed that the protective function of a union
was as important to them as its role as a negotiating body.   All clerks

were asked this question whether they were union members or not. As Table 2 shows 41% of the men and 45% of the women held some notion of a trade union as providing protection, and 47% of the men and 42% of the women stressed its negotiating function. Fewer clerks overall perceived the union as a fighting body organized to combat employers. What the table also demonstrates is that relatively few clerks were prepared totally to reject the idea of a trade union, so that it appeared that for the majority, trade unionism, in such terms as they defined it, was seen to be appropriate. While clerks in all firms put

TABLE 2   DEFINITIONS OF A TRADE UNION BY FIRM AND SEX

DEFINITIONS		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
PROTECTION	M	9	43	6	55	9	47	1	33	8	35	3	27	36	41
	F	12	48	5	45	5	45	3	33	7	41	1	25	33	43
NEGOTIATION /REPRESENT- ATION	M	9	43	3	27	10	53	2	67	10	43	7	64	41	47
	F	11	44	3	27	6	55	6	67	4	24	2	50	32	42
A FIGHTING BODY	M	5	24	4	36	5	26	-		8	35	1	9	23	26
	F	7	28	2	18	1	9	-		5	29	-		15	19
REJECTS IDEA OF A TRADE UNION	M	2	10	1	9	1	5	-		1	4	1	9	6	7
	F	-		1	9	-		-		5	29	1	25	7	9
TOTAL RESPONSES	M	25		14		25		3		27		12		106	
	F	30		11		12		9		21		4		85	
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	M	21		11		19		3		23		11		88	
	F	25		11		11		9		17		4		77	

forward notions of protection and negotiation, it was apparent that comparatively few clerks (both men and women) at Saturn Shipyards were likely to stress negotiation. For them the union as a protector or as a fighting body were more important definitions and as will become clear such definitions were consistent with their occupational needs and

anxieties. In this context they felt that their union ought
to be stronger in terms of member identification. Compared with
clerks at Saturn those at Mercury Engineering did not produce a
single image of the trade union as a fighting force and this
response was barely existent at Earth Supplies. In both of these
firms, where, as we have seen clerks had considerable confidence in
their managements the idea of the trade union as a negotiating
body was predominant. Clerks at Earth Control and Neptune Electrics
were almost as likely to produce all three definitions, of protection,
negotiation and fighting, whereas those at Jupiter Airways were
marginally more likely to suggest negotiation. What was interesting,
however, was that in all the firms investigated there were some clerks
who defined the trade union as more than an instrumental organ to
negotiate better pay and work conditions. Thus the responses which
C. Wright Mills suggested as indicators that trade union membership
meant more than instrumental acceptance, such as "I feel I have some-
body at the back of me". "I have a feeling that we are all together
and strong - you are not a ball at the feet of the company" (31) were
also produced by clerks in this study as the following quotations
indicate.

"To help each other. I look upon it as a form of insurance.
A body that will protect the interests of its members if
they come into conflict with any particular manager.
Also as a means of seeking increased wages and improvement
of work conditions".

"The main protector of our rights".

"It means you've got a little bit of protection - a little
bit more. They bring home your rights to you".

"A backing behind your job. It helps us to have a say
with management."

"Simply an insurance policy for workers".

"It gives protection, handles grievances and complaints".

"Someone to protect you against management.   Individually
  you can't approach management now".

"The idea of protection against the possible tyranny of
  employers".

"If you have a case or a claim you've got backing with a
  union - if everybody sticks together".

"If you get an unfair deal in work they protect you".

"Protection of the weak".

"A form of protection".

"Security".

"For the protection of workers against management.   En
  bloc men can further their interests".

"Someone to stick up for you against the management".

"It adds strength and security to a person's position".

"A body of people to protect the workers.   They represent
  us when particular problems arise".

"It means protection for the workers".

These responses are drawn from all firms and represent the views of
women and men since overall they were just as likely to see the
union as a protector.   In many ways the notion of protection has
embodied within it the awareness of opposition and exploitation and
if this is accepted then the majority of responses to this question
concerning union imagery showed varying degrees of consciousness of
the union as an oppositional force.   This was of course drawn out
more graphically by those who stated clearly that the union's prime
function, as they saw it, was to fight management.   Notions of
'protection' and 'fighting' were more in evidence than 'negotiation',
with the notable exception of Mercury Engineering and Earth Supplies.

However the acceptance of trade unionism in terms of the process of collective bargaining and representation was also in evidence in all the firms albeit rather low in Saturn Shipyards. The following quotations illustrate this type of response.

"The best method for working people to bargain collect-
ively for their benefits".

"Unity. Being able to put problems en masse instead
of people airing individual grievances".

"People who represent the staff to management".

"Better wages and better conditions. It gives you
a voice with management".

"It ensures I get my fair share. I pay my dues and
they get rises for me. It benefits me".

"We've been able to talk to the company on an equal
basis as a bargaining power. Every employee should
be a member but strikes should be a last resort".

"It represents the workers".

"I'm in favour of them. You need a group voice. One
person alone can't do much".

"Unions are there to be a spokesman for you, between
you and management".

"To look after the interests of their members. To gain
for them a just reward for their labour".

"A collective organization trying to get better pay,
better conditions of service and generally protecting the
interests of workers".

"A body of people who have duly elected another body to
handle their interests".

"It means a set of workers who stick together to get their
rights. Also the negotiation of wages to keep up with the
standard of living".

"Mainly to look after the interests of workers to see that
they get a satisfactory and fair deal".

"As a negotiating body it is necessary. Unfortunately
the tenor has changed. It works on a political basis
rather than what is best for the membership".

"It should fight for all round conditions, heating
facilities, toilets and wages but it shouldn't tell you
to go on strike".

"Keeps everyone together for better conditions and pay
rises".

"Its there to help . They negotiate and take views to
management. Its strength".

"Solidarity, a spirit of cooperation with fellow workers
and collective bargaining."

Such responses indicate that negotation was either seen to be the
only legitimate function of a trade union or only one of several
important activities. They demonstrate that any simplistic
typology of clerical views of a trade union would be difficult
to deduce. This becomes even clearer when we turn to their
perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of union membership.

THE MEANING OF UNION MEMBERSHIP

In the introduction to this chapter the view that unionism
can be taken to mean an awareness of collective independence and an
acceptance of individual dependence was presented. As we have already
seen the majority of clerks in this study were aware of the trade
union as a separate body which either represented, negotiated,
protected or fought for their interests and rights. To this
extent it could be argued that collective independence was recognized.

However when it came to considering the advantages and disadvantages
of union membership they apparently saw collective independence as an
advantage but still felt that a loss of individual independence was a
disadvantage.   As Table 3 indicates the most often cited disadvantage
of union membership was loss of individuality.   This was mentioned far
more than the possibility of being asked to take part in militant action
of which they did not approve, and which itself was often seen to be
the demand to give up individual judgements and rights.   Table 4
demonstrates that the most frequently mentioned advantage of union
membership was the security and back up which the trade union provided
for them.   This reinforced their earlier definitions of a trade union
but when they thought more specifically about the advantages to them
of belonging to a trade union it seemed that clerks in all firms
produced a surprisingly unanimous view of what it meant to be a union
member.   The security provided by membership was far more likely to
be mentioned than was the insurance of pay rises.   Direct references
to the advantage of belonging to a collectivity because of strength in
numbers was only mentioned by a minority of clerks, most of whom were
men, but once again these responses could be taken to be more explicit
accounts of collective independence than were those which had as
their main theme security or back up.   Taking the overall responses
as summarized in Tables 3 and 4 it seemed that the majority of clerks
in this study were agreed that union membership meant a loss of
individual identity which they regretted and a gain of collective
identity which meant more than simply holding membership in an organ-
isation which took care of pay rises.   The fact that they bemoaned
a loss of individuality and the possible demands of collective action
cannot however be passed over lightly.   It can be interpreted as one
dimension of feeling about membership which for the majority of clerks

TABLE 3 PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGES OF UNION MEMBERSHIP BY FIRM AND SEX

DISADVANTAGES		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
LOSS OF INDIVID-UALITY	M	5	31	6	55	8	42	3	100	14	64	2	20	38	47
	F	8	35	6	75	6	55	3	33	7	44	3	100	33	47
POSSIBLE DEMANDS FOR MILIT-ANT ACTION	M	4	25	2	18	4	21	-		3	14	1	10	14	17
	F	6	26	-		6	55	-		4	25	2	67	18	26
NO DIS-ADVANTAGES	M	7	44	3	27	5	26	-		3	14	5	50	23	28
	F	8	35	2	25	2	18	5		1	6	-		18	26
DISADVANT-AGES BELONGING TO THIS UNION	M	-		-		2	11	1		2	9	2	20	7	9
	F	1	4	-		-		1		5	31	-		7	10
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	M	16		11		19		4		22		10		82	
	F	23		8		14		9		17		5		76	
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	M	16		11		19		3		22		10		81	
	F	23		8		11		9		16		3		70	

TABLE 4 PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES OF UNION MEMBERSHIP BY FIRM AND SEX

ADVANTAGES		EC	%	SS	%	JA	%	ME	%	NE	%	ES	%	TOTAL	%
SECURITY/ BACK UP	M	10	63	7	64	12	63	1	33	14	64	8	80	52	64
	F	15	65	6	75	7	64	5	56	12	75	-		45	64
PAY RISES	M	4	25	4	36	4	21	-		4	18	1	10	17	21
	F	3	13	4	50	3	27	4	44	5	31	2	67	21	30
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS	M	7	44	5	45	5	26	2	67	5	23	4	40	28	35
	F	6	26	1	13	1	9	3	33	1	6	1	33	13	19
NO ADVANTAGES	M	-		-		1	5	-		-		2	20	3	4
	F	1	4	1	13	-		1	11	3	19	-		6	8
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	M	21		16		22		3		23		15		100	
	F	25		12		11		13		21		3		85	
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	M	16		11		19		3		22		10		81	
	F	23		8		11		9		16		3		70	

made total immersion into the role of union member difficult. Some

of the typical responses to the question concerning advantages and

disadvantages of union membership illustrate this point.

Advantage

"Protection. You get to know what management can tell you

to do and what not to do.

Disadvantage

If you do your job exceptionally well and the person alongside

you is not doing so well management may like to give you more

money but because of the union they can't do that. They've

got to make everyone the same".

Advantage

"If you are not a member the Board can dismiss you for a trivial

reason, plus you have nobody to fight for you if you are not

getting a satisfactory deal.

Disadvantage

Mainly you must abide by union rules. For example, going on

strike when you don't want to, to follow the majority."

Advantage

"The union will fight any cause you have if you feel the firm

is asking you to do unreasonable jobs, or if you have an

accident.

Disadvantage

I don't know whether or not there are disadvantages - but

at times of strike, if you are against the policy or decisions,

this could be an inconvenience".

Advantage

"You cannot fight on your own. If you have bad working

conditions or bad wages they might do something about that.

Disadvantage

If they say 'right we're out on strike' I don't think that's

right. Its man's prerogative to strike or not. Its fine

if they pay us to strike. I'm the one that loses not them. You

pay your money and you don't know what happens to it -
you're not told".

Advantage

"You have recourse to a higher authority where you cannot
make direct approaches yourself.

Disadvantage

I can't see any disadvantages with the exception of having
to follow the leader - the T.U.C. - sort of big brother
business".

Advantage

"Negotiations through one person with management.   One man
making the case instead of 5000 voices babbling.

Disadvantage

Members run like sheep".

Advantage

"As pointed out earlier on if you're not a member then wages
would remain static and conditions would not be as good.

Disadvantage

You may disagree with union policy but due to the democratic
system you have to go along with it.   It depends on the
issue being debated and how important it is.   If you
strongly disagree you can always throw your card in".

Advantage

"You avoid victimization and instant dismissals.

Disadvantage

So far none but if it became militant there would be".

Advantage

"You are kept inside your own job specification and not moved
about and they get you fair pay.

Disadvantage

If you disagree you still must follow the majority.   You're
not allowed to be an individual".

Advantage

"If you have problems and anything against the company you

can turn to the union and they will help you.

Disadvantage

If they say 'go on strike', you have to even if you don't

want to".

Advantage

"Keeping your job, security.

Disadvantage

There aren't many in our union - but overall its following

the majority if you disagree".

Advantage

"We benefit from the agreements they reach. It helps to

reach a decision in a group. Then you have a group rather

than an individual complaint. It holds together a group

who can strive for better things.

Disadvantage

A vote can be carried which I don't agree with - especially

with a strike decision".

Advantage

"You lose yourself in a crowd if you have a grievance.

Disadvantage

A person loses his individuality".

These responses are drawn from all firms except Saturn Shipyards

where loss of individuality had a more specific meaning. The above

quotations illustrate the majority views of membership, combining

the two separate categories on table 2 of 'loss of individuality'

and 'possible demands of militant action'. With regard to objections

made to strike action table 3 demonstrates that these arose in all

firms except Saturn Shipyards and Mercury Engineering. In the

context of other responses it was more a question of such a possibility

not entering the minds of clerks at Mercury.   For them the union
itself was a negotiating body.   In addition they tended to say
'there must be some disadvantages but I can't think of any' or
'I can't think of any at the moment.   I don't know much about it'.
At Saturn, however, there was real concern about the lack of strength
of their union and the lack of commitment of the membership.   When
they considered the disadvantages of union membership their responses
(which I have classed in Table 3 as 'loss of individuality') were
more to do with possible victimization or discrimination by management
than expressions of regret about losing individual independence.
Although the numbers were small (5 (45%) of the men and 3 (38%) of
the women), these were the only clerks in the sample who felt that
union membership might lessen promotion chances or in fact had been
the cause of discrimination.   The following comments illustrate this
point of view which emerged only in Saturn Shipyards.

<u>Advantage</u>
"You belong to a body that will protect the interests of its
members if they come into conflict with management.

<u>Disadvantage</u>
If you become too prominent in union activities I think it
could be marked down in a way which would be disadvantageous
to the individual".

<u>Advantage</u>
"Speaking with one voice and not competing with colleagues.

<u>Disadvantage</u>
With white-collar workers its being labelled as Bolshie
by management who hint 'why do you try to frighten us'."

<u>Advantage</u>
"No advantages, definitely not, because we wouldn't be allowed
to come out on strike.

Disadvantage

Our boss doesn't like us being in a union".

Advantage

"If you're going to lose your job, the union can fight

for you.   Also pay rises.

Disadvantage

Discrimination by management against union members.   We

had a case not so long ago".

Advantage

"Your rights are protected.   You get a better deal as far

as wage increases are concerned - fighting through the

union.   It can be very strong in a crisis.

Disadvantage

Management tend to look down on you if you are a member of

the union.   In this company it hinders promotion prospects".

It seemed that in Saturn, there was some appreciation of the cost

of being a union member in terms of the perceived hostility of

management to white-collar unionization.   Thus while a few

regretted loss of individuality on the basis which other clerks

had, in terms of a principle, more saw it as a price to pay with

possible consequences of management discrimination.   Yet as we

shall see, clerks at Saturn were convinced of the need for a strong

union and as we have already seen they tended to define a trade union

as either a protective or a fighting body.   As table 2 demonstrated

far fewer saw it as a negotiator or representer of their interests.

The argument later in this chapter will be that we can only understand

their views on unionism, and indeed those of clerks in other firms, by

reconsidering their concerns and anxieties about their occupational

identity.   However before leaving Tables 3 and 4 it is worthwhile

reinforcing the point made earlier about clerical definitions of the

trade union, that very few clerks totally rejected the idea of a union.

Similarly only 4% of female clerks and 8% of males felt that there were no advantages to union membership. In addition when considering disadvantages a substantial minority (28% of men and 26% of women) felt that there were none as they saw it. For a few clerks (7% of men and 7% of women) the question of union membership elicited their dissatisfaction with membership of their own particular union. For the most part, however, clerks recognized the value of union membership even when they cited disadvantages. In order to extend our understanding of their identification with trade union membership we now turn to the evaluations of their trade unions.

CLERICAL EVALUATIONS OF THEIR TRADE UNIONS

Table 5 demonstrates that the majority of clerks, 57% of the men and 66% of the women rated their unions as either good or fair. However clerks at Saturn and Neptune were much less likely to offer these judgements. For them the major criticism was that their union was not strong enough, although for clerks at Saturn this meant that the membership was weak and not sufficiently committed whereas at Neptune, clerks blamed the union itself. Very few clerks overall felt totally dissatisfied with their union or declared disinterest insofar as they did not believe in unions at all. However Table 5 provides only a simplistic account of the ways in which clerks viewed their unions and in order to clarify the reasons for the evaluations they offered and to better understand why they felt that their union was or was not an appropriate expression of their interests, it is necessary to consider their responses in greater detail. At first sight it seemed, as Table 5 might suggest, that men and women held different views of their trade union perhaps reflecting rather different expectations and notions of unionism. However while

slightly more women rated their union as good, almost equal numbers
of men and women were critical of their union if the 'not strong
enough' and 'bad categories on the table are considered together
(39% of the men compared with 34% of the women). In addition women
themselves were not evenly spread across firms with regard to these
evaluations and where criticism was most forthcoming both men and
women within particular firms put forward similar views. Thus it

TABLE 5   CLERICAL EVALUATIONS OF THEIR TRADE UNIONS BY FIRM AND SEX

EVALUATIONS		EC		SS		JA		ME		NE		ES		TOTAL	
			%		%		%		%		%		%		%
GOOD	M	11	44	-		7	38	1	33	3	14	3	40	24	30
	F	13	57	1	13	7	64	7	78	4	25	-		32	46
FAIR	M	3	13	3	27	9	47	2	67	4	18	3	30	22	27
	F	5	22	-		3	27	2	22	3	19	1	33	14	20
NOT STRONG ENOUGH	M	2	37	7	64	1	5			13	59	1	10	28	34
	F	3	13	6	75	1	9			6	37	-		16	23
BAD	M	-		-		1	5			2	9	2	20	4	5
	F	2	8	1	13	-				3	19	2	67	8	11
DON'T BELIEVE IN THEM	M	1	6	1	9	1	5							3	4
	F	-		-		-									
TOTAL	M	16	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	22	100	10	100	81	100
	F	17	100	8	100	11	100	9	100	16	100	3	100	70	100

is useful to consider the responses in each firm in order to establish
what were the main attractive features of their trade unions and where
clerks felt that the unions had failed.

Taking the firms in which clerks felt that they could identify
positively with their particular unions it was clear that in Jupiter
Airways and Mercury Engineering, the main attractive features of their

trade unions were on the one hand the pay rises which had been
negotiated and on the other the lack of militant action. Thus
while a clear majority in each firm felt that their union was either
good or fair, this did not mean that clerks identified with broader
ideals of unionism but rather with an organization which as they saw
it had succeeded in improving their pay and conditions without the
cost of militancy which they felt would have been an inappropriate
method for achieving their ends. The following quotations illustrate
this point of view which was clearly shared within Mercury and Jupiter.

Jupiter Airways   APEX

Men   "Very good because of pay negotiations"

"They are pretty good from a financial point of view
and thats what its all about."

"Pretty good. Its a non-militant union".

"They are fair. They have got us rises though we could
do with more".

Women   "They're alright because they've had no strikes".

"Its been very effective. Its not militant but we have
got what we wanted through discussion. We've had no
awful strikes".

"Good at Newcastle. The rises escalated terrifically and
then evened out. It depends a lot on local representatives.
They used to be good".

"Its done very well for us. Our pay has gone up as a
member. It has taken a long time but we've got there in
the end".

Mercury Engineering   ASTMS

Men   "Good. They negotiate wage increases".

"Fair. Its a good thing if it is used properly".

Women   "They negotiate a rise every year.   Very good".

"Very good.   They negotiate better working conditions
and salaries".

"Pretty good.   I've only been in for a year and I've had
a pay rise.   The negotiations between unions and
management have been good.   Management have listened
and considered everything the union has put before them".

"Its the first time I've been in a trade union in all my
life.   Ours is good really.   It keeps you in touch
with what goes on and gets better working conditions".

"Quite reasonable.   I don't concern myself much with the
union.   You take less interest in it when you are married
in thinking about what the union may do for you in ten
years time".

The main impression given by clerks at Jupiter and Mercury was that
their own experience of trade union membership had been advantageous
in terms of pay negotiations.   At Mercury 6 (66%) of the women also
confessed that they really didn't know a lot about their union in so
far as they had not been members for very long.   In both of these
firms white-collar trade unionism was a relatively new phenomenon and
in such circumstances it was not perhaps surprising to find that clerks
defined their chief sense of identification with the union in instru-
mental terms.   The added source of identification of belonging to a
union which was seen to be non-militant was more pronounced at Jupiter
as became apparent when clerks were asked if in making their comments
about their own trade union they were thinking of other unions.   At
Mercury the predominant response was that any comparison was impossible
since they had so little experience of trade unions.   However at Jupiter
6(66%) of the women and 6 (31%) of the men felt that their union was

good, because, unlike those they knew about from the media, such as
dockers, car workers and other manual unions, their's did not "strike
unnecessarily". As one of the women put it "I'm only glad that they
don't ask you to go out on strike like some do" or as one of the
men said "strikes do not make sense, that's why white-collar unions
are good".

Turning now to clerks in mining, they of course had experienced
the first miners' strike which COSA members had supported although they
had voted overwhelmingly against it, and APEX members had not, in the two
firms included in this study. It was evident in their responses to
the section of the interview dealing with trade union identity that the
memory of the strike had not faded and that it was significant event in
the life of clerks as trade unionists. As one woman APEX member at
Earth Control put it "Before the last dispute there was a lot of trouble
and there is still a lot of bitterness between trade unions here".
Thus while APEX members at Earth Control and Earth Supplies (and it
must be admitted that the numbers are really too small to enable general-
izations) felt that their union was good because it was non-militant and
independent of miners, COSA members were in the main satisfied with
their union because they felt it drew added strength from being an
integral part of the NUM. Here it is important to make the point that
clerks who had violently objected to supporting the miners' strike had
left the union and those remaining were likely to be those who suffic-
iently identified with NUM COSA to obey their executive and take part
in militant action. Of the 10 clerks (2 from Earth Supplies and
8 from Earth Control) who were non-members in the sample 8 had either
left or did not want to join the union because they did not believe in
strikes as the following quotations illustrate.

"In this day and age trade unions go a bit too far.

  There are too many strikes over petty things.   They

  don't try to cooperate with management.   As long as

  they get what they want they don't care how they get

  it.   I am not a member because I object to strikes.

  They may have nothing to do with clerks".

"The fact that COSA is affiliated to the NUM is the basic

  problem.   They question the motives of each supporting

  the other.   They should be left to fight their own battles.

  I left when I was told to back the miners".

"I don't like them.   They are too strong now - another

  form of Government almost.   There are too many of them".

"I would prefer an association not a union because they

  don't strike".

No direct comparison of non-union members, APEX members and COSA
members in mining can be made since the majority of clerks in the
mining sample belonged to COSA.   However the strike had obviously
had the effect of testing clerical loyalties to their trade union
and as APEX members saw it had presented them with a fight which
was not theirs.   One APEX member noted the separation of interests
in another way when he said "There are two unions in the industry for
clerks.   Mine is purely clerical.   The other is associated with the
NUM which is for miners.   I don't think manual workers are the right
people to fight for clerks".

The COSA members at Earth Supplies were in the main satisfied
with membership of their union because they felt that a close
association with manual workers had benefitted them.   As one
respondent expressed it "I feel if COSA stood on its own it would
not stand much chance really.   It needs the backing of the NUM".

However a minority of clerks (5) felt that total identification with membership of COSA was difficult because they were "the poor relations of the NUM", or because they felt that they as individuals were gaining little from their membership. But for the majority, belonging to a union which also represented manual workers was not problematic and was seen to be beneficial. A similar picture emerged at Earth Control with the majority of COSA members stressing the benefits of belonging to a union which had the strength of the miners behind it with such comments as,

"Its a strong union. This was proven 2 years ago".

"I rate the NUM highly having fought the way they did.
Our branch of COSA is very good. We make our own
decisions".

"Good. I wouldn't want to be in APEX. I feel strongly
about the strike. I was a picket. They came into work
and sat on their backsides. They defied their own
executive. Parasites!"

"Good. For instance we were on strike for six weeks and
we got a rise and an extra week's holiday".

"I think clerical workers in the Coalboard should have
one union, COSA. At the last strike half the workers
were coming in".

"My union is weak of necessity. Its an integral part of
the NUM. We are happy to go along with them. I don't
think we could go it alone".

"COSA does a good job for people like me".

It was rather puzzling that these clerks who had experienced strike action and who obviously recalled it as a significant event did not define a trade union more in terms of a fighting body. As table 2

showed the majority of clerks at Earth Control and Earth Supplies
either stressed protection or negotiation as the main characteristic
of a trade union. At Earth Supplies the emphasis on negotiation
was consistent with a favourable view of management. Earth Control
clerks were in general more likely to perceive management as distant
but not necessarily in oppositional terms, particularly since they
trusted the Coalboard as an employer even at a time when redundancies
were likely. Perhaps for this reason it could be suggested that
while the strike had sharpened their awareness, and their general
acceptance or rejection of belonging to a union which also represented
manual workers, such an experience did not of itself transform their
broad conceptions of a trade union. But it did lead to a strong
identification with membership of COSA, which itself was reinforced
by the continuing presence of APEX members who represented in their
eyes a type of renegade trade union member who would accept rises for
which he had not fought, as well as non union members who had not been
united in the cause. This was evident by the comments made by COSA
clerks and also those made by the few APEX members. As one APEX
member said "we didn't go on strike in the last strike. We believe
in reconciliatory methods rather than going on strike", thus demonst-
rating that APEX membership reaffirmed a different type of identific-
ation with a non-militant union. Equally although very few made a
direct comparison with any other union when asked if they had been
thinking of other unions when making these judgements, if they did,
they invoked the alternative union in their firm. Thus APEX members
referred to COSA and felt that their own union was better because it
was non-militant, and COSA members referred to APEX of whom they
disapproved because of its policy of negotiation and reconciliation.
However these comparison had effectively already been made in their

evaluations of their own trade unions and did not require additional questioning in order to elicit them. They emerged spontaneously and had the effect of strengthening their feeling of belonging to an appropriate union as they had come to believe it to be, whether this was COSA or APEX. Referring back to Table 3, while a substantial number of clerks in Earth Control and Earth Supplies shared the common view expressed by the majority of clerks in other firms, (that loss of individuality and possible demands for strike action were disadvantages of union membership) they were less likely to do so and more likely to say that there were no disadvantages to union membership than clerks in other firms.

Although there were too few APEX members in the samples drawn from Earth Control and Earth Supplies to permit generalizations, it was apparent that the main attractive feature of the union for APEX members interviewed was its non-militant character. In this they were similar to clerks at Jupiter Airways, also APEX members. However when we turn to Saturn Shipyard and Neptune Electrics some comparison of APEX members who did not subscribe to this type of identification becomes possible. As Table 5 indicates, the majority of both men and women at Saturn felt that their union was not strong enough. This was less a matter of the trade union character as they saw it and more a matter of weak membership. The following quotations illustrate this view.

"Its only as strong as its members. Unfortunately they are apathetic. Clerks are reluctant to join although they accept benefits".

"It could be better. Its not as big a union as some of the men's unions. We haven't got a lot to back us up.

"I think they are doing their best. At the moment we

haven't a lot of strength. We don't get maximum support

from all the members. I think it will come in time".

"Its not strong enough, not powerful enough. We haven't

got enough backing. We haven't got the full support

from clerical workers in shipbuilding".

From these views it seemed that clerks at Saturn were not directly critical of APEX but that they felt that they needed a stronger more powerful membership in order to successfully achieve their ends. As one man put it when defining a trade union, "if the union was strong enough your position would be felt. If it was strong enough you could have a say in the dealings of the firm. You'd be in a better position to acquire what you want. Both management and union would know exactly how they stood". In addition to the criticisms made about membership 5 (63%) women were critical of the union representatives whom they felt were weak and uncommunicative. One women felt that there weren't enough women members to exact the right sort of treatment. As she put it "Other girls have been to the union with their troubles and they just put them off. There aren't enough girls in this firm in the union". Another complained that she wasn't given enough notice of union meetings and that in any case 'they weren't interested in her views'. However the main concern of clerks at Saturn was that they needed a higher membership and a more committed one in order that their branch of APEX would be more effective. Throughout the interview these clerks were those most critical of their work situation and their occupational rewards. They were also more anxious about their relative position vis a vis manual workers and the decline in their status. They were most likely to express occupational anxiety. If any clerks were likely to perceive the need for strong trade union

identity it was these clerks particularly since manual workers
were a potent comparative referent for them. This was apparent
in their evaluation of their union, although again like clerks in
other firms very few referred to other unions when asked directly.
However, if they did, they mentioned manual unions in shipbuilding
and felt that they commanded more respect from management because
of their strength. This desire for a union which would provide
an oppositional force to a management whom they did not respect or
trust was apparent in their definitions of a trade union as well
as in their evaluations of their own union. Thus very few saw
a trade union as a negotiating body, but rather as a protector of
clerical interests and a fighting force. In terms of identification
with union membership, clerks at Saturn wished for a greater sense
of union identity which could only come, they felt, through the united
effort and commitment of clerks as a whole. Such a realization echos
many of the requirements of trade union consciousness as defined in
the literature, since it encompasses both an awareness of their
objective position vis a vis the employer and the desire for solid-
aristic action to combat their oppressors. Whether in the fullness
of time APEX would be seen as the appropriate vehicle for expressing
their needs is difficult to predict. However APEX clerks in other
firms did identify with their membership of a union which they
believed to be non-militant and therefore appropriate. This points
to the difficulties which APEX and other white-collar trade unions
may have in terms of various memberships who are looking for different
sources of identification.

This theme can be further elaborated when we turn to clerks at
Neptune Electrics. Although they did not express anything like the
same degree of dissatisfaction with their work situation and occupational

rewards, it became clear in their evaluations of their trade

union that Neptune clerks were critical of their trade union in

the context of comparisons which they made of their position vis

a vis production workers. In those terms their union was judged

to be 'ineffective', 'pathetic' and 'weak'. They were less inclined

to perceive this as a problem of membership resistance or apathy, as

clerks at Saturn did, although 6 (27%) men at Neptune felt this to

be the case. They were more inclined to be critical of the

activities of the union officials as the following comments indicate.

"Its no good. There's next to no representation, a lack

of information, no union card, no journal, no book of rules

- just nothing".

"They're a bit slow. They have a good name but, they are

weak".

"Quite poor. They seem to be amateurs in the Trade Union

Movement. They seem to be unaware of the traditions and

principles of trade unionism, unlike the shop floor unions".

"They are too inexperienced to be effective".

"They are not militant, only average. They ought to have

more go. Other unions always get a better deal in Neptune.

Management is not willing to pay as much for clerks as for

production workers but union members will not really act".

"Good in terms of job security but poor in every other. The

leadership is poor and this is not helped by membership apathy.

They haven't sufficient experience for high level negotiation

or the ingenuity to do it well. It also suffers because of

the members".

"Not very good. The shopfloor have better unions. Ours

accepts rises they wouldn't accept. There are stronger unions

on the shop floor. Production - that's where the money is".

"Not very good. We've been fighting a salary claim for a
year".

"Fairly good. Its a clerical union compared with a shop
floor union. The latter gets quicker rises. It could
be to do with production. The management don't class the
clerical union the same as production. The shopfloor get
bonuses twice a year - clerk's don't".

"Very good. More could be done. There could be firmer
negotiations".

The majority of clerks in Neptune, even those who felt that the
union was fair or good, made comments like those above. For
them identification with membership of APEX was less than total
because it did not fulfil their need for representation of clerical
interests as successfully as they thought manual unions did for
their members. Once again most clerks did not feel that they had
been thinking of other unions when stating their views, but, those
who did referred to manual unions in engineering and also TASS,
another white-collar union representing white-collar workers in
Neptune. In both cases the comparison was unfavourable. However
as with other clerks the comparison with manual unions was made
spontaneously through the dissatisfactions they felt with their
membership of APEX. Like clerks at Saturn they wanted to belong
to a union which would strengthen the arm of the clerical group but
this they felt was less a problem of a weak membership and more a
problem of inexperienced and ineffective representation. In this
sense their identification with membership of APEX was the weakest
amongst APEX members in this study, although this did not mean that
they rejected the idea of union membership. When asked if they
would feel differently as members of another union most clerks felt

that their behaviour and feeling as trade unionists would not alter, but of the 19 clerks in the total sample who felt that they would be more committed if the trade union was more effective, 10 (53%) were at Neptune. The rest were scattered throughout the other firms. The consideration of whether they would feel differently as members of another trade union was made after they had rated themselves as union members. It now remains to present these evaluations before final interpretations are made concerning their identification with trade union membership.

CLERICAL EVALUATIONS OF THEMSELVES AS UNION MEMBERS

AS Table 6 shows clerical workers depicted themselves as union members in a variety of ways, the most common judgement being that they were average or ordinary members. However, as many men described themselves as staunch or active as those who had seen themselves as average or ordinary (30% in each case). Women were far less likely to describe themselves as staunch trade union members but more likely than men to be self-critical. Thus 24% of the women felt that they were not very good, thus implying that they ought to be better and often stating this, or else suggesting that they would be better if their union was more effective. Similarly of the small minority of women who felt that they were uninterested, half of them thought they might be if their union was better. If we accept that both men and women who described themselves as indifferent or bad union members were not totally at odds with union membership, then only a small minority actually felt that they were reluctant members and would have ideally preferred to be non-members. Such an interpretation was consistent with the other views expressed by clerks about their union and membership of it. More interesting than the overall results, however, were the varying evaluations made

by clerks in different firms which in the main were consistant
with their evaluations of their trade unions.

Thus in Earth Control, Earth Supplies and Saturn Shipyards,
male clerks were far more inclined to judge themselves as staunch
or active members of their trade unions.   In both mining and
shipbuilding as we have seen there was a firm desire to belong
to a strong union.   Women at Saturn felt that they too could be
active members if the union represented them better even though
they were inclined to see themselves as bad trade union members

TABLE 6   SELF EVALUATIONS AS TRADE UNION MEMBERS BY FIRM AND SEX

EVALUATIONS		EC		SS		JA		ME		NE		ES		TOTAL	
			%		%		%		%		%		%		%
AVERAGE, ORDINARY	M	3	19	4	36	5	26	2	67	6	27	4	40	24	30
	F	8	35	3	37	3	27	5	56	3	19	-		22	31
INDIFFERENT, NOT INTERESTED	M	1	6			1	5	-		3	14			5	6
	F	-				2	18	2	22	6	38			10	14
STAUNTH, ACTIVE	M	9	56	5	46	2	11			4	18	4	40	24	30
	F	5	22	1	13							1	33	8	11
NOT VERY GOOD	M	-				3	16	1	33	6	27	1	10	11	13
	F	5	22	4	50	4	37	2	22	5	31	-		20	29
NON-MILITANT	M	2	13	1	9	4	21			2	9			9	11
	F	4	17	-		1	9			1	6			6	9
RELUCTANT	M	1	6	1	9	4	21			1	5	1	10	8	10
	F	1	4	-		1	9			-		2	67	4	6
TOTAL	M	16	100	11	100	19	100	3	100	22	100	11	100	81	100
	F	23	100	8	100	11	100	9	100	16	100	3	100	70	100

at the present time.   Although the numbers were very small in certain
cases, it is still possible to note consistent trends.   Thus clerks
at Mercury Engineering and Jupiter Airways were disinclined to see
themselves as staunch or active members and this related to the

rather narrow instrumental identification which they made with
their union membership. There were relatively few clerks who
defined themselves as staunch or active in Neptune Electrics
either and rather more who saw themselves as indifferent or not
very good members. Once again however we must remember the degree
of criticism they made about their own trade union and the much
weaker identification which they felt with membership of APEX.
Of the clerks at Neptune who defined themselves in rather negative
terms as union members, almost half of them said that they would
have been better members of another union.

Clearly the ratings which clerks made of themselves concerning
union membership cannot be explained totally in terms of their
existing unions. However all that is being suggested is that there
was some evidence of a consistent relationship between their trade
union imagery and their views of themselves as members.

CONCLUSION

In this study clerks who wished to identify with the strength of
a manual union, those who desired strong white-collar representation
comparable to manual union representation, and those who preferred
to belong to a non-militant negotiating union all emerged. Not all
however felt that their existing union membership fulfilled these
wishes. On the other hand few clerks saw union membership itself
as contrary to the image they held of themselves as clerical workers.
This suggests that earlier studies made by Dale, Sykes, and Mercer
and Weir for example in which clerks were judged to be reluctant or
at most instrumental trade union members must now be questioned.
Since union attitudes clearly vary amongst clerical workers it may
be that all researchers should be wary of generalizing their findings.
In addition since union membership has increased rapidly since 1964,

this may mean that psychological barriers to identifying with

unionism have also been breaking down, in which case some of

the earlier studies, particularly that of Dale (32) may now be

outdated. In my view, however, it is equally the case that most

previous studies have paid insufficient attention to the possible

variations in union identification in a widely varying occupation,

and have certainly not investigated the work definitions and

reference groups of clerks other than in a superficial manner.

Taking the lead from the definitive works of Lockwood and Mills

it has been assumed that clerical workers identify with management

and that promotion for them means moving into management ranks.

Thus even when they have joined unions it has been assumed by

some that this has been a defensive act either to protect privileges

or to counteract diminishing promotion chances. However this latter

explanation, for clerical workers as it were yielding up one identity

for another, has been only one among many.

In seeking to explain why clerks joiningunions, accept or reject

them, almost every conceivable explanatory variable has been invoked

ranging from the structural determinants of growth which Bain has

offered to the more social psychological factors suggested by Lockwood

and Mills. Ultimately the question has been whether changes in

the work situation accompanied by changes in the clerk's social

position have lead to a changed philosophy concerning unionization.

Such a broad issue has naturally lead to complex theories and

conversely rather simplistic empirical research, where class of

origin, promotion or earnings have been taken as key operational

variables.

In this research, where the emphasis has been on documenting

the clerks own perceptions of reality two key factors have emerged

which go some way to explaining differential union identity. The

first one is the way in which clerks define their relationship with

management. As in Mercer and Weir's study of white-collar employees

where clerks reported a low level of contact with management, (33)

clerks in this research were inclined to see management as distant and

separate. However this did not necessarily mean that management was

viewed in oppositional terms. At Saturn Shipyards there was a clear,

repeated and shared view that management blocked clerical interests

and attempted to prevent clerical solidarity by unfair promotion

practices and hostility to union membership. These clerks felt the

need of a strong united clerical union. Clerks at Mercury Engineering

simply defined their relationship with management as friendly or

personal and thus felt that the union should negotiate in limited

areas with management. Like clerks at Jupiter Airways I have

suggested that Mercury clerks identified with union membership in an

instrumental sense. Thus far this was all that membership meant to

them and they, like Jupiter clerks did not perceive their immediate

managers as threatening. Clerks in the mining industry differed in

their view of management, those at Earth Control perceiving management

as removed from them in the bureaucracy and those at Earth Supplies

seeing them as close and helpful. In both cases, whether members of

COSA or APEX, clerks were satisfied with membership. In addition

they did not define trade unions as a predominantly fighting force

even though they had experienced a major strike. However, even at

Earth Control the distant relationship with management was something

which was largely accepted and not seen in oppositional terms. At

Neptune, clerks were critical of APEX. They wanted to belong to a

stronger more effective union and while they too appeared to accept

a distant management, they were clearly more resentful of management's

preference (as they saw it) for production workers in terms of the

rewards meted out to them.

The second factor of some importance in explaining clerical trade union identity is encapsulated in the feeling which Neptune clerks expressed about their relationship with manual workers. It concerns the degree to which clerks feel that their own position vis a vis manual workers has slipped beyond a tolerable and justifiable level. In actual fact this feeling was much more pronounced in Saturn Shipyards and was accompanied by widely shared dissatisfaction with most aspects of their job and work situation. Given these perceptions the desire for a united and committed union membership was most prevalent. In other firms, and this demonstrates that mere physical proximity to manual workers is not the key, clerical workers felt on the whole that their position vis a vis manual workers was not as yet a matter of concern. In Neptune the unfavourable comparison with manual workers was somewhat softened by the feeling that as clerks they were 'doing well' and working for one of the best firms in the area. However this did not prevent the feeling that they could do better if only they belonged to a union which was more like a manual union. In addition it is likely that the argument concerning perceived relationship with management and manual workers is more complex, since they appear to be interactive factors. The clerk in viewing his own position is probably more likely to make unfavourable comparisons with manual workers where management is seen to be, not only unappreciative, but also a major block to the achievement of clerical interests. In addition the feeling of belonging to a separate occupational group, of being a clerk with distinctive interests, is likely to be reinforced by such perceptions.

Thus both status and occupational anxieties underly union identity, not so much in terms of single variables like promotion,

or pay, but more in terms of the way clerks define their relation-
ship to key referents in the work place.   As I have noted in
previous chapters, clerks were more inclined to select work based
referents, made little reference to social class as such but did
feel that ultimately status meant a position in society.   However
there was little evidence that they felt that trade union membership
was inconsistent with their status needs.   As clerks, and within
the context of moderate aspirations, they judged union membership
to be appropriate even though significant differences occurred by
firm in the kinds of union identity desired.   That this was the
case, even when they recognized the dilemma of giving up individual
independence for collective dependence, should surely go some way
to suggest a revision of the stereotype of the 'individualistic'
clerk who because of his marginal position in the class structure
and his strong desire to belong to management can only accept
unionism rather reluctantly.   Finally, in making revisions to our
understandings of clerical trade unionists, we should be careful to
consider different work situations whether our preference is with
objective analysis, or with subjective definitions of reality.   It
would seem that there is such a thing as a clerk, according to clerks
themselves, but there is no such thing as a typical clerical trade
unionist.   Many forms and strengths of union identity are possible,
just as no doubt they are amongst manual workers.

CHAPTER IX   CONCLUSION

"While the modern white-collar worker has no articulate philosophy

of work, his feeling about it and experiences of it influence his

satisfactions and frustrations, the whole tone of his life.   Whatever

the effects of his work, known to him or not, they are the net result

of the work as an activity plus the meanings he brings to it, plus

the views that others hold of it" (1)

During the twentieth century, the clerical labour force has

grown dramatically both as a proportion of the white-collar sector

and in relation to the numbers employed in manual occupations.   Whilst

it is difficult to assess the impact of what Crozier has termed the

"administrative revolution" (2), it is generally agreed that significant

changes, associated with growth, have occurred which have threatened the

superior status of the clerical worker and caused him to reconsider his

position vis a vis management and manual workers.   The literature on

the clerk, although not entirely consistent, promotes the image of an

individual who resists the new order and who will do anything to bolster

his declining status even if it means joining a trade union.   The clerk

then is thought of as a defensive person who seeks to preserve his

position in the face of all odds.   However the clerical worker has

been more often written about than researched, and there has been a

pronounced tendancy to consider clerical workers as a homogeneous mass

about whom simplistic generalizations can be made.   As Silverman noted

in 1968, "if we are to advance from speculation, the pressing need would

now seem to be the attempt to dismantle the notion that there exists a

unitary occupational group of 'white-collar' workers or 'clerks'" (3)

It is to be regretted that Silverman did not go on to fulfil his own

hope that "the specification of theoretical problems may lead on to

fruitful research." (4)   Lockwood, some years before Silverman had

also hoped to stimulate research. He said, "There are gaps in the information about the blackcoated workers, and the present work claims to be no more than a preliminary statement and exploration of the field. It is hoped, however, that the attempt to order the problem with an explicit framework of ideas has had the advantage of clearly indicating where further research is necessary and likely to be fruitful". (5) . Yet with a few notable exceptions the study of clerical workers remains an open frontier. This is particularly the case when it comes to investigating the clerk in other than class terms. Bain and Clegg have argued that sociologists have failed to contribute to the exposition of industrial relations problems because sociology and other 'traditional disciplines grotesquely twist the actual industrial relations experience so that it will fit their competing 'intellectual moulds' ... To take only one example, the many attempts to explain the growth and character of unionism in terms of 'class' and 'status' are a monument to the folly of explaining trade unionism without first looking closely at trade unions". (6) Whether or not this statement is taken to be a fair criticism, it is certainly the case that an important effect of the sociological focus upon trade unionism as an expression of class interests has been the tendancy to think of workers, whether blue-collar or white-collar as homogeneous in character. Thus intra-occupational differences have rarely been considered and this is particularly the case with clerical workers. 'The gaps in information about black-coated workers,' to which Lockwood referred, have persisted precisely because of assumptions which have been made about the clerk's position in the class structure and his aspirations to belong to the middle-class. Thus it has been widely accepted that the real value of studying clerks lies in their marginal class position. As D. Weir puts it, "The position of intermediate groups such as the clerks, draughtsmen and white-collar technicians in

the class structure has been a topic of recurring concern for sociologists". (7)   Even when the basic assumption made in Weir's statement, that clerks do occupy an intermediate position, has been questioned, the main thrust of the research has naturally enough been centered upon the stratification debate.   Trade unionism in this context has typically been seen as the expression of working class interests and white-collar workers as obstacles to the labour movement or as a threat to its traditional values.

The main aim of this thesis was to develop an alternative approach to the study of clerical workers and white-collar trade unionism than that which derives from structural considerations such as the class or work position of the clerk.   It was felt that inspite of the considerable literature on the changes which have occurred in clerical work and the relationship of clerks to the class system, very little was known about the way in which clerks defined their work situation and their views of trade unionism.   With this problem in mind the theoretical perspectives of action theory and reference group theory were clarified and integrated.   The reason for this integration lay in the limitations of action theory as it had been developed and applied in industrial sociology.   Here it seemed that whilst the proposal of action theory to commence analysis at the level of the actor was faithfully pursued, the ultimate task of the researcher was to locate actor definitions in social situations.   This exercise led researchers via a new route into an old trap.   It meant that the actor's definitions of reality could only be seen to make sense if they were circumscribed by those of the sociologist.   The sociologist in seeking to analyse social situations from which meanings were seen to arise was in danger of falling back on the analysis of structural determinants to action. Such a practice, it was argued, seriously weakened the basic tenets

of action theory. The problem was how to take account, not only of the actor's definitions of reality, but also of the relationship he himself posited between meaning and social situations. A solution was offered in terms of reference group theory. It was argued that by examining the key referents which actors selected it would be possible to analyse their goals and expectations within contexts which they themselves defined. This seemed to be both of general value in refining action theory and also of particular relevance in the study of clerks since their identification with management or more broadly the middle class has been more often assumed than tested. In addition the attempt to investigate the occupational and trade union identity of clerks required a perspective which would focus attention upon clerical evaluations of the relationship of their occupational group to others. The perspective and methods developed in this thesis were intended to enable clerks to articulate their views and to relate those views to standards which they selected for themselves.

In assessing the value of the approach which guided this study of clerks it is difficult to avoid making judgements independently of the results obtained. However a number of general problems can be cited. The initial difficulty lies in suspending structural notions. If, as was the case in this research, different firms are chosen as sites for the enquiry, then in a sense the researchers have already made a structural assumption. Having done so, it is difficult to resist the temptation to explain variations in the views of the subjects as a function of structural determinants rather than as a function of referents which they select. Even if this is accomplished it is equally problematic to avoid the search for more complete explanations which lie outside the data given by respondants. Thus the question of why some referents are chosen and not others may require some intuitive

guesswork on the part of the researcher and in the effort to search

for patterns and meanings in the results of the enquiry the tendancy

is to be driven ever outwards. (8)   The tension between attempting to

work within a framework set by the views of actors and that developed

by the researcher has been a topic of recurring concern in sociology.

Jack Douglas, for example, in considering some of the problems associated

with the social construction of moral meanings, explicates the general

methodological problem by reference to John Dewey and James Tuft. (9)

They wrote, "Of one thing we may be sure.   If enquiries are to have

any substantial basis, if they are not to be wholly up in the air, the

theorist must take his departure from the problems which men actually

meet in their conduct.   He may define and refine these; he may divide

and systematize, he may abstract the problems from their concrete

contexts in individual lives; he may classify them when he has detached

them, but if he gets away from them he is talking about something which

his brain has invented, not about moral realities". (10)   The intention

to stay with the accounts which actors give may be firm but in the process

of classifying and abstracting it is often difficult to avoid searching for

super- ordinate explanations.   Such was the frustration of working within

the theoretical perspective devised for this research.   Where the analysis

of results has slipped away from the original intention, as with the

traditional use of variables such as age, sex and firm locations, the

attempt to systematize results involved assumptions that such variables

did in some sense determine reference groups.   Some justification can be

offered in the sense that respondants themselves referred to these as

significant variables in the interpretation of clerical goals and

expectations.   Where the analysis has kept faith with the theoretical

perspective it could be realistically observed that explanations are only

partial.   Thus there was no attempt to relate the differences in clerical

views of their work situation with what could be termed objective differ-

ences. (e.g. observed differences in size, relative structures of
the work force, proportions of male clerks to female clerks, pay and
so on). While such an attempt could have been made it was felt that
it would have been inconsistent with the logic of the theoretical
enquiry. However whether or not total explanations have emerged, it
is hoped that a much greater understanding of the contemporary views
of clerical workers has been developed. In addition, it is worth
stressing that on the basis of commencing analysis with the actor and
completing the analysis with his referents, the problems of structure
and process in social science are further uncovered.

Another objection which can be raised against actor-oriented
research is that it can lead to a somewhat static view of society.
Thus the focus is upon the actor determining his own fate, responsible
for making sense of his situation and acting upon it. This can divert
attention away from questions of power and influence. If it is to be
viable in terms of dealing with the dynamics of social life it must be
able to deal with the case where definitions of groups of actors are
opposed and where changes in definitions occur. This is possible within
the basic framework but requires some attention to the problem of how
definitions arise, how they are maintained and how they change. One
limitation of research which is based upon one-time interviews, as this
research was, is that analysis of the dynamics of action is obviously
limited. However some attempt to combat this problem was made by
eliciting from clerks their view of existing relationships within the
work place and of changes within their occupation. In seeking to
understand the clerical worker it might be legitimately argued that a
participant observation method might have been more valid. As against
this, however, the emphasis upon an ordered (if open-ended) interview
technique enabled a broader based study through which the comparison of
clerks in different firms was possible. This was particularly important

if the view of clerks as a homogeneous group was to be seriously challenged. In addition, only by examining the reference groups of a large enough number of clerks could the questions surrounding their alleged identification with management and rejection of manual workers as a similar group with common interests be raised. On the basis of the results of this enquiry, it is suggested, that the theoretical perspective could be judged as useful, and as enabling the exploration of the occupational and trade union identity of clerks. The interview schedule which was designed in faith with the theoretical perspective produced results which, whatever the difficulties of analysing open-ended data, did much to extend an understanding of the common interests of clerks and the specific interests of groups of clerks. Although open-ended interviews lead to a wide range of responses, the results lend some credance to the notion of shared definitions of reality. As Homans once said of his own research on clerical workers, "In my experience in holding non-directive interviews with persons who interact frequently with one another, I have found that many of them express the same opinions in almost the same words, often without realizing that they are doing so" (11) The same impression was gained in this research, as the results from different firms have indicated.

The results of this study suggest that only by taking account of clerical interests in work will we be able to understand and to make predictions about the clerk-as-trade-unionist. In so far as it is possible to generalize from clerical workers drawn from six firms all operating in the North-East of England, it would seem that, whatever their differences, clerks share a view of their occupation as distinctive. They also have one problem in common which I have typed as 'occupational anxiety'. This refers to their belief that the general

public, manual workers, and to some extent management hold perjorative images of clerical workers, which clerks resist but find difficult to dispel, particularly as they share doubts themselves about the relative worth of clerical work. Nor can this be interpreted as a status problem in terms of a frustrated desire to identify with management since, whatever clerks feel about their own promotion prospects, it seems that their main identification group is that of clerks. Their desire for promotion is also to be understood as the desire for advancement within the clerical hierarchy. Management is not seen as an identification referent but as a powerful interaction group. Where management is viewed as blocking the interests of clerks, and where clerks also believe that their occupational rewards are unsatisfactory, then the sense of belonging to a distinctive group is heightened. Under these conditions it is unlikely that clerks would ever perceive their interests to be common with those of manual workers particularly where management are seen to uphold the interests of production workers at the expense of clerks. This does not mean that clerks could never be really working class or could never behave like traditional blue-collar trade unionists. But as this study has shown, the clerks who were most opposed to management and who desired a strong union to protect and to fight for their interests were also those who wanted to achieve this by closing clerical ranks and developing a united clerical trade union membership. In any event as C.T. Wheelan has noted "it is by no means clear ... what are the ... interests which an occupational group must realize are shared by other groups of employees before it can be said to be conscious of class ties. Nor is it clear how fundamentally dissimilar interests can be seen to be before class consciousness can be said not to exist". (12)

The problem is even more complex than this if we accept that some clerks may now assess their own position in work and society to be far

from superior to that of manual workers and to <u>accept</u> this situation.
Certainly the clerks in this study did not manifest any desire to be
superior to manual workers particularly skilled manual workers.   If
clerks believe that they have separate interests which set them apart
from manual workers but not above them, then it is difficult as Mercer
and Weir have noted in a different context to sustain a perspective
based on "irrational elements, such as might be expected on the basis
of theories of either the "status panic" or "false consciousness" type".
(13)   Perhaps we could conclude that the traditional view of the clerk
as a status seeker, striving to preserve his closeness to management
and distance from manual workers must now be seriously revised.   What
seems more likely, on the basis of this study, is that even without
anti-manual worker feelings, clerks have developed "strong identifications
within the clerical group and consciousness of an attachment to a clerical
'class' with its own special interests and problems".(14)

At the same time this study also indicated the degree of fragmentation
which exists within the clerical occupation.   Clerical workers in
different firms used common standards, based on their understanding and
experience of clerical work, to assess their situations but not surpris-
ingly came up with different assessments.   Thus what they wanted from
trade union membership varied.   This is a problem which white-collar
unions representing clerks in many different industries will have to face.
The notions of union character put forward by Lockwood and Blackburn rest
largely on assumptions about homogeneity of interests which differentiate
blue-collar and white-collar occupations. (15)   However by examining the
views of members of one of these we have seen that different intra-
occupational union identies can emerge even when there is a strong sense
of belonging to a common occupation with shared interests.   Indeed the
occupational identity of clerks is such that being a member of a trade

union no longer poses problems for them. It is not inconsistent with
their status needs. But depending upon their specific interests at
plant level, they are likely to expect their union to represent them
differently. In many ways the clerks in this study who belonged to an
industrial union, COSA, posed fewer problems for the integration of
clerks within the labour movement. Yet they were no more union minded
than other clerks, with the possible exception of the young female members of
ASTMS who were aware of their inexperience as trade unionists. The answer
would seem to lie in their belief that COSA was a strong enough branch of
the NUM to represent their interests while drawing power from its manual
membership. APEX clerks however demonstrated that a white-collar union
may be seen by members of the same occupation to be either a satisfactory
representative of their interests or to be totally inadequate. This
result was in no way surprising but it draws attention to the problems
involved in recruiting and sustaining a membership where there is no con-
census of opinion about the desired policies and character of the union on
the part of the membership itself. The problem for union officials lies
in moving from any general image of the union which they may wish to project
to a particular strategy which their members in different work situations
perceive as vital for the protection of their interests. The impetus
for recruitment and growth may itself generate more problems than union
officials can deal with. However there is little doubt that clerical
workers no longer resist the idea of union membership and that this can be
understood as a function of their occupational identity. A reasonable pred-
iction might be that with the breakdown of this resistance, clerical employees
will become more active in the trade union movement and that the motive power
behind this activity will derive from the tensions which exist between
groups of clerks as to how best their interests can be served. Much

depends upon the degree of isolation which clerks feel within the workplace since on the basis of their own views, the strongest dependence and desire for involvement in trade unionism, springs from anti-management feelings.   In this sense clerical-trade-unionists of the future are likely to act in a similar manner to their manual counterparts.   Their total union with manual workers is however unlikely and this suggests that white-collar unions, not withstanding the pressures of differences in expectations from their memberships, will continue to grow in strength.

Peter Berger argues that work no longer provides individuals with a "firm profile". (16)   It seems that in the case of clerical workers occupational identity has emerged less in relation to a belief in the craftsman like nature of their work and more in relation to the dynamics of social relationships in the work place.   They now see a clear separation of their interests from both management and manual workers and where these interests are seen to compete, the sense of being a clerk is further enhanced.   To be a clerk and to be a trade union member is no longer resisted, although variations in union identity are offered and will probably continue to be offered by different groups of clerks, On the basis of this study, clerical workers appear to have been emancipated from 'status anxiety' and 'defensiveness', but on their own evidence it would be unreasonable to expect a uniform response to trade unionism.   Nevertheless, clerks also appear to have come down finally not on the side of management or manual workers, but on the side of clerks.

APPENDIX 1

Interview Schedule

A. Job and Work General

1. One of our difficulties lies in actually defining white-collar or clerical work. Will you tell me how you would do this?

2. Would you list as many white-collar jobs as you can?

3. Are you thinking of people you know when you make this list? (E.G. Family or Close Friends))

B. Job and Work Particular

1. How did you get into this line of work?

2. If you were looking for a new job what sort of thing would you have in mind?
(E.G. What characteristics of a different job or a similar job?)

3. How does your job compare with other jobs?
(Prompt if necessary; any jobs you can think of).

C. Earnings

1. What would be a satisfactory standard of living for you?
(E.G. 1. Minimum standard of Living
2. Maximum Standard of Living

2. Do you feel that your present earnings enable you to live in the way you would like?

3. Do you feel that there are any other sorts of people doing noticeably better than yourself at the present time?

4. What sort of people do you think are doing noticeably better?
(Prompt if necessary; who, what sort of jobs do they do?)

5. Some people say that manual workers are doing much better nowadays than people in jobs like yours. Do you think this is so?

6. Do you think manual workers ought to be doing better than people in jobs like yours?

D. Management and Promotion

1. Do you think (name the firm) is a good firm to work for?
(E.G. Conditions of employment).

2. In saying this are you comparing your firm with any others?
(Prompt if necessary; what others?)

3. What do you think of management here?

4. If good or bad, why?

5. Thinking about this firm, how much would you say promotion depends upon how well a man or woman can do a job, and how much on other things?
(Prompt if necessary; I had in mind things like management policy on recruitment and promotion, or age, sex and education).

6. How do you feel about your own chances of promotion?

7. If good or bad why? Compared with whom?

E. Trade Union

1. What does the idea of a trade union mean to you?

2. Thinking along these lines, how do you rate your union?

3. What do you think arethe main advantages and disadvantages of being a union member?

4. In saying this are you comparing your union with any other? (Prompt if necessary; which ones?)

5. There are many different kinds of unions and union members. What kind of union member do you consider yourself to be?

6. Would you feel differently in another union?

F. Status

1. What does the term status mean to you?

2. What is a high status? What is a low status?

3. Thinking along these lines, what sort of status do you think you have?

4. What sort of status do you think clerical work in general has?

5. What sort of image do you think other people have of clerical work? (E.G. manual workers, management, friends)

6. When you are thinking about your own status, who do you compare yourself with?

7. Do you think a clerk now has as much status as a clerk 50 years ago?

8. If not, why not? If yes, why?

APPENDIX II

Introduction Card

1. **Introduce yourself:-** 'Good morning/afternoon. My name is ...

   I am a member of the research team from Newcastle Polytechnic.

   The project, as you probably know is concerned with the study of

   clerical workers in a number of different industries. We have

   already conducted a survey by questionnaire in this firm and now

   we are interested in interviewing a sample of clerks.'

2. **The Interview:-** a) 'The interview is to learn about you, your

   views and opinions.. There are no right and wrong answers, no

   yes and no type questions.

          b) As always, what you have to say will be

   treated in the strictest confidence.

          c) It will take about half an hour.

          d) I'll make notes as we go along, if that is

   alright with you.

          e) I'd like to talk around five main areas -

   1) Job and work 2) Earnings 3) Management and Promotion

   4) Trade Unions 5) Status.'

3. **Cue Card:-** This is a list of general cues, prompts and instructions.

   1) Why?

   2) In which ways (what ways)?

   3) Is there anything you would like to add?

   4) Is there anything else ... before we move on?

   5) Is that all?

   6) Can you tell me a little more?

   7) When the interviewee says 'how do you mean'? - turn it

         back e.g ask him/her 'what do you take it to mean'? or

         'what do you understand by it"?

   8) If it necessary to stem the flow of the respondent say

         'we'll discuss that in a minute, if we could just finish this'.

9) Do not interpret questions for respondents. If they cannot or do not want to answer a question, leave it. If the rest of the interview goes well try the question again at the end.

Footnotes

Chapter I

1. Lockwood, D. (1958) 'The Blackcoated Worker: a Study in Class Consciousness', Allen and Unwin, London. p.125

2. Mills, C. Wright (1951) 'White Collar', Oxford University Press, New York.

3. Crozier, M. (1971) 'The World of the Office Worker', Translated by David Landau, University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London. p.10.

4. Bain, G.S. and R. Price (1972) 'Union Growth and Employment Trends in the U.K., 1964-70', British Journal of Industrial Relations, November 1972, pp 366-381, Table 1, pp 368-9.

5. Bain, G.S. (1970) 'The Growth of White Collar Unionism', Clarendon Press, Oxford. p.13

   (See also Routh, G. (1965) 'Occupation and Pay in Great Britain 1906-60', Cambridge University Press. On page 6 he shows changes in the distribution of the labour force in the United Kingdom between the years 1911-1959. Clerical workers had more than doubled in that period, increasing from 4.84% of the labour force in 1911 to 12.00% in 1959.)

6. Ibid, p.13

7. Ibid, p.13

8. Lumley, R. (1973) 'White-Collar Unionism in Great Britain', Methuan and Co. Ltd., London, p.17. Lumley gives the figure for clerks as $34\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I have taken the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to be a printing error.

9. Bain, G.S. (1970) Op.Cit., p.14, Table 2.3

10. Bain, G.S. and R. Price (1972) Op.Cit., p.370, Table 3.

11. Census 1971, Great Britain. Economic Activity Part IV (10% sample) London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office pp.xxxix,xL

12. Price, R. and G.S. Bain (1976) 'Union Growth Revisited: 1948-1974 in Perspective', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol.XIV No.3 pp 339-355.

13. Mills, C. Wright (1951) Op.Cit., p.249.

14. Ibid, p.75.

15. Ibid, p.xviii.

16. Ibid, pp 189-198.

17. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit.

18. Ibid, p.41.

19. Dale, J.R. (1962) 'The Clerk in Industry', Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, p.5.

20. Ibid, p.5.

21. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit., p.81.

22. Mills, C. Wright (1951) Op.Cit., p.209.

23. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit., p.99.

24. Bain, G.S. (1970) Op.Cit., p.54.

25. Ibid, pp.51-53.

26. Bowen P., Elsey V. and M. Shaw (1974) 'The Attachment of White-Collar Workers to Trade Unions', Personnel Review, Vol. 3, No. 3, 22-32 p.26, Figure 2. This Figure is shown in Table I on page 11 of this thesis. It was constructed from the 'New Earnings Survey, 1973' from the DEP Gazette, Vol. LXXXII, No.2, February 1974.

27. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit. p.36.

28. Bain, G.S. and R. Price (1972) Op.Cit., p.370, Table 3.

29. Crozier, M. (1971) Op.Cit.

30. Ibid p.15.

31. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit. p.112.

32. Hamilton, R.F. (1966) 'The Marginal Middle Class: A Reconsideration', American Sociological Review, Vol. XXI, April, 192-9.

33. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) 'Patterns of White-Collar Unionization in the Steel Industry', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol.3, No.2, 8-24.

34. Mumford, E. and O. Banks (1967) 'The Computer and the Clerk', Routeledge and Kegan Paul, London.

35. Dale, J.R. (1962) Op.Cit.

36. Ibid, p.29.

37. Bain, G.S. (1970) Op.Cit., p.25, Table 3.3.

38. Ibid, pp.37-9.

39. Bain, G.S. and R. Price (1972) Op.Cit, pp378-9.

40. Price, R. and G.S. Bain (1976) Op.Cit p.17.

41. Patterson, D. (1975) 'White Collar Militancy', Studies for Trade Unionists, Vol. 1, No.2, July 1975.

42. Ibid, p.2, Table 2.

43. Blackburn, R.M. (1968) 'Those Militant White Collar Unions', Personnel, Journal of the Institute of Personnel Management, October 1968, 29-30, p.29.

44. Bain, G.S. (1966) 'The Growth of White-Collar Unionism in Great Britain', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. IV, No.3 November 1966, 304-335 p.304.

45. Kleingartner, A. (1968) 'The Organization of White-Collar Workers', <u>British Journal of Industrial Relations</u>, March 1968, 79-93, p.79.

46. Mills, C. Wright (1951) Op.Cit., p.309.

47. Bain, G.S. (1970) Op.Cit.

48. Bain, G.S. Coates, D. and V. Ellis (1973) '<u>Social Stratification and Trade Unionism</u>', Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London.

49. Blackburn, R.M. (1968) Op.Cit., p.29.

50. Ibid, p.29.

51. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit. p.137.

52. Ibid, p.149.

53. Ibid, p.153.

54. Ibid, p.195.

55. Ibid, p.205.

Chapter II

1. Goldthorpe, J.H., Lockwood, D., Bechhofer, F. and J. Platt (1968) '<u>The Affluent Worker : Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour</u>', Cambridge University Press. (See also '<u>The Affluent Worker : Political Attitudes and Behaviour</u>', Cambridge University Press 1968, and '<u>The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure</u>', Cambridge University Press 1969).

2. Ibid, p.184.

3. Ibid, p.36.

4. Ibid, p.158.

5. Dawe, A. (1970) 'The Two Sociologies', <u>British Journal of Sociology</u>' Vol. 21, 2-7-18.

6. Ibid, p.214.

7. Dreitzel, H.P. ed. (1970) '<u>Recent Sociology</u>', No.2, Macmillan, London, pxvi.

8. Berger, P.L. and T. Luckmann (1967) '<u>The Social Construction of Reality</u>', Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London.

9. Ibid, p.121.

10. Silverman, D. (1968) 'Formal Organizations or Industrial Sociology: Towards a Social Action Analysis of Organizations', <u>British Journal of Sociology</u>, Vol.19, 221-38.

11. Ibid, p.235

    Silverman later offers a more dynamic analysis of man's relation-
    ship to work when he writes "Attachments to an organization
    thus reflect the meanings which those concerned bring in from
    the wider society and finite provinces of meaning specific to
    the organization. Together these generate types of involvement
    which may change during a member's stay". p.184 in 'The Theory of
    Organizations'(1970), Heinemann, London. Still later, as an
    ethnomethodologist, he turns to an analysis in terms of process
    rather than structure. See for example 'Getting In : the Managed
    Accomplishment of 'Correct' Selection Outcomes' D. Silverman and
    J. Jones in 'Man and Organization' edited by John Child (1973)
    Allen and Unwin, London pp.53-106.

12. Brown, R. (1973) 'Sources of Objectives in Work and Employment',
    in 'Man and Organizations' edited by John Child, British Sociological
    Association Industrial Studies, Allen and Unwin Ltd., London.

13. Ibid, pp.36-37.

14. Blumer, H. (1966) 'Sociological Implications of the Thought of
    George Herbert Mead', American Journal of Sociology, 71, 535-44,
    p.542.

15. Berger, P.L. and T. Luckmann (1967) Op.Cit.

16. Sherif, M. (1936) 'The Psychology of Social Norms', Harper, New
    York.

17. Berger, P.L. and T. Luckmann (1967) Op.Cit, p.106.

18. Gouldner, A.W. (1971) 'The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology',
    Heinemann, London.

19. Festinger, L. (1959) 'Informal Social Communication', Psychological
    Review, 57, 271-282.

20. Pfuetze, P.E. (1954) 'The Social Self', Record Press, New York.

21. Mead, G.H. (1934) 'Mind, Self, and Society' Edited by Charles W.
    Morris, University of Chicago. p. 154.

22. Ibid, p.155.

23. Gerth, H. and C.W. Mills (1954) 'Character and Social Structure;
    The Psychology of Social Institutions', Routeledge and Kegan Paul,
    London, see p.86, footnote 9.

24. Merton, R.K. and A. Kitt Rossi (1968) 'Contributions to the Theory
    of Reference Group Behaviour', in 'Readings in Reference Group
    Theory and Research' edited by Hyman, H.H. and E. Singer, Collier-
    Macmillan. On p.38, Merton and Rossi argue that "Mead in effect
    advances the hypothesis that it is the groups of which the
    individual is a member that yield the significant frame of reference
    ...... he was not driven to ask whether, indeed, the group taken
    as a point of reference by the individual is invariably the group of
    which he is a member".

25. Hyman, H.H. and E. Singer (1968) 'Readings in Reference Group Theory and Research', Collier-Macmillan, London. p.6. The authors are quoting Cooley, C.H. (1956), 'Human Nature and Social Order', Free Press p.301.

26. Mann, L. (1969) 'Social Psychology', John Wiley and Sons, New York, London, p.40.

27. Goffman, E. (1968) 'Asylums', Penguin, Harmondsworth.

28. By 'arbitrary social positions' I mean groups such as social class which are held to determine behaviour.

29. See for example Shibutani, T. (1955) 'Reference groups as Perspectives', American Journal of Sociology, 60, 562-569. On p. 562 he points out that "as might be expected during the exploratory phases in any field of inquiry ... there is some confusion involved in the use of this concept, arising largely from vagueness of signification. The available formal definitions are inconsistent, and sometimes formal definitions are contradicated in usage".

30. Lockwood, D. (1966) 'Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society', Sociological Review, 14, 249-67,

31. Goldthorpe, J.W. and D. Lockwood (1963) 'Affluence and the British Class Structure', Sociological Review, XI, 133-63.

32. Ibid, p.155.

33. Pollis, N. (1968) 'Reference Group Re-examined', British Journal of Sociology, 19, 300-7, p.1.

34. Ibid, p.2.

35. Hyman, H.H. and E. Singer (1968) Op.Cit. pp.3-4.

36. Kelley, H.H. (1947) 'Two Functions of Reference Groups' in 'Readings in Social Psychology', edited by Swanson, G.E., Newcomb, T.M. and E.L. Hartley, Holt Rinehart and Winston pp.410-414.

37. Turner, R.H. (1956) 'Role-taking, Role Standpoint and Reference Group Behaviour', American Journal of Sociology, LXI, 316-328.

38. Ibid, p.327.

39. Durkheim, E. (1952) 'Suicide : A Study in Sociology', Translated by Spaulding J.A. and G. Simpson, Free Press (First published in 1897).

40. Merton, R.K. (1938) 'Social Structure and Anomie', American Sociological Review, Vol.3, 672-80.

41. Mills, C. Wright (1951) 'White Collar', Oxford University Press, New York.

42. Ibid, pp. 239-258.

43. Turner, R.H. (1956) Op.Cit., p.328.

44. Runciman, W.G. (1966) 'Relative Deprivation and Social Justice', Routeledge and Kegan Paul, London.

45. See for example Festinger, L. (1950) 'Social Pressures in Informal Groups : A Study of Human Factors in Housing', Harper and Row, New York. See also, Homans, G. (1950) 'The Human Group', Harcourt, Brace, New York.

46. Turner, R.H. (1956) Op.Cit.

47. Homans, G. (1950) Op.Cit.

48. See for example, Newcomb, T.M. (1952) 'Social Psychology', Tavistock Publications Ltd., London. See also Strauss, H.M. (1968) 'Reference Group and Social Comparison Among the Totally Blind in Hyman, H.H. and E. Singer (1968) Op.Cit. pp.222-237.

49. Sherif, M. and C.W. Sherif (1969) 'Social Psychology' Harper and Row, London, ch.11.

50. Silverman, D. (1968) 'Clerical Ideologies : A Research Note', British Journal of Sociology, 19, 326-33.

51. Hyman, H.H. and E. Singer (1968) Op.Cit., p.13.

52. Runciman, W.G. (1966) Op.Cit.

53. Mills, C. Wright (1951) Op.Cit. p.229.

54. Crozier, M. (1971) 'The World of the Office Worker'. Translated by David Landau, University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London.

55. Stouffer, S.A., Suchman, E.A., Devinney, L.C., Star, S.A. and R.M. Williams Jnr. (1948) 'Adjustments During Army Life' and Stouffer, S.A., Lumsdaine, A.A., Lumsdaine, M.H., Williams, Jnr., R.M., Smith, M.B., Janis, I.L., Star, S.A. and L.S. Cottrell Jnr. (1949) 'Combat and its Aftermath'. Both Princeton University Press.

56. Merton, R.K. (1957) 'Social Theory and Social Structure', Free Press.

57. See for example Stern, E. and S. Keller (1953), Public Opinion Quarterly, 17, 208-17.

58. Schutz, A. (1972) 'The Phenomenology of the Social World'. Translated by Walsh, G. and F. Lehnert, Heinemann Educational, London.

Chapter III

1. Daniel, W.W. (1969) 'Industrial Behaviour and Orientation to Work - a Critique', Journal of Management Studies, 6, 366-75, p.366.

2. Goldthorpe, J.H. (1972) 'Daniel on Orientations to Work - A Final Comment', Journal of Management Studies, 9, 266-273, p. 267. For the full debate between Daniel and Goldthorpe see also:- Goldthorpe, J.H. (1970) 'The Social Action Approach to Industrial Sociology : A Reply to Daniel', Journal of Management Studies, 9, 199-208. Daniel, W.W. (1971) 'Productivity Bargaining and Orientation to Work - A Rejoinder to Goldthorpe', Journal of Management Studies, 8, 329-35.

3. Lockwood, D. (1966) 'Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society', Sociological Review, 14, 249-67.

4. Bott, E. (1957) 'Family and Social Network', Tavistock, London.

5. Ibid, p.163.

6. Lockwood, D. (1966) Op.Cit. p.257.

7. Goldthorpe, J.H., Lockwood, D., Bechhofer and J. F. Platt (1968) 'The Affluent Worker : Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour', Cambridge University Press, London.

8. Ibid, p.38-42.
   The instrumental, bureaucratic and solidaristic types are derived from three contrasting orientations to work, employed the authors suggest by the affluent worker, the salaried employee and the traditional worker respectively. The instrumental orientation is manifested when "the primary meaning of work is a means to an end" p.38; the bureaucractic when "the primary meaning of work is as a service to an organization" p.38; the solidaristic when "work ... is experienced not simply as a means to an end but also as a group activity" p.40. The authors point out that since all work in an industrial society has an instrumentsl dimension, it may be that only the 'instrumental' orientation can be thought of as a pure type with the 'bureaucracic' and solidaristic' orientations as deviations from it. They also suggest that other deviations might be possible "as, for example, in a 'professional' direction" p.41.

9. Ingham, G.K. (1967) 'Organizational Size, Orientation to Work and Industrial Behaviour', Sociology, 1, 239-58.

10. Ingham, G.K. (1967) Ibid, p.246.

11. Silverman, D. (1970), 'The Theory of Organizations', Heinemann, London, p. 179.

12. Ingham, G.K. (1970) 'Size of Industrial Organization and Worker Behaviour', Cambridge University Press, London.

13. Cotgrove, S. and S. Box (1970) 'Science, Industry and Society', Allen and Unwin, London.

14. Merton, R.K. (1957) 'The Role-Set : Problems in Sociological Theory' British Journal of Sociology, Vol.8, 106-20 and
    Gouldner, A.W. (1957), 'Cosmopolitans and Locals', Administrative Science Quarterly, 2, 281-306 and 444-80.

15. Parker, S.R. in Parker S.R., Brown, R.K., Child, J. and M.A. Smith (1967) 'Studies in Sociology', Allen and Unwin, London, chapter 14, pp 164-165.

16. Mills, C. Wright (1951) 'White Collar', Oxford University Press, New York.

17. Mercer, D.E. and D.T.H. Weir (1972) 'Attitudes to Work and Trade Unionism Among White-Collar Workers', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 3, No.2 49-60, p.53.

18. Ibid, p.53.

19. Mercer, D.E. and D.T.H. Weir (1969) 'Orientations to Work Among White-Collar Workers', Paper presented to the Social Science Research Council Conference, Cambridge 1968, p.119. Published in 'Social Stratification and Industrial Relations' edited by Mann, M., 1969, The Council, London.

20. Sheldrake, D. (1971) 'Orientations Towards Work Among Computer Programmers', Sociology, 5, 209-24 p.210.

21. Brown, R. and P. Brannen (1970) 'Social Relations and Social Perspectives Amongst Shipbuilding Workers - A Preliminary Statement', Sociology, Vol.4, No.1 and No.2, 71-84 and 197-211.

22. Ibid. The authors argue on p.207 for example that "Peoples' definitions of their social situations do not necessarily form a logical and consistent whole. Since different definitions are used in different contexts, individuals need not be aware of, or can ignore inconsistencies".

23. Brown, R. (1973) 'Sources of Objectives in Work and Employment' in 'Man and Organization' edited by Child, J., Allen and Unwin, London p.29.

24. Daniel, W.W. (1969) Op.Cit, p.367.

25. Brown, R. (1973) Op.Cit.

26. Daniel, W.W. (1969) op.cit. p.367.

27. Silverman, D. (1968) 'Clerical Ideologies : A Research Note', British Journal of Sociology, 19, 326-33 p.327.

28. Blauner, R. (1964) 'Alienation and Freedom : The Factory Worker and His Industry' The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London p.30.

29. Mills, C. Wright (1951) Op.Cit. p.230.

30. Blauner, R. (1964) Op.Cit. p. 159.

31. Child, J., Loveridge, R. and H. Warner, (1973) 'Towards and Organizational Study of Trade Unions', Sociology, Vol.7, No.1, 71-91.

32. Ibid, p.76, Fig. 1.

33. Seidman, J. (1958) 'The Worker Views His Union' University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

34. Goldthorpe, J.H., Lockwood, D., Bechhofer, F. and J. Platt (1968) Op.Cit.

35. Blackburn, R.M. (1967) 'Union Character and Social Class', Batsford, London, pp 18-19.

36. Lockwood, D. (1958) 'The Blackcoated Worker', Allen and Unwin, London pp 137-138.

37. "Unionateness" of an organization is measured by the extent to which the following characteristics apply:

    (1) It regards collective bargaining and the protection of the interests of members, as employees, as its main function, rather than, say, professional activities or welfare schemes.

    (2) It is independent of employers for purposes of negotiation.

    (3) It is prepared to be militant, using all forms of industrial action which may be effective.

    (4) It declares itself to be a trade union.

    (5) It is registered as a trade union.

    (6) It is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress.

    (7) It is affiliated to the Labour Party.

See Blackburn, R.M., op.cit., pp.18-19.

38. Bain, G., Coates, D., and V. Ellis (1973) 'Social Stratification and Trade Unionism' Heinemann, London.

39. Ibid, pp.60-63.

40. APEX, Agenda for the Eighty-Third Annual Conference and Special Delegate Meeting, 1974, London.

41. Steel Industry Management Association. Circular from Corby Branch, 1975. "This is to inform you of S.I.M.A's position in relation to Industrial Action regarding our salary claim.

S.I.M.A. National Council have instructed all members to implement a policy of non-co-operation as follows:-

    a) There will be a total ban on overtime working.

    b) There will be a total ban on response to call out requirements.

    c) All S.I.M.A. members will work strictly within the limits of agreed job descriptions.

    d) All S.I.M.A. members will work strictly within the limits of procedure manuals or regulations or other published or written instructions governing particular activities.

    e) That S.I.M.A. members do not initiate internal and external business communications by telephone and that, when answering their own telephones, they state that acting on union instructions, any communication on business and/or duty matters must be conducted in writing or face to face.

    f) There may be other restrictions which can be applied locally, however, these must be approved by the Branch Committee and head office notified, prior to implementation.

These actions will commence from Monday, 11th November, however there are interpretations and implications locally for which head office guidance is necessary. As such we have agreed to postpone the commencement at Corby until after such clarification is received. You will be notified exactly when to take the action.

It is essential that all members respond on this first occasion of a call for a demonstration of unity and determination so that, perhaps once and for all, B.S.C. might be convinced that the views of their Managers must be taken seriously. Perhaps a strong stand now will need never to be repeated."

42. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) 'Patterns of White-Collar Unionization in the Steel Industry', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 3, No.2, 8-34.

43. Bain, G., Coates, D. and V. Ellis (1973) 'Social Stratification and Trade Unionism', Op.Cit. p.156.

44. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit. pp.194-5.

45. Blackburn, R.M. and K. Prandy (1965) 'White-Collar Unionization : A Conceptual Framework', British Journal of Sociology, XVI (June 1965), 111-22 p.120.

46. Bain, G.S. (1970) 'The Growth of White-Collar Unionism', Clarendon Press, Oxford.

47. Ibid, p.188.

48. Mills, C. Wright (1951) Op.Cit. p.309.

49. Dubin, R. (1973) 'Attachment to Work and Union Militancy,' Industrial Relations, Vol. 12, Feb. 1973, 51-64 p.51.

50. Ibid, p.52.

51. Barlowe, G. (1969) 'Some Latent Influences in a Pay Claim : An Examination of a White-Collar Dispute', British Journal of Industrial Relations, 200-210.

52. Ibid p.203.

53. Ibid p.208.

54. Gouldner, A.W. (1965), 'Wildcat Strike', Harper, New York.

55. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) Op.Cit.

56. Child, J., Loveridge, R. and M. Warner (1973) Op.Cit.

57. Sheldrake, D. (1971) Op.Cit. p.211.

Chapter IV

1. The Social Science Research Council approved an award of £3,631 to P. Bowen and M. Shaw for the period, 1st January 1973 - 31st December 1973. This period was subsequently extended for one year to 31st December, 1974.

2. Prior to the appointment of Valerie Elsy, Edward Rose was the research assistant for three months. Valerie Elsy was in post from January 1973 to December 1974. Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic paid the salary of the research assistant.

3. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) 'Patterns of White-Collar Unionization in the Steel Industry', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol.3 No.2, 8-34.

4. As we wrote, (1972) Ibid, p.19, "Ironhill is situated in an area with long traditions of mining and steel. The Community is predominately working class and depends for its livelihood on the continuing prosperity of Ironhill. There are few opportunities to work outside the steel works which do not involve a journey of at least 10 miles. Consequently Ironhill is situated within a fairly isolated, tightly-knit community whose relationship with the steel plant is very close."

5. The interview schedule is shown in Appendix 1.

6. In response to S.S.R.C. advice we included ASTMS, as well as COSA and APEX, the original unions selected for the study.

7. The grading structure of the national airline is more extensive than the grades at this station. For example, the M grade includes 6 divisions - M1 to M6; and in the lower grades, besides A and B there are C, D and Junior grades. There are also grades for typists and machine operators.

8. The change of name from CAWU to APEX was effected at the Annual General Conference in 1972.

9. Lumley, R. (1973) 'White-Collar Unionism in Britain', Methuan Co. Ltd., Great Britain p.43.

10. See Table 8 on p.94 of this thesis.

11. Lumley, R. (1973) Op.Cit, See Appendix 1.

12. These figures were obtained from the Research Department of APEX.

13. Edwards, R. (1973) 'Equal Pay', TOPICS, Special edition. APEX. pp.1-2.

14. Opinions obtained from union officials at National and Local levels in discussions and informal interviews.

15. Hughes, F. (1953) 'By Hand and Brain', Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., London, p.11.

16. Bain, G.S. (1970) 'The Growth of White-Collar Unionization', Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp.108-110.

17. For a detailed account of the relationship of CAWU to BISAKTA, see Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) Op.Cit.

18. Bain, G.S. (1970) Op.Cit, p.115.

19. These figures were provided by the Research Department of APEX.

20. Bain, G.S. (1970) Op.Cit, Table 3.6.

21. As quoted by a member of the Research Department of ASTMS.

22. Lumley, R. (1973) Op.Cit. p.66.

23. Ibid, p.50.

24. Landsbury, R.D. (1973) 'Management Services in British Airways' Ph.d Thesis, London University p.442.

25. These figures were obtained from the Research Department of ASTMS.

26. APEX National Engineering Advisory Council, London 1972. I attended and made notes of the proceedings.

27. Bain, G.S. (1970) Op.Cit, p.102.

28. Lumley, R. (1973) Op.Cit, p.43.

29. Ibid, p.50.

30. See for example, Hawkins, R. (1972) 'Conflict and Change : Aspects of Industrial Relations', Holt, Rinehart and Winston, London pp.138-154.

31. Information supplied by local union office, Durham.

32. Lumley, R. (1973) Op.Cit. p.72.

33. Ibid, p.72.

34. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) Op.Cit.

35. McCormick, B. (1960) 'Managerial Unionism in the Coal Industry : British Journal of Sociology, Vol. XI No.4, 356-369.

36. Ibid, p.360.

37. Bowen, P, Elsy, V. and M. Shaw (1974) 'The Attachment of White-Collar Workers to Trade Unions', Personnel Review, Vol.3 No.2, 22-32, p.31, Footnote 26, Quotation taken from the Northern Echo, February 1972.

38. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit. p.164.

39. Paynter, W. (1970) 'British Trade Unions and the Problem of Change', Allen and Unwin, London, p.95.

40. Bain, G.S. (1970) Op.Cit., Table 3A.1., p.200.

41. Bowen, P, Elsy, V, and M. Shaw (1974) Op.Cit. p.29.

42. Lumley, R. (1973) Op.Cit, Appendix 2.

43. McCormick, B. (1960) Op.Cit, Table 1, p.360.

44. These figures were supplied by the Research Department of NUM COSA.

45. Bowen, P, Elsy, V. and M. Shaw (1974) Op.Cit, p.31, Footnote 25, Quotation taken from the Northern Echo, 26 January 1972.

46. Paynter, W. (1970) Op.Cit, p.109.

47. Lumley, R. (1973), Op.Cit, pp.73-4.

48. Bowen, P, Elsy, V. and M. Shaw (1974) Op.Cit, p.31.

49. These descriptions of the unions were compiled for this thesis and are intended only to illustrate the three different union models on which the overall study of clerks was based.

50. McHugh, P. (1968) 'Defining the Situation. The Organization of Meaning in Social Interaction', The Bobbs-Merrill Co., New York, p.3.

51. These were Valerie Elsy, full-time research assistant, Dennis Hall and Esther Logan, part-time interviewers for the project.

52. Nie, N.H., Hadlai Hull, G., Jenkins, G. and D.M. Bent (1975) 'The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences', 2nd edition, version 6, McGraw-Hill, London.

Chapter V

1. Bain, G.S. and R. Price (1972) 'Who is a White-Collar Employee?', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. X No.3, November 1972, 325-339.

2. Ibid, p.329.

3. Ibid, p.336.

4. Ibid, p.338

5. Mills, C. Wright (1951) 'White Collar', Oxford University Press, New York, pp. xvi-xvii.

6. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) 'Patterns of White-Collar Unionization in the Steel Industry', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 3 No.2, 8-34.

7. Mercer, D.E. and D.T.H. Weir (1972) 'Attitudes to Work and to Trade Unionism Among White-Collar Workers', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 3 No.2, 49-60.

8. Ibid, p.53.

9. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) Op.Cit. p.28.

10. Dale, J.R. (1962) 'The Clerk in Industry', Liverpool University Press, p.19, Table 9.

11. Ibid, p.24, Table 14.

12. Daniel, W.W. (1969) 'Industrial Behaviour and Orientation to Work - A Critique', Journal of Management Studies, 8, 366-75.

13. Dale, J.R. (1962) Op.Cit, p.15.

14. Crozier, M. (1971) 'The World of the Office Worker', Translated by David Landau, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p.25.

Chapter VI

1. Weir, D.T.H. (1973) 'The Wall of Darkness : Subjective Operationality and the Promotion System Among Clerical Workers' in 'Men and Work in Modern Britain' (1973) edited by David Weir, Fontana, p.169.

2. Ibid, p.170.

3. Mills, C. Wright (1951) 'White Collar' Oxford University Press, New York.

4. Weir, D.T.H. (1973) Op.Cit. p.171.

5. Ibid, p.180.

6. Weir, D.T.H. (1975) 'Class Consciousness Among Clerical Workers' in 'The Sociology of Modern Britain' (1975) edited by Eric Butterworth and David Weir, Fontana, pp.327-8.

7. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) 'Patterns of White-Collar Unionization in the Steel Industry', <u>Industrial Relations Journal</u>, Vol. 3 No. 2, 8-34, p.21.

8. Dale, J.R. (1962) '<u>The Clerk in Industry</u>', Liverpool University Press, p.53.

9. Ibid, p.50.

10. Ibid, pp.50-1.

11. Ibid, p.23.

12. Barlowe, G. (1969) 'Some Latent Influences in a Pay Claim : An Examination of a White-Collar Dispute', <u>British Journal of Industrial Relations</u>, 200-210.

13. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) Op.Cit.

14. Dale, J.R. (1962) Op.Cit.

15. Mills, C. Wright (1951) Op.Cit.

16. Bowen, P. and M. Shaw (1972) Op.Cit.

17. Goldthorpe, J.H. Lockwood, D., Bechhofer, F. and J.F. Platt (1968) '<u>The Affluent Worker : Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour</u>", Cambridge University Press, London.

Chapter VII

1. Hyman, H.H. (1942) 'The Psychology of Status', 147-65, p.147, Reprinted in part from 'The Psychology of Status', Archives of Psychology No.269 (1942), in '<u>Readings in Reference Group Theory and Research</u>, (1968) edited by Hyman, H.H. and E. Singer, Collier-Macmillan, London.

2. Reissman, L. (1953) 'Levels of Aspiration and Social Class', <u>American Sociological Review</u>, Vol. 18 No.3, 233-42, p.233.

3. Allen, V.L. (1961) 'White-Collar Revolt?', <u>The Listener</u>, Vol. LXVI No.1705, 895-7, p.896.

4. Dale, J.R. (1962) '<u>The Clerk in Industry</u>', Liverpool University Press, p.27.

5. Mills, C. Wright (1951) '<u>White Collar</u>', Oxford University Press, New York, p.240.

6. Ibid, p.249.

7. Lockwood, D. (1958) '<u>The Blackcoated Worker</u>', Allen and Unwin, London, p.100.

8. Mills, C. Wright (1951) Op.Cit. p.xii.

9. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit p.208.

10. Ibid, p.99.

11. Ibid, pp.125-32.

12. Ibid, p.131.

13. Dale, J.R. (1962) Op.Cit. p.27.

14. Ibid, p.28.

15. Ibid, pp.29-30. See Appendix 1, question F.7.

16. Ibid, p.27.

17. The question which provided information for Table 1, 'Self Located Class Position by Sex,' was as follows:-

   Which of the following groups is nearest to your own class position? Please tick.

Middle Class Lower Middle Class Working Class Other, please specify	

   Taken from the questionnaire designed and employed by P. Bowen, V. Elsy and myself.

18. Dale, J.R. (1962) p.33, Table 20.

19. Mercer, D.E. and D.T.H. Weir (1969) 'Orientations to Work Among White-Collar Workers', Paper presented to the Social Science Research Council Conference, Cambridge 1968, Published in 'Social Stratification and Industrial Relations' edited by Mann, M. 1969, The Council, London

   and

   Weir, D.T.H. (1975) 'Class Consciousness Among Clerical Workers', in 'The Sociology of Modern Britain', 1975, edited by Eric Butterworth and David Weir, Fontana.

20. Lockwood, D. (1958) Op.Cit., p.100.

Chapter VIII

1. Mills, C. Wright (1951) 'White Collar', Oxford University Press, New York, p.309.

2. Ibid, p.313.

3. Sykes, A.J.M. (1964) 'The Problem of Clerical Trade Unionism', Scientific Business, 11, 176-83, p.177.

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Chapter IX

Conclusion

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