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**Cold type: Computerized typesetting and occupational
subcultures in the New York City newspaper industry**

Hochwald, Eve Fay, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1988

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**COLD TYPE: COMPUTERIZED TYPESETTING AND OCCUPATIONAL
SUBCULTURES IN THE NEW YORK CITY NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY**

by

EVE HOCHWALD

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York**

1988

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract**COLD TYPE: THE IMPACT OF COMPUTERIZED TYPESETTING
ON OCCUPATIONAL SUBCULTURES IN THE NEW YORK CITY
NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY**

by

Eve Hochwald

Adviser: Professor June Nash

Using a framework drawn from recent social science discussions of the labor process and from the anthropological literature on culture as the generative basis through which people adapt to or transform their social circumstances, this dissertation analyses the changes occurring in the occupational subcultures and political organization of printers, journalists, and computer service workers in the New York City newspaper industry since the introduction of computerized typesetting in the mid-1970s. One consequence has been a restructured labor force, entailing a shift of skilled, traditionally male, manual craft jobs to, on the one hand, clerical "women's work," and, on the other, professional-technical jobs, filled by both sexes, with an accompanying shift from a "residual" cohesive occupational subculture to an "emergent" one based on attenuated relationships, and an individualistic ethic

of "professionalism" replacing a collective identity expressed through trade unionism.

"Cold type" is the first major composing room innovation since the introduction of the linotype machine about a century ago. Although there has been considerable continuity from then until now in the issues of class and gender definition that animate the newspaper workplace -- articulated in struggles between craft workers and their employers, and between "skilled" (male) and "unskilled" (female) workers -- these changes in the underlying social relationships at work make their political resolution different this time around. In the new, depersonalized automated workplace, with its fragmented social ties, communal issues become particularly important, because they build on or sometimes create an ongoing interpersonal community, a necessary precondition for collective action, but one that is no longer a necessary condition of production. This finding is illustrated by the goals -- affirmative action and video display terminal safety -- that motivated newspaper activists during my fieldwork, and by the feminist and health-and-safety networks which gave them support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As long as anthropological interest in technology and the division of labor was concentrated in non-industrial societies, the particular technology under consideration was a given. Either the indigenous technology was presumed to have been in place always, or it was introduced, imposed through contact, colonialization, or development.¹ Until recently the same assumption of technology as a given has influenced studies of technological change in industrial societies, where it is unwarranted.

Instead, the emerging view of technological development is that it arises from historic circumstances, the product of class interests and gender definition (Bose 1974; Cowan 1983; Fleischman, 1977; Noble 1977,

¹Regardless of its origin, however, anthropologists report similar findings regarding the impact of foreign technology. Reviewing community studies of "developing" areas, for example, Pelto and Bernard (1972) confirm the hypothesis that the introduction of new production technology leads to heightened social stratification and less equal distribution of resources within a given population or region. Referring to Latin America, Wolf and Hansen (1974:vi) describe the growing polarization between rich and poor, caused by the "growing irrelevance of the masses to the increasingly concentrated forms of production generated by overseas metropolises."

1984; Strasser 1982). This changing perspective stresses the dialectical relationship between the labor process and technological innovation. As described by Marx (1977 [1866]:291-92), the labor process -- the process by which the capitalist consumes labor-power -- exhibits two characteristic phenomena:

First, the worker works under the control of the capitalist to whom his work belongs; ...Secondly, the product is the property of the capitalist and not that of the worker, its immediate producer. ...Thus the product of this process belongs to him just as much as the wine which is the product of fermentation going on in his cellar.

The revival of interest in the capitalist labor process as a subject of scholarly inquiry was sparked by Harry Braverman's Labor and Monopoly Capital (1974). Starting from the position taken by Marx in Capital, he writes (1974:8),

Processes of production are, in capitalist society, incessantly transformed under the impetus of the principal driving force of that society, the accumulation of capital. For the working population, this transformation manifests itself, first as a continuous change in the labor processes of each branch of industry, and second, as a redistribution of labor among occupations and industries.

Both these statements apply to the contemporary newspaper industry. The adoption of the linotype machine in the 1880s set off a wave of changes whose outcome was reversed by the implementation of "cold type" (computerized typesetting) in the 1970s.² In New

²One of the major suppliers of computerized newspaper typesetting systems is the Harris Corporation, a

York City in 1974 a historic trade union agreement negotiated by Local 6 of the International Typographical Union (ITU), representing the printers, turned the established skill hierarchy upside down. Tracing the development of the capitalist mode of production over the past hundred years, Braverman refers to this process by which, time and time again, craft workers have lost their specialized knowledge, skills, and control over their work methods as "deskilling." The printers are a classic case (Zimbalist 1979).

This dialectical approach to technology and the labor process, combined with the anthropological definition of culture as a basis for generative action (Hansen 1977; Nash 1979; Sider 1986), provides the framework for this dissertation. I view culture not as a static and immobilizing entity -- in which new technology becomes the deus ex machina which effects cultural change -- but, rather as a core of beliefs and behavior that provides the matrix for generative and adaptive change. Following Braverman, I analyze

major defense contractor. Cold type technology is a direct spinoff from government and military applications. According to Fleishman (1977:5), "The CRT screens and systems software designed to shoot down Russian fighters over Prague are, in their second generation rebirth, setting obituaries in Kansas and composing grocery ads in Boston."

industry-wide changes within and between occupations; the ethnography I present is thus of the industry as a whole, and not, as is more customary, of a particular work site. The cultural aspects described are occupational, not corporate.

Consistent with the notion of deskilling, the introduction of new technology in the newspaper industry -- in this case, computerized production techniques -- created a broad range of new jobs, some skilled and technical, and others -- the majority -- clerical and dead-end. However, the shift from printer to computer professional represents more than a change of occupation, and, possibly a change in status, or even, according to some sociological analyses, a change in social class. I describe this transformation as that from a "residual" to an "emergent" subculture (Williams 1974).²

This analysis of occupational subcultures is derived from two premises: (1) First, the three occupational groups I compare -- printers, journalists, and computer programmers -- represent three distinct subcultures, which overlap with other subcultures to which individual members belong. These subcultures need not

²Wolf (1982:5) uses the notion of the continual reconstruction and deconstruction of cultural sets to express a similar sense of cultures in transition.

be consistent. Nor do they necessarily add up to a consistent whole, even in a given workplace, much less to a larger culture which corresponds to presumed societal boundaries. This leaves room for further discussion of which, if any, subcultures are primary or dominant (Worseley 1981; Read 1980). (2) Second, I assume that cultural processes are derived from social and economic conditions, and are not independent of them. In this I follow the "materialist" tradition identified by Williams (1981), distinct both from what he labels the "informing spirit" approach and from Douglas' (1978) assumption that cultural parameters can be understood apart from their historically specific contexts.

BACKGROUND: Automation in the Composing Room

Cold type differs dramatically from the older method of printing using hot lead, heavy galleys of type, and linotype machines. Its impact was immediate. As fluorescent lights, computer printers, and video display terminals replaced the linotype machines, the composing room, formerly a noisy, dirty, hot, and exciting place to work, became quiet, clean, cool, and low-key; in short, a typical modern office.

The printers' reactions to these changes in their working environment are mixed. Some enjoy the chance to dress in "regular" clothes at work, now that they no longer get dirty; in the past they always changed to

special work outfits to protect themselves from smudges, solvents, and flying sparks. Few have any illusions that the cosmetic changes have been made for their benefit. A printer I interviewed said,

When it was just us here, no one cared how dark or hot it was. Now we have air conditioning all the time, but it's not for us, it's for the machines.

He sounded more resentful than pleased.

Aside from the greatly altered method of typesetting, other aspects of composing room work are as yet unchanged. Page make-up and proofreading still require a dictionary, paste, and draftsmen's hand tools to cut and paste the newspaper columns (now computer-produced) to make them fit on the newspaper page. Yet the mood is already quite different. The fraternal atmosphere is gone; in the old days, several informants said, they used to discuss "just about anything." Now, since the 1974 hiring freeze, the composing room is characterized more by petty squabbles than by spirited discussions about union affairs or current events.⁴

My first fieldwork visit to a newspaper composing room was to the New York Times in July, 1978. It was the last month that any of the newspaper was still being typeset the old way, and those of the printers

⁴Barthelme (1980) is a fictional account of the change from bonhomie to gloom in the atmosphere of the newsroom after computer terminals are installed.

still working on linotype machines vied with each other to show me how fast and how accurately they could set type. By then they all had taken an eight-week training course for the new equipment, taught by "typists," as they said scornfully. They were still much more comfortable with the old linotype machines, then piled up and accumulating in a walled-off section of the old composing room, waiting to be sold as scrap metal.

Conscious of the symbolism inherent in the reduction in space allocated to the old and new composing rooms, the printers made uneasy jokes drawing analogies between themselves and the soon-to-be-discarded machines, jokes which were probably closer to their true feelings than the brave optimism they expressed in formal interviews. Despite the fact that the 1974 "automation" contract had guaranteed all the printers then employed permanent jobs, they were understandably nervous about what other changes awaited them.

On the horizon, for example, is pagination. This next phase of automated newspaper production means editors using computer programs not only will set type, but also arrange it in properly proportioned and sized columns and pages. This will take away what little composing room work remains that still involves the skills the printers served six-year apprenticeships to learn. Even without pagination, there are already too many men

for the amount of work. For management, the increased productivity justifies their investment in cold type; for the printers, it is a source of added anxiety.

Equations which assess automation in terms of efficiency and productivity omit the social costs inherent in discarded workers and displaced families. Often these costs are dismissed as the inevitable "price of progress," a favorite expression in the 1980s composing room. While to some of the printers, cold type is just another innovation in the tradition of the linotype machine, making the flow of information faster and more accessible, to others it is a harbinger of a futuristic fantasy, when machines have jobs and people are idle, bored, and quarrelsome, come true.

For the printers, the possible gains are outweighed by the loss of a way of life and the elimination of skills in which they had invested great effort. For example, when in place, automatic pagination means that a task which once -- in addition to practice and experience -- needed a good eye, considerable care, and the exercise of individual judgment, will require only a keystroke to perform.

Among the other human costs in the transition to cold type are health hazards associated with the new machines. Some trade union activists in the ITU and the Newspaper Guild as well as some health-and-safety advo-

cates in the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) see these costs as yet another indictment of the capitalist drive toward accumulation and ever greater profits, signaling the bankruptcy of capitalism as an economic "order." They look for ways to effect a resurgence in political consciousness that will redress the balance of power between capital and labor.

Deskilling and Workplace Activism in the 1980s

The American labor movement might have been one source of such a campaign, but, throughout the 1970s, this seemed unlikely. Union leaders claimed victory just if management didn't succeed in decertifying their locals. In the already unionized New York City newspaper workplace, where workers earned comparatively high salaries, the main issues that confronted trade unionist activists were member apathy and management offensives aimed at reducing the unions' bargaining power.

In this attempt, the new technology played a crucial role. Cold type has eliminated almost all the newspaper jobs under ITU jurisdiction. The new computer-related jobs belong either to the Newspaper Guild -- if the jobholders are employed directly by a newspaper -- or, more serious for the American labor movement as a whole -- they fall outside union juris-

diction altogether, along with the majority of clerical and technical jobs in the United States.

Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, the critical question facing the Guild and the ITU was whether to combine into one industry-wide trade union, or to continue separately as an industrial and a craft union respectively.² Since the 1930s American trade unions have been split into craft and industrial unions. Craft unions, representing skilled workers organized by trade, belong to the American Federation of Labor (AFL), organized in the late nineteenth century, the period when both capital and labor consolidated into corporate form. Industrial unions, representing workers organized by plant, are part of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), an outgrowth of 1930s New Deal legislation enacted to pull the country out of the Depression.

Within the newspaper industry, both types exist. The ITU is the largest newspaper craft union. The News-

²I thank Gaye Tuchman for first pointing out to me the sociological truth that institutional mergers are a sign of weakness, not strength. Trade unions are no exception. In the case of the newspaper trade unions, however, decline in union membership does not mean a decline in the industry's overall importance or size. In 1981 the newspaper industry was the largest in the United States, ahead of steel and auto; in each of the preceding years from 1977 through 1980, it ranked second or third.

paper Guild, larger still, is an industrial union, representing editorial, clerical, and service workers. A merger between the two was first proposed in 1976, and scheduled to take place in 1978. It was postponed to 1980, and then put off to the following year. Finally, in 1981, at what would have been the final stage of ratification, the ITU Executive Board voted to reject the merger.

Their reasons can best be understood in the context of the struggles over class and gender definition in the late nineteenth century, in conflicts which left the printers a legacy of workplace control and masculine self-definition. Had the Guild-ITU merger succeeded, it would have been the first between a "white-collar" and "blue-collar" trade union. A new united newspaper workers' trade union might have been able to recover some of the bargaining strength eroded by management assaults on both the Guild and the ITU after the installation of computerized production systems. Proponents in both unions, and their allies, applauded the merger as a chance to overcome past enmity over jurisdiction lines and strike objectives. The historic background necessary to understanding its failure is the subject of Chapter II.

For those interested in the revival of a socialist movement in the United States, the proposed merger

had symbolic as well as practical significance, pointing to a revitalized American labor movement, now dormant compared to the large organizing drives of the 1930s. In unifying so-called "white" and "blue" collar workers in one powerful industry-wide union, the merger also might have augured a new class consciousness among members of the American working class (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1979; Howard 1984).

Such predictions run counter to Braverman's conclusion that the deskilling of craft workers -- of whom the printers are the last in a long line -- means that the domination of labor by capital is complete.⁶ Both interpretations share a belief in the determinant role of the American working class without, it seems to me, fully taking into account either the historic and unchanged pattern of American political movements or the transformation in social relations effected by the new automated workplace, the subject of Chapter III.

Observers (Sombart 1976 [1906]; Karabel 1979) have ascribed the failure of the United States working

⁶This was the most controversial part of Braverman's analysis. According to Coombs (1978:94-95), who takes a strongly opposed position, Braverman incorrectly reduces social control over the means of production to the technical knowledge of the production process. Alt (1976) makes a parallel argument regarding the erosion of American workers' collective use of their leisure time in favor of consumerism; for an opposing view, see Susser (1982).

class to coalesce into a self-conscious political party or movement acting in its own interest to five peculiarly American circumstances: (1) the relative affluence of the American working class in comparison to any other in the world; (2) the opportunities for social mobility in the American class structure; (3) the presence of the open frontier during most of the nineteenth century, which made possible geographic, if not social mobility; (4) the legacy of slavery and the great divisiveness of racial, ethnic, and cultural differences, often deliberately manipulated in the division of labor; and (5) the continual influx of new immigrants who provided a ready source of cheap labor.⁷

Another factor -- related to the others but often overlooked or skipped over too lightly -- is also crucial, in my opinion, to understanding American patterns of political action. The separation of home and work -- brought about by the establishment of residential neighborhoods far from the industrial center, and of an inner city core of factories and offices surrounded by

⁷The implied comparison is to Western Europe, where class allegiance is taken seriously and expressed through national political parties. However, as Ed Hansen (pers. comm.) points out, the comparison fails not only in terms of its ahistorical approach to the American past, but also in regard to the European present, in which Socialist and Communist political parties behave much the same as any others.

commuter suburbs -- has been a characteristic feature of American urbanization, as yet unaffected by computerized automation (although the potential is there).²⁹

In recent decades, one consequence of this separation has been the strength of community-based social movements, such as civil rights, feminism, and environmentalism. In the 1980s, these movements were the source of successful political coalitions which united industry workers across occupational lines. They are the subject of Chapter IV.

The Interpretation of Occupational Subcultures

This use of the printers and their union to illustrate a theoretical point is only the latest example of a long scholarly tradition. At issue have been: (1) the egalitarian attitude of unionized male printers toward their female co-workers (Baker 1962:41-44; Baron 1982; Cockburn 1981, 1983; Dubois 1978); (2) their occupational community and its effect on the internal democratic two-party political system within the ITU (Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956); (3) typesetting as unalienated labor (Blauner 1964; Braverman 1974; Giebal

²⁹Davis (1980) does allude to the work/community split in various places, but as asides; it is not the main thrust of his argument. Alt (1976) comes closer, but his focus is not on community as such, but on the rise of consumerism as it erodes the collective use of leisure time, and so affects the self-definition of the American working class.

1979); and (4) the impact of printing technology on class relations (Kelber and Schlesinger 1967; Friedman 1978, 1980; Zimbalist 1979).

Journalists and the newsroom before computerization are also the subject of numerous sociological inquiries, some of which focus on past history (Aronson 1973; Leab 1970; Rosten 1936; Schudson 1978). Equally useful for my purposes are those which concentrate on how journalists are socialized to the mores of the profession (Breed 1955; Dreier 1977; Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman 1976; Tuchman 1972; 1973; 1979), becoming, as Wallerstein (1974:404) says, the staff which not only propagates the myths, but also believes them.

Computer professionals have also been used to score theoretical points. Two studies assess the impact of deskilling on computer programmers (Kraft 1979) and on the data processing industry as a whole (Greenbaum 1979). Also, as embodiments of the new technocrats, they figure prominently in scholarly debates about the so-called professional-managerial class (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1979; Walker 1979) and the "new" working class (Braverman 1978; Mallet 1975; Poulantzas 1975; Wright 1979).

Taken together, these studies form a basis of comparison for my observations as a fieldworker in 1980-82 in the newly automated New York City newspaper

industry. I interviewed printers, journalists, and computer professionals, and, where possible, I observed them at work. I also became a participant-observer in various activities of the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH), then involved in an extensive campaign to ensure the safe use of video display terminals.

Of my informant groups, the printers I interviewed come closest to an ideal random sample. In each composing room the shift foreman and the chapel chair (shop steward) helped schedule interviews by setting up appointments with every fourth or fifth man on the priority list. By definition, however, these workers are not representative of past printers in their orientation toward their jobs, because, despite the buyout option first included in the 1974 automation contract and repeated several times since, they have chosen to continue working, some well past retirement age.

In selecting informants from the other two occupations, I use a combination of sociological methods. One is the use of "key" informants. My key journalist informants are either people to whom I was introduced by mutual friends, or they are fellow NYCOSH members. Similarly, the computer professionals in my sample who are my key informants also are friends of friends, or my former co-workers. In addition to giving me the

benefit of their time and experience, my key informants also referred me to their colleagues: this sample-building procedure is known as the "snowball" technique. Through it I met the rest of my informants.

When I interviewed them, all were employed by one of the three daily New York City newspapers. Many work there still. To ensure their anonymity, I adopt the convention of pretending that they all work at the same imaginary metropolitan newspaper, the nonexistent New York Daily. I follow this practice except when I describe events that already are part of the public record, such as the 1981 Daily News advertising campaign, or the women's affirmative action lawsuit against the New York Times.

I also follow the convention of writing in the ethnographic present, in this case, 1980-82. To protect individuals, I have changed not only their names, but also, in some cases, the departments in which they work, and, in others, details of career histories. Thus, for example, someone identified as the night news editor in reality may have an equivalent job title; a programmer who I say is a Mergenthaler system specialist instead may have technical expertise in another area. However, all quotations come from real people, and appear with their permission.

CHAPTER II

The Working Out of Historic Possibilities:
Gender, Class, and the Newspaper Trade Unions

Introduction.

Observers of the United States repeatedly emphasize the same traits in defining the American character. From accounts of nineteenth century figures like de Tocqueville, Marx, and Sombart to reports by contemporary cultural anthropologists like Gorer (1948), Mead (1942), and Harris (1981) common unifying themes emerge. Among them are the belief in equality of opportunity; the refusal to recognize the existence of social class; the sharp demarcation between what is considered appropriate behavior for men and women; the lack of a sense of history; and, above all, the strong faith in material and social progress, in which the future is always brighter than the past.¹

In my fieldwork, I too noticed the prevalence of these elements of American ideology. They are embedded

¹Comprehensive definitions of American culture, as distinct from popular culture, are scattered and diverse. Different scholars emphasize different facets. See, for example: Henry (1973) on opportunity as the distinguishing characteristic; Erikson (1976) on individuality; Thernstrom (1964) on mobility; and Rapp (1982) on the ideological use of the family.

in the assumptions people make about their lives, their jobs, and their prospects for their families. Yet at the same time my informants do not feel themselves in charge of, or able to predict, their future. The enormity and rapidity of social change in the 1960s and the technological change in newspaper production in the 1970s -- both of whose impact on workplace social relations are still being played out -- do not foster certainty or a sense of security.

When I conducted interviews, the question my informants found hardest to answer was what they and their families would be doing in the next five or ten years. All they could say was that they expected their children's lives to differ markedly from their own, just as theirs had turned out quite differently from those of their parents. But where they felt their lives, at least materially, had been better than their parents, they were unsure that their children's lives, despite their greater amount of formal education, would necessarily be better than their own.

Nonetheless, they accept the facts of rapid social change and correspondingly great physical and social mobility with equanimity, ascribing them to "progress" and to other forces beyond their control. Technology, in particular, they see as such a force, with a life of its own, autonomous, almost "natural" in

its relentless rhythm taking precedence over human concerns and constraints. I lost track of how many times my informants said to me, "You can't stop progress," in tones that ranged from resigned to enthusiastic, depending on their place in the new order.

In the workplace, technology and automation go together. The fear of some of my informants that they will be replaced by machines is reflected in their ambivalence, tinged with awe, about the new printing technology. They admire its accomplishments, but they also feel the new machines threaten their remaining jobs. Still, the attitude most voice is acceptance. Perhaps because of its very concreteness, in a setting where so much else is fluid, technology appears to be a given, inevitable and unstoppable in its encroachment on their livelihood.

For my informants the present represents a sharp break with the past in one way or another. They respect the new, and feel little sense of continuity with events that occurred before their own lifetime. One example of this prevalent attitude is a statement made by Bertram Powers, the president of ITU Local No. 6 and the architect of the historic 1974 automation contract. At its signing, he said, "We're going to see more changes in the next ten years than any working men have

ever seen."² In part, he was right, in part engaging in hyperbole, indulging his audience's predilection for outdoing the past.

His comment also reveals the sense he and other ITU members have of being part of a long tradition of "working men," an "age-old" tradition in the words of some printers describing the changeover from "hot" to "cold" typesetting at the New York Times.³ In reality, however, in this case, "age-old" means about a century long, an era dating from the introduction of linotype machines into newspaper composing rooms about one hundred years ago. The decisions made then determined the present-day newspaper industry trade union structure, in ways that narrow their descendants' options.

By placing recent events in the New York City newspaper industry into historic perspective, this chapter has three purposes:

²Quoted in Raskin (1974). On the printers' fatalism even before the automation contract was signed, see Noble (1984:259), who quotes Powers as saying as early as 1963, "We must of course accept the inevitability of automation."

³Retiring linotypists discuss what this tradition means to them in the award-winning film Farewell, Etain Shrdlu (distributed through the Museum of Modern Art), which records the changeover from "hot" to "cold" type at the New York Times in July, 1978. The film is narrated by Carl Schlesinger, then in charge of re-training linotypists at the newspaper and the ITU educational director, and also co-author of a history of the ITU (Kelber and Schlesinger, 1967).

1) To show why the landmark 1974 ITU automation contract and the ITU's proposed merger with the Newspaper Guild are both called "historic" events;

2) To elucidate the recurring issues of gender and class as they interact with the publishers' introduction of new equipment in the composing room, first the linotype machine and its prototypes in the late nineteenth century, and then, a century later, computers and video display terminals; and

3) To build a framework in which to consider the validity of the analogies made between contemporary workplace conditions and those which sparked the labor organizing drives of the 1890s and the 1930s, the subject to which I return in Chapter IV.

The Present: Automation and the ITU

In the summer of 1974 the New York City local of the ITU ("Big 6") negotiated its last contract with the publishers of the city's two largest daily newspapers, the New York Times and the Daily News. This landmark agreement set the stage for automating the composing room. Its provisions were relatively simple:

(1) In exchange for giving the publishers the right to automate the composing room as thoroughly as they wished, the newspaper printers then employed were guaranteed lifetime jobs.

(2) Jobs were to be eliminated only through attrition, or through a printer's voluntarily accepting a retirement "bonus," a lump-sum payment made to printers who retired at specified times during the life of the contract. The value of the buyout ranged from \$2500 to \$4000, depending on when the publishers tendered the offer.

(3) Unusually long, the contract was to last eleven years, retroactive to 1973 and expiring in 1984 (when it was extended three more years to 1987, when it was again extended for another three years).

In effect, the union had negotiated its own demise. The significance of this agreement can best be understood in the context of the historic relationship between the ITU and the newspaper industry. It ended years of fighting over control of the composing room between the union and the publishers, between union and non-union printers, and between ITU members and members of other industry trade unions.

Because of their size, and New York City's prominence in the publishing industry, trade union locals here always have had a disproportionate influence on disputes. Since colonial times, New York City has been the center of the U.S. printing and publishing industry, and the site of most of the major political and ideological battles which have shaped the American

newspaper industry. In the mid-eighteenth century, for example, the principle of a democratic free press was established here by the famous trial of John Peter Zenger. His lawyer, the prominent Andrew Hamilton of Philadelphia, successfully argued that truth is a sufficient defense against libel accusations.

Paralleling the centralization of the industry in New York City is the concentration of union activity here. The first locals of both the ITU and Newspaper Guild were organized here. The first printers' strike in the United States occurred in 1776 in Manhattan, and the first National Typographical Union local was formed here twenty years later. In the 1930s the New York chapter of the Newspaper Guild was instrumental in the decision to affiliate with the CIO.

Therefore, part of the automation contract's importance was that it was copied widely. The third New York City daily newspaper, the Post, signed a similar contract soon after, and other newspapers across the country followed suit. The settlement also attracted wide attention in Europe, where computerized typesetting also spread quickly (Muller-Jentsch and Erd 1978; Winsbury 1978). In this country it was cited as an example for other industries with workers whose skills are no longer in demand (National Center for Produc-

tivity and the Quality of Working Life 1977; Rogers and Friedman 1980).⁴

Historic Parallels

By the 1980s, the use of computers had increased productivity even beyond management predictions. Depending on the estimate, a cold type operator typesets four to ten times more copy than a linotypist. Also, the buyout clause had not worked as well as anticipated in cutting down the labor force. Since the 1970s were a period of high inflation and unemployment, the cash settlement that earlier had seemed fair had become inadequate. It was too small to serve either as a retirement nest egg, or to start a business, the two purposes the printers mentioned most frequently.

Thus, fewer of the printers had retired than management had expected, and the remaining printers had less work to do.⁵ In itself, the enforced idleness is a

⁴ A similar settlement, guaranteeing lifetime job security and offering financial incentives for early retirement, was negotiated by the International Longshoremen's Union in the 1970s when containerization and automated cargo handling became the norm on the waterfront. For an excellent analysis of the impact of the new technology and the subsequent settlement on Brooklyn dock workers and their community, see DiFazio (1985).

⁵ I interviewed the printers during working hours, something I couldn't have done with the far busier journalists and computer professionals. Although the printers were not setting a slow pace deliberately, there was rarely enough typesetting for all those scheduled to work a full shift. Given their fears that the lifetime job guarantee might be rescinded, however, the subject of idleness was quite sensitive. A previous

situation quite different from that faced by nineteenth century newspaper printers after the introduction of the linotype machine. Both innovations restructured not only the physical tasks of work, but also the social relationships between workers, and between workers and employers. However, cold type has spread much more widely and rapidly than the linotype machine did. One reason is that the linotype machine required an initially greater capital investment.⁶

The largest difference for the New York City printers between the two inventions has been the economic consequences resulting from their adoption. Although it is estimated that use of the linotype machine increased the productivity of an individual printer from four to ten times over, the expanding market for newspapers meant that there was more than enough work to go around.⁷ Several factors contributed

researcher had quoted out of context a quip a printer made about "sunbathing on the roof;" recounting the episode three years later, he was still angry.

⁶The relatively slower spread of the linotype machine is documented in the life histories of nineteenth century compositors (Burnett 1974). By contrast, cold type spread much more quickly; it was already widely in use in India by 1978 (Business India 1979), the same year it was adopted by the New York City newspapers.

⁷For estimates of the linotype machine's impact on productivity, see Baker (1957); Kelber and Schlesinger (1967); Friedman (1980). Describing the favorable economic climate in which linotype machines were adopted, Glebal (1979) finds that, except for the depression of 1891-92, printers were always in demand.

to this market expansion:

(1) First, lower production costs stimulated the demand for printed matter (Baker 1957);

(2) Second, it was in the 1890s that advertisements began to appear regularly in newspapers, creating more work for printers and more sources of revenue for the publishers, and making circulation the most important barometer of a newspaper's health (Schudson 1978); and

(3) Third, circulation was fostered by the growth of a reading public. Also, the 1890s was the decade in which mass public transportation was established. It was then that commuters developed the habit of reading a daily newspaper as they traveled between home and work (Schudson 1978).

By contrast, the 1970s were the tail end of a period of decline in newspaper circulation. Advertising was still the financial key to a newspaper's success, and both readers and advertisers had shifted their attention to radio and television. In 1960 there were eight daily English-language newspapers published in New York City;² by 1970 there were only four, a fact

²New York City's closest rival, Chicago, had four major daily newspapers in 1960. By the mid-1970s there were only two left.

blamed by the publishers as much on labor disputes as on the loss of advertising revenue. In 1963, for example, there was a four-month strike by the printers (joined by the other industry trade unions) which closed all eight papers, one permanently.

The issues of the strike, the first officially sanctioned by the ITU since 1883 (before the introduction of the linotype machine) were essentially those of autonomy and control. The publishers wanted to allow unlimited use of paper punch tape from outside wire services, and to eliminate the printers' contractual right to "bogus" work, that is, resetting any material, (mostly advertising), that had come into the composing room already set in type. Although the 1963 settlement favored the printers, a decade later it was obvious they could not win again.

After months of heated negotiations, the ITU and the New York City publishers agreed on the terms of the 1974 contract, ratified by the members of "Big 6" by a vote of 1009 to 41. There are conflicting interpretations about the precedent set by the contract. Praised because it won "Big 6" members lifetime job security, it is also condemned for giving away the rights of future generations of workers to safeguard the relatively privileged position of about 2500 men.

Newspaper printers already had the most secure and best paid jobs in the trade, because of the amount of overtime work, and because their ability to stop production had given them a strong bargaining position in contract negotiations. Their final 1974 contract reflects their past strength. For a 34-and-a-half hour work week, they were to be paid either \$292, \$306, or \$319, depending on whether they worked the day, night, or "lobster" (after midnight) shift.

In 1980-81 the base salary was up to \$565 weekly, compared to the other crafts' \$430-\$480. Since most of those still working had been at their newspaper at least ten years, and since the contract called for 3% annual wage increases, plus cost-of-living adjustments, by 1982 an average printer was earning about \$30,000 a year, well above the national average for industrial workers. Collectively, they also had more control over their working conditions than did most other industrial or office workers.

Access to jobs, and to work shifts, was strictly controlled by seniority lists. Even substitutes followed a union-maintained priority list. The foreman of the composing room was, and is, an ITU member, not a management representative; in his domain, he is the

final authority.⁹ To join the union, a printer either had to serve a six-year apprenticeship, for which there was usually a waiting list; or to be employed in a print shop when it was organized by the ITU.¹⁰

The Consolidation of the ITU, 1860-1910.

The working conditions and benefits enjoyed by the printers, and safeguarded in their 1974 contract, are the direct result of nineteenth century battles fought by the union in the decades immediately preceding and following the adoption of the linotype machine. Historians traditionally have presented the invention of the linotype machine as an example of the great nineteenth century innovations which paved the way for American industrial dominance in the twentieth century (Cortissoz 1921).

⁹In the 1890s, the pressmen seceded from the ITU in order to have a foreman of their own supervising them in the pressroom. As technological advances made the tasks of the pressroom and the composing room more separate, the pressmen wanted the distinction recognized by allowing only pressmen to supervise other pressmen. Even after they had established an independent union, debate over whether or not their foreman had to be a member of the pressmen's union continued to dominate national conventions for more than a decade. The resolution was that it was "desirable" that the foreman be a union member, but this clause could not always be enforced; it remained a matter for debate into the 1950s (Baker 1957:215-38).

Even in 1980, it was the foreman's permission, and only his, that I needed to observe and interview printers in the newspaper composing room.

¹⁰The second route is the way the few women ITU members I met had been able to join the union.

Recently, however, radical and feminist historians have challenged this assessment, with its assumption of technological determinism (Baron 1982; Cockburn 1981; Friedman 1980). Students of technology and the labor process point out that the linotype machine was not invented and introduced in a vacuum; rather, its development and acceptance took place against the background of a prolonged struggle between publishers and printers for composing room control.

Feminist historians have demonstrated that this struggle too is only part of the story. At the same time the ITU male compositors were fighting against the capitalist appropriation of their skills, they also were engaged in a prolonged fight to exclude women and non-union printers from the composing room.

Conversely, the classic view of the printers and their union, expressed in Union Democracy (Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956), ignores the role played by technology in shaping the politics of the ITU. The authors find the ITU to be the only exception among American trade unions to the oligarchic tendency posited by the French political theorist Robert Michels. According to his Iron Law of Oligarchy, large bureaucratic organizations inevitably become oligarchic, concentrating power and resources in the hands of a few.

These leaders, who then have privileges to protect, continue to garner organizational resources and to discourage their members from activities which challenge the status-quo. In refuting Michel,¹¹ Lipset and his colleagues attribute the ITU's anomalous position among American trade unions to its unique internal two-party parliamentary system. For them the critical features of the printers' nineteenth century history are the points at which organizational and bureaucratic changes took place.

They take as a starting point the year 1850, the year the New York City Local was founded (six previous associations had dissolved). The National Typographical Union was founded in 1852, creating the printers' first lasting national organization. Before then they had been organized only locally. For the next forty years, however, the national union remained a loose confederation of independent locals.¹² Its main functions were to provide mutual aid to locals on strike, and to prevent publishers from importing strikebreakers to cities where union printers were on strike.

¹¹Lipset (1967) expands on his reasons for wanting to refute Michel.

¹²Kelber and Schlesinger (1967) give 1852 as the founding date of the national union. It became the International Typographers Union in 1870, when several Canadian locals became affiliates.

Other organizational turning points came after the national conventions of 1884 and 1888, when the members voted for changes in governance to counter the extreme decentralization. Provisions were made for fulltime national officers, for a fulltime union organizer, and for a defense fund that could be disbursed if a local strike had national office approval. This last provision had the effect of closely involving the national leaders in locals' contract negotiations.

At the same time, the union expanded its old-age, sick home, and mortuary benefits. Both types of change enlarged and strengthened the national bureaucracy. They also prefigured the differences which were to characterize the ITU's two internal political parties. One, the more conservative of the two, favored the benevolent approach to trade unionism. The other, more liberal, wanted to concentrate on wages and working conditions.

Although the name of the two parties changed from time to time, this difference between them remained constant from the time the two-party system became formalized in the late nineteenth century. The system itself was an outgrowth of the fights over and between printers' secret societies. These societies were most active in the union in the 1870s and 1880s. The most powerful was known as the Brotherhood, but all shared

the common goal of driving "rats" -- non-union printers who worked below the union scale of wages and prices -- from the trade.¹²

By 1980, the two-party system was no longer viable, although traces remain. One party, the Progressives, now has been in power both nationally and locally for more than two decades. One local office is in the hands of the opposition -- known as Unitypro -- but they are not the equivalent of the Independents in the 1950s at the time of the Union Democracy study. They are a watchdog faction rather than a separate political party, with its own slate of candidates for electoral office. Since it was the two-party system that distinguished the ITU from other unions, its demise serves to confirm rather than contradict the oligarchic drift of American trade unions.

Technology, Democracy, and the Construction of Gender in the Newspaper Workplace

Other scholars have called into question ITU "democracy," even when the two-party system was firmly in place. Despite their adherence to internal democracy, and to ideals of workplace equality, by the turn of the century the union had excluded women printers

¹²Often "rats" were unapprenticed printers. Baron (1982) discusses the deliberate exclusion of women from the trade, without, however, mentioning secret societies or the two-party system's role in this process.

and so-called "unskilled" workers from their ranks. Feminist scholars trying to explain the persistence of occupational sex segregation have looked for its origins in the nineteenth century division of labor in the skilled crafts (Phillips and Taylor 1980).¹⁴ The printers are a particularly interesting example, since the ITU admitted very few women members, although qualified women printers did exist (Baron 1982; Cockburn 1981). Students of technology and the labor process have explained how the use of the linotype machine affected class relations in the newspaper industry (Friedman 1978; 1979; Zimbalist 1979).

The two concerns overlap. In the nineteenth century, as in the twentieth, the processes of technological innovation, gender construction, and class definition are closely related. Before the era of linotype machines, the typical print shop in the United States was a small, family-run concern, in which women worked beside their fathers and husbands setting type, as they had since colonial times. Printing and typeset-

¹⁴And even earlier. See, for example, the chapter "Women and Work" for an outline of the gender-based division of labor in nonindustrial societies, in Hunter College Women's Studies Collective (1983); and, for one anthropologist's view, Gough (1984).

ting were definitely "women's work."¹⁵ By 1900, however, this was no longer the case -- a dramatic change effected in about twenty years' time -- and would not be again until the 1970s, when cold type made women's re-entry into the printing trades possible.

On the surface, it appears that there is a "natural" explanation for this phenomenon, derived from the biological differences in physical strength between men and women. The physical effort exerted in setting type by hand, or by computer, is much less than that needed to operate a linotype machine. Handset type requires that the compositor stand at a typecase, pick out the individual letters needed, arrange them into words, lines, paragraphs, and finally pages.

When complete, the page must be locked into a metal form, which weighs about fifty pounds. Presses ink these forms, and run off copies from them. After each press run, the form must be dismantled by hand and each piece of type sorted back into the typecase. The physical requirements for the job are: the ability to stand for long periods of time; a strong back; and

¹⁵For a history and detailed listing of women printers (often widows who had inherited a printing license, a valuable asset) in the U.S. before mechanization, see Hudak (1978). For their history just before and after the introduction of the linotype machine, see Baron (1982), who analyzes the cultural contradictions inherent in the shift from a kin- to a craft-based occupational community.

strong arms to lift and carry the heavy metal frame into which the typeset page is locked.

The physical process of using the linotype machine is quite different.¹⁶ The model developed by the Mergenthaler company with the backing of a consortium of prominent newspaper publishers in the 1890s became the standard for the industry. It is a large, bulky, and somewhat unwieldy machine with two innovative features. It transforms molten lead directly into type, eliminating the continual re-use of the same typeface characters; and it produce lines of type, rather than single letters or words.

As before, the printer's physical job requirements include the strength to move fifty-pound forms from place to place, but now, in addition, printers need long arms to move the cumbersome, far-apart levers of the linotype machine; the stamina to withstand the extreme heat and noise produced by the machines; and a large handspan to be able to manipulate the ninety-character keyboard quickly.

In other words, the physical requirements of linotype operation are more demanding than for handset type, but not so much more so that no women could learn to do the job. During my fieldwork I met several women

¹⁶But not the intellectual component, since literacy and some education are still necessary.

who had worked as linotype operators, although none were still doing so. Like the women portrayed in the film Rosie the Riveter, they had learned their trade and had been hired during the male labor shortages of World War II, only to be displaced when the men came home. The explanation for the lack of women linotypists, therefore, is not "natural" or based solely on biological capabilities. Rather it lies in the political use of physical differences, in this instance the better workplace organization of the nineteenth century male printers.

Even before the invention of the linotype, the ITU had been involved in struggles with the publishers, on the one hand, and with "unskilled" or non-union printers, on the other, to maintain the union wage scale, and with it, the printers' traditional control over the composing room. These industry-specific battles were played out against the background of the larger issues of nineteenth century labor history in the United States.

These include: the failed attempts to build a national Labor Party after the Civil War; the temporary alliance between middle-class feminists (suffragettes) and women workers institutionalized in the Working Women's Association; and the struggle to organize the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Ultimately founded

along individual craft lines, on the premise that an unbridgeable gulf lay between "skilled" and "unskilled" workers, the AFL emphasis on protecting the former from the latter has been and is still influential in shaping the labor struggles of the twentieth century.

Technology and the Labor Process: The Linotype Machine

The first Mergenthaler linotype machines to be introduced into newspaper production were adopted in the New York Tribune composing room in 1886, in the ninth year of a bitter, fifteen-year-long strike by the ITU's Local No. 6, then as now the union's largest single local. This strike is of particular interest because it is an exceptionally well documented instance of the use of technology to dominate labor, and of labor's successful resistance to this domination. The Tribune publisher, Whitelaw Reid,¹⁷ set out to destroy

¹⁷Reid is the subject of a two-volume adulatory biography (Cortissoz, 1921), which gives a glowing account of both his political career and his tenure as publisher of the New York Tribune. His biographer, however, omits any mention of the fifteen-year-strike, and has only praise for Reid's role in promulgating the linotype machine. After alluding to the robust financial health of the newspaper after the 1884 political campaign, he describes it this way (1921:II:106-7),

As a leading spirit in the syndicate formed to underwrite the Mergenthaler invention Reid was not only a preponderant stockholder, but an extremely active official. He served for some years as treasurer, and from the beginning he was immersed in a prodigious correspondence looking now to the finances of the enterprise and now to the slow stages of manufacture... There had to be experiments without number, breakdowns, and crudities in the early results... Much of the experimental work

the union -- first by creating an open shop and later by introducing linotype machines -- but the printers' successful resistance forced him to reinstate the ITU on its own terms. In the process the printers learned political lessons that armed them against further such attacks until the 1970s (Friedman 1979).

At the time the publishers' strongest weapon against the printers was the mechanization of the composing room. Mechanization had already taken place in the pressroom in the 1840s and the 1850s, when cylinder presses were introduced.¹⁶ Web presses were added in the 1870s. The printers' best weapons against the publishers were political, expressed in the enlarged ITU role in national party politics; and economic, through labor and consumer boycotts.

was carried out in his own composing room, and there the machine first functioned triumphantly... There was, for him, a lasting satisfaction in his association with this progressive achievement.

And profit, one might add. From this account one would never know that the Boycotter existed, or that the ITU prevailed.

¹⁶The New York Tribune, under its founder Horace Greeley, in 1861 was the first American newspaper to print from curved stereotyped plates. This development meant that plates could be prepared from page forms and distributed to as many presses as were available. Like other technological advances, it greatly increased worker productivity (Kelber and Schlesinger 1967:2).

The fight between them is representative of many that occurred during this period. It has been termed the second stage of capitalism, the accumulation of collective capital, extending the power of capital to include not only what commodities are made, but also how they are made as well. In general, in this era of United States history craft skills were becoming subordinate to machines, and all types of industries (printing included, and as diverse as iron-making, textiles, and cigar manufacture) were becoming mechanized (Aronowitz 1983; Braverman 1974).

The fifteen-year Tribune strike began in 1877 to protest the publisher's imposition of new working conditions, among them the second wage cut in two years. The communication from management to ITU members that sparked the strike read:

What we want and would like our men to consider --

1. A reduction in the price of composition on night work to 40 cents and on day work to 33 cents -- or about one-fourth off from the very highest prices of the flush times before the panic.
2. No work to be done which we do not want and cannot use -- in other words, no "bogus" and no allowance in place of it.
3. Work to be done at fair prices in whatever way we think most to our interest -- by the piece or on time, at foreman's option.
4. No double-price matter.

The strike's resolution determined the conditions under which the linotype machine eventually was adopted

for widespread use. The terms negotiated set the pattern for all future labor settlements between the newspaper publishers and craftsmen from then on, including the 1974 printers automation contract and the 1978 New York City pressmen's strike, discussed in Chapter 4.

Although Reid had refused to allow union printers to work at the Tribune since 1883, and had insisted on an open shop since 1877, he intended to eliminate the union entirely through mechanization. As the head of a consortium of six wealthy and prominent publishers, he invested heavily in Ottmar Mergenthaler's linotype machines, at the time one of several contending prototypes. Letters on file in the Whitelaw Reid papers housed at the Library of Congress reveal Reid's unrelenting pressure on Mergenthaler to perfect his invention so that they could start mass production.

At the same time he continually wrote his (non-union) foreman to keep ITU members and their sympathizers out of the Tribune composing room. Nonetheless, the printers were slow to realize the real threat posed by the linotype machine. Their reactions are recorded in the Union Printer, the ITU's nineteenth century newspaper, one of the means by which the national office communicated with its locals.

As late as 1880, the editors ridiculed attempts to develop the linotype machine, believing that it

could never be built. When events proved them wrong, they continued to scoff at the idea that machine-set type could ever rival handset work. After Reid installed the first linotype machine at the New York Tribune in 1886, they and their readers repeatedly criticized machine-set type on aesthetic grounds (Friedman 1979:17-18).

They took Reid's lockout of union printers in 1883 more seriously. The ITU's first retaliatory move against him was a boycott. They asked their supporters to boycott the Tribune and its advertisers, and they asked the advertisers to withdraw their ads. The union then began its own newspaper, the Boycotter. In it they rallied support for the boycott, and they publicized the backing they received around the country from advertisers, other trade unions, and kindred organizations like the Knights of Labor.

It was in the Boycotter that the ITU announced its next move against the Tribune -- their intention to enter the arena of national party politics. They threatened to boycott the Republican Party if they nominated Reid for president. Partly in response the Republicans nominated James G. Blaine, a candidate only slightly more acceptable to labor, who then helped elect the Democratic candidate, Grover Cleveland.

In 1885 Reid entered into negotiations with Local No. 6, seemingly with the goal of ending the then eight-year-old strike. He agreed to consider making the Tribune a union shop again. His motive was, possibly, to impress the Republican convention then meeting in New York, and probably also to clear the way for the installation of linotype machines, then ready for trial use. These negotiations soon stalled, perhaps because Reid was never sincere in wanting a settlement.

He installed the first of the linotype machines in 1886. They were quite flawed. Their matrices frequently jammed, making them inoperable, since there were as yet no specialized tools to repair them. As documented in the Reid papers, in the letters between Reid and his trusted foreman, the (scab) hand compositors resisted assignment to the new machines. The foreman writes of having to fire men who would only work on the "cases" (where they set type by hand). Since the machines broke down constantly, it is not surprising the printers refused to operate them.

There was no systematic training. The first operators appear to have been trained by Mergenthaler himself, but then Reid, in a characteristic move, denounced Mergenthaler and forced him to resign once the linotype was in mass production and the inventor dispensable. Reid then, as president of the old

Mergenthaler Printing Company, tried to train compositors on the new machines in his own composing room.

This venture was doomed to failure. First, it failed to take into account the inherent difficulty that untrained men could not produce. Second, by then, 1888, the men in Reid's composing room were a particularly unprepossessing lot, described by one source as the "dregs of the industry." They were ITU outcasts, and few other employers would have hired them. By working at the Tribune, not only were they scabs, but they also accepted substandard conditions of employment. Wages were low, and there was no job security.

Since Reid deliberately had slowed down production in order to get rid of Mergenthaler, even being "trained" on the linotype machine was no guarantee of future employment. Furthermore, the conditions for training were deplorable. A contemporary description said,

A sawmill was noiseless in comparison, a dry kiln not so hot, a gas factory contained purer air, and the stock exchange on Black Friday could show more excitement than was here displayed by the unfortunate operators and still more unfortunate machinists in charge.¹⁹

¹⁹Originally "Black Friday" was September 24, 1869; later it became a generic term for a financial panic. This description is quoted by Friedman (1979:25), citing as the source Otto Schoenrich, Biography of Ottmar Mergenthaler and the History of Linotype Development (Baltimore, Maryland), 1898.

Under such conditions the men then employed did not learn how to operate the machines, and mistakes and idle machines continued.

By 1890, Reid's failure to train competent operators had given the ITU the basis to claim that their members were best suited to operate the new linotype machines. The union argued convincingly that only experienced printers could operate them properly, since only they understood what the finished product, the "form," should look like. Accordingly, they drafted a new wage scale.

In the meantime, Reid had become ready to settle the Tribune strike. He already had made the bulk of his profits from the new invention.²⁰ He may have needed

²⁰Friedman (1979:26) gives some information on the costs and profits associated with the development of the linotype machine: She reports that in 1889, even with the strike and boycott on, and with the problems of keeping the new machines running, Reid was said to have saved \$80,000 in operating costs. Additionally, Reid's syndicate had kept control over the distribution of the machines. They were never sold outright; they were leased for \$1000 deposit, with quarterly payments of \$125 to follow. According to the Boycotter, the syndicate paid \$300,000 to buy out Mergenthaler's National Typographic Company; they must have recouped their investment very quickly. Besides Reid, the other investors were: W.N. Haldeman of the Louisville Courier-Journal, Victor Lawson and Melvin Stone of the Chicago News, Henry Smith of the Chicago Inter-Ocean, W.H. Rand of Rand McNally & Company in Chicago, and Stilson Hutchins of the Washington Post. The Union Printer also claimed James G. Blaine, the 1884 Republican candidate for president, to be an investor (Friedman 1979:21).

ITU co-operation to staff the composing room with reliable workers, or he may have wanted peace with the Republican Party, so that he could run on the 1892 national ticket as vice-president. At any rate, in 1892 he signed an agreement with Local No. 6, establishing their sole jurisdiction over the new technology and accepting higher pay scales. In exchange, the union ended their long boycott.²¹

The adoption of linotype machines at the New York Sun followed a similar pattern. The publisher introduced them there in 1889, along with a campaign to replace union printers with non-union crews. When the Sun management announced that, "Henceforth, ours will be an open office," Local No. 6 called an official strike. They initiated a boycott resembling the one that had proved effective against the Tribune. This time the strike and boycott lasted only three years, ending again with an ITU victory. In 1902 the Sun management agreed to hire union printers and pay the new higher wage scale (Kelber and Schlesinger 1967:24-25).²²

²¹This is the reason given by Kluger (1986:152). Unlike the adulatory Cortissoz, Kluger (1986:149-53) acknowledges Reid's pronounced anti-labor bias.

²²These authors seem unaware of the earlier, precedent-setting Tribune strike. Also part of the pattern is a history of labor unrest at the Sun. According to Friedman (1979), the Knights of Labor endorsed an 1877 Sun boycott because of an anti-labor editorial. At their annual convention, however, the ITU voted not to endorse the boycott because the Sun had the editorial right to freedom of the press, and, it was, after all,

The union had been successful in obtaining the printers' original goals. All the objections they had raised to the 1877 Tribune management communication that started the fifteen-year strike were resolved in their favor, despite the linotype machines' introduction. They had negotiated a wage increase, not a reduction; they had kept the night differential; "bogus" (or reproduction) work continued as an accepted practice until the landmark 1974 contract; and the foreman continued to be a union member.

The only point in the dispute affected by the linotype machines was that of "piece" versus "time" rates. Reid and Local No. 6 agreed that payment for machine-set type was to be set by "time" rates. This was adopted as the industry standard at the 1982 ITU national convention (Kelber and Schlesinger 1967:14).

In other words, in the newspaper industry the increased centralization and growth of the ITU's national organization, and their affiliation with the AFL -- both of which enabled the printers to exercise the political clout of labor -- was an effective counter to forces of collective capital, represented in the

a union shop. In other words, in this instance, as they were to do later, the ITU endorsed the principle of separating their own economic "bread-and-butter" issues from support for a more broadly-based labor movement.

consortium headed by Reid. The role played by new technology was important, but not decisive. Rather, the political strategies labor developed were lessons they practiced when necessary. They left composing room control in the hands of the unionized printers and protected ITU members from management assaults for the next several generations.

Nonetheless, some historians have interpreted the printers' accomplishments in the 1880s and 1890s as only a partial victory (Aronowitz 1983; Davis 1980; Friedman 1978). Their union achieved an enhanced reputation and an acknowledged influence on national politics. The boycott -- the tactic they developed to counter anti-unionism -- was widely imitated, almost from its inception. (The Boycotter contains many mentions of other boycotts throughout the country worthy of support.) Also, their attendance at the national Republican convention of 1884 demonstrated the value of using politics as a means to advance economic demands.

However, it also committed the union to the politically expedient course of supporting whatever party would back their immediate goals, rather than allying themselves with one particular Labor party. Their actions then were consistent with the non-partisan political line that has become the hallmark of American trade unions. The unions operate within the

national two-party system, shifting their allegiance depending on shortterm goals, rather than based on deep-rooted ideological considerations.²³

The emergence of the AFL during this period as a national labor organization maintaining craft separation and committed to "working it out" with the employer corresponds to the ITU policy of bargaining for immediate benefits for members, rather than building a united and politically independent labor movement. A similar policy of immediacy in regard to technology led first to craft ascendancy and autonomy, but then, later, to the ITU's inability to formulate a longterm course of action in the years -- the 1950s and 1960s -- when computerized automation was on the horizon.²⁴

Critics charge that the failure of the ITU to form binding alliances with other industry craft unions after World War II, or with the more broadly based CIO Newspaper Guild, can be traced at least in part to the policies the union first articulated in response to the linotype machine. Once the adoption of cold type became

²³The ITU's refusal to boycott the New York Sun as long as it was technically still a union shop (footnote 33) is a perfect example.

²⁴Norbert Wiener, the father of cybernetics, was concerned about the consequences of automation for the labor movement. He approached an ITU official in 1949, offering to work with them, but the union never responded. His contacts with other unions also never led to a united plan of action (Noble 1984:75-76).

inevitable in the 1970s, the ITU's "business-as-usual" approach reflected the same expediency, resulting in their decision to protect a few at the expense of their fellows and of future generations.

The Political Construction of Gender:
The ITU and the Women's Typographical Union, 1860-1880

The influential study by Lipset and his colleagues which made the printers famous for union democracy appeared, ironically, just when the ITU's internal two-party system was coming to an end. In the 1950s, elected offices at the local and national level regularly alternated between officeholders of the two parties, which functioned through a well developed system of electoral politics, voting assemblies, and regular elections. In "Big 6", the New York City local that was the study's focus, a high ratio of rank-and-file members attended union meetings, and held elected office for a time before returning to the shop floor.²⁵

Yet by concentrating so exclusively on the political expression of the ITU's internal democracy,

²⁵Although the authors of Union Democracy found this situation unusual in the United States, in Europe it is unheard of. Jake Ecclestone, then an official of the British National Union of Journalists, told me in 1981 of his surprise to learn that both printers and journalists in the U.S. can serve a term in union office (for which their employers give them release time), and afterwards, they then can return to their old jobs. In the U.K., he said, "Once a trade union leader, you're off the shop floor permanently, because the employer would never have you back."

and by locating its origins in the printers' occupational community, Lipset and his colleagues overlooked the importance of the actual division of labor in the composing room itself. The most basic component of the printers' democratic traditions, in my opinion, is their insistence on only one job rank and title, that of journeyman printer. Any journeyman is knowledgeable in any area of composing room specialization: typesetting, page make-up, proofreading, and machine repair. Therefore, unlike pressmen, for example, printers have only one category of membership and one wage scale.²⁶

The concept of equal pay for equal work is embodied in all ITU rules and contracts, thus eliminating some of the friction inherent in situations with permanent senior and junior categories. Status differentials are not formalized into ranks. For example, linotype operators have the most prestige; their job is considered the most difficult, and, in addition, has the most opportunities for earning overtime and bonus pay. However, in principle and in rates of base pay, such differentials are not recognized.

Nonetheless, there was considerable discrimination against women printers in the nineteenth century.

²⁶The pressmen seceded from the ITU in 1899 to form their own union. Soon after, they began to admit "assistants," who had less training, status, and pay. The union's history is the subject of Baker (1957).

Very few women printers ever became entitled to ITU protection, because they were not allowed to join. Even so, some historians have praised the nineteenth century ITU for its progressive and farsighted policy (Baker 1964; Baron 1982), because women members earned as much as their trade union "brothers," a practice to which contemporary union officials still point with pride.

Not all scholars share this perception of the ITU's egalitarian past. In seeking to explain the persistence of industrial occupational sex-typing, they have traced its origin to deliberate attempts of organized male workers to exclude women from the workplace.²⁷ Instead of interpreting women's workplace subordination as simply the reflection of their dependent position in the home and in the family, more recently scholars have seen it as the result of political as well as social and economic factors (Hochwald 1985).

The history of women printers is a case in point, having left a legacy of male -- so-called "skilled" -- craft workers in secure, well-paid jobs and female -- so-called "semi-skilled" or "unskilled"

²⁷Not necessarily to their detriment. Humphries (1980) argues that the nineteenth century fight of the British working class for a "family wage" (sufficient for a working man to support his unemployed wife and their children) was a means by which the working class defended their standard of living and class cohesion.

-- workers relegated to marginal and less desirable jobs. In the early nineteenth century, in the era of family-owned print shops, both men and women learned to ~~set type at home.~~²⁰ The critical difference between them is that women rarely, if ever, served the formal apprenticeship which would have qualified them as "journeymen" and union members.

Instead, when family-owned print shops needed extra help, they hired a male apprentice. When the apprentice achieved journeyman status, the printer-proprietor often replaced him with another apprentice, rather than paying him the higher union wages to which he was entitled. This practice produced a stream of qualified journeymen printers who became itinerants or "tramp" printers.

Already in the 1850s printers in cities with the highest wage scales, such as New York City, were plagued by an influx of country printers, who worked below union scale or violated union rules in other ways. As the problem intensified, it became part of the

²⁰Even before the introduction of the linotype machine, the number of small, family-run print shops in the U.S. had been declining. By the 1870s a one-owner printer-publisher shop was already an anachronism. Previously, however, they had played an important role, exemplified by men such as Thomas Paine, Lloyd Garrison, and Horace Greeley. The latter's nineteenth century career embodies the transformation of newspaper publishing from a personal to a corporate enterprise.

impetus for the transformation of the printers' union from a loose confederacy of independent locals to a strong national organization. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s urban newspaper printers continually complained about the "rat" printers infestation.

Some were unfinished apprentices; others were accomplished journeymen whose shops had closed or who were looking for higher wages. Since many of them expected to open their own print shops instead of remaining employees, they did not identify with the union goals of protecting craft workers (Baron 1982:28). Women did not become tramp printers.²⁹ Yet as more and more of them moved to the cities to earn a living, they too threatened urban printers' status and wages.

During and after the Civil War, the number of unmarried women entering the industrial labor market steadily increased. Most took low-paid, insecure jobs in the clothing and textile industries. Those who could tried to get work in the printing industry, as typesetters, bookbinders, proofreaders, and the like. Some publishers took advantage of the women's willingness to work for lower wages by subdividing the tasks of the

²⁹Nor did they participate in the heavy drinking, hazing initiation rites, and secret societies that were prominent features of the printers' occupational culture in the nineteenth century: all helped to heighten male fraternity in the trade (Rowbotham 1974:113-114).

composing room. They then hired women as semi-skilled workers, and they also used them as strikebreakers.³⁰

Opinion within the ITU in the 1860s and the 1870s was divided on the question of whether to admit women. Supporters argued that if women were to become full-fledged union members, entitled to the same pay scale, their attractiveness to the publishers, and their effectiveness as strikebreakers, would be over.

The opposition was afraid that admitting women printers would lead to skill dilution. They insisted on holding the line against all semi-skilled workers, whether women or boys, by boycotting any print shop or newspaper that employed them (Baker 1964; Baron 1982). Neither side proposed a third alternative, that of allowing the women printers an associate membership.

Such a step would have negated the traditional and apparently democratic union practice of recognizing only one status -- that of journeyman, or master of the trade -- which could be achieved only through apprenticeship. This practice, preserved from medieval guild organization, is patriarchal in the strict meaning of the word. A man is master of his craft and of his

³⁰The "cult of true womanhood" which emerged after the Civil War also discouraged women from seeking job parity with men (Welter 1983).

household; women and "boys" (apprentices or those not qualified in the trade) are subservient to him.

Women printers themselves were divided between practical and ideological considerations. They realized that if the employers had to pay them as much as they paid the union printers, they would hire only the men. To get jobs at all, they acknowledged, meant working for lower wages and accepting the designation of "semi-skilled". However, in the late 1860s, some women printers found a way out of this dilemma.

They organized their own independent printers' local in New York City. As was customary, they were loosely tied to the ITU's Local No. 6, because any new local became the responsibility of any pre-existing one in the same geographic region. The new women's local -- called the Women's Typographical Union -- had about a hundred members and operated its own print shop.

The impetus to organize had come from the Working Women's Association, a feminist organization whose founders included the well-known and influential middle-class reformers and suffragettes, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Disappointed that their former allies, the abolitionists, had proved to be interested only in extending the vote to freed male slaves, but not to women, Anthony and Stanton turned to the just formed Labor Party for new sources of support.

Their credentials as delegates to the 1868 convention came from their claim to represent working women, in particular the women printers who formed the Women's Typographical Union. The alliance was short-lived. The reformers saw jobs for women as their primary goal. They encouraged members of the Working Women's Association to work as strikebreakers, and they wanted the women printers to accept training from publishers who planned to use them for that purpose.

Anthony, for example, in a disastrous move, backed the New York City newspaper publishers in an 1869 strike. The working women chose to ally themselves with their trade union "brothers" rather than their middle-class "sisters," refusing to act as scabs during labor disputes, or to work for non-union newspapers. The Working Women's Association could not withstand such a heated clash of class interests, nor could the Labor Party. Both dissolved by the mid-1870s.³¹

³¹The uneasy relationship between the suffragettes and the women printers of the Working Women's Association is well described in Dubois (1978) and Baron (1982). Todis (1942) presents the same events somewhat differently. According to her account, the opposition to seating Stanton at the convention arose from the other delegates' unwillingness to back her stand on suffrage, although they did want to support women workers, and not from the suffragettes' anti-labor stands. She attributes the failure of the National Labor Union to the death of its founder, Sylvis, and seems unaware of any tensions caused by Stanton and Anthony's co-operation with strike-breaking publishers.

Soon afterwards, the Women's Typographical Union, by then a recognized ITU local in its own right, collapsed as well. Its members had been dependent on jobs obtained through the influence of their middle-class supporters. Most of their printing jobs had come from typesetting feminist periodicals and newspapers, such as Anthony's The Revolution. Without this support they had difficulty obtaining jobs. As they had foreseen, even as members of Local No. 6, publishers refused to hire them as long as men were available. Additionally, many of the union men refused to share their work assignments with women printers, union or not.

The men viewed, with some reason, the entry of women into the labor market -- even if paid equal wages -- as the devaluation of their labor. If women worked to support themselves, they reasoned, the men would not be paid a "family wage", one sufficient to support their wives and children left at home.³² The fight

³²Some feminist scholars have interpreted the nineteenth century struggle for the "family wage" as a chauvinist fight to retain patriarchal advantage, while others have concluded that it was an effective means by which workers defended their right to family life. Hartmann (1979:16) says that the family wage cemented the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism by: perpetuating women's dependence; providing capitalism with an ideology of separate spheres for men and women; and ensuring that women would have lower-paid jobs.

Humphries (1977) makes the opposite point: the fact that arguments for the maintenance of a family wage were detrimental to the interests of both men and women as workers does not negate its significance to workers, male and female, as a class strategy. Nonetheless, as Baron (1982) notes, the principle of the fam-

between the ITU and the publishers over the adoption of the linotype machine thus must be seen in the context of two ongoing and simultaneous battles.

One was to preserve the union and its standard of equal job designations; the other to prevent the cheapening of their wage in relative, if not absolute, terms. The major controversy between newspaper printers and publishers was not so much the amount of the wage, but its terms and what it represented. The underlying and more critical issues were whether the printers or publishers would decide the wage scale, using either: the criteria of the status of the printer within the traditional craft hierarchy, or the market forces of supply and demand and the relative efficiency and productivity of individual workers.³³

The entrance of women workers, no matter how poorly or well trained in their craft (that is, whether recruited from publisher-run scab training schools or from family-owned print shops) did threaten the bar-

ily wage had unforeseen consequences. In the 1880s and 1890s by contributing to the exclusion of female printers from the trade as skilled and equal members of the craft, it helped create a pool of lower-paid women workers who could be recruited as strike-breakers.

³³Mars (1982) makes a similar point in regard to contemporary contract negotiations and strikes: wage disputes often mask conflicts about informal work arrangements or other areas of power and control.

gaining position of ITU male printers on both these issues. First, it created a pool of workers whose availability would subject printers to the laws of supply and demand, thus reducing wages. Second, it also created a potential supply of unequally trained print workers, whose existence could lead to a subdivision of labor in the composing room.

If a formal distinction were made between the more and less "skilled" printers, the publishers would have been able to impose the hierarchical wage and job structure that they favored at the expense of the union printers' control over their work processes.³⁴ This would have compromised the ITU's unique internal participatory democracy. In this respect, the women printers threatened their male colleagues no more than did the other "unskilled" workers or printer "rats."

However, the critical difference between the women and other union members was that the women printers had not served formal apprenticeships. To have treated them equally based on any other criteria would have undermined the principles for which the embattled ITU was fighting. Admission to the union, then as now, depended on serving an apprenticeship, after which the

³⁴Baron (1982) discusses this aspect of the printers' transition from a craft to a capitalist economy.

journeyman printer was entitled to work assignments on the basis of seniority.

Like apprenticeship, seniority is a seemingly fair trade union principle that nonetheless discriminates against women workers. Since their family responsibilities tend to make them enter and leave the labor market repeatedly, a system that rewards continuous employment puts them at a disadvantage. Nonetheless, apprenticeship and seniority rights, along with equal job classifications, are still the cornerstones of ITU contracts and work rules in the 1980s. They were kept in the 1974 automation contract, and since then they have been successfully defended against challenges based on affirmative action legislation.

Technological Determinism Vs. Historic Possibilities

The two critical issues at stake in the nineteenth century printers' struggles against the publishers and against non-union printers (a category which includes almost all women printers and the first linotype operators) were: (1) control of the composing room and (2) the right of working printers to a family wage. Each was resolved in ways that favored the organized printers; in each instance, technology played an important but not determinant role in the outcome.

In the first instance, the ITU assured its dominant position in newspaper composing rooms for the next

hundred years by their victory in forcing Reid to give their members the exclusive right to "man" the linotype machine. In the second instance, the adoption of the linotype machine -- rather than one of the available rival invention -- denied women printers' aspirations for equal treatment. Once introduced, it was adopted rapidly by newspaper publishers on both sides of the Atlantic, sealing the fate of women in the trade.

Few women ever learned to operate the linotype machine. They lacked the training; some lacked the physical strength and build needed for its operation; and the lead fumes produced were known to be unhealthy for pregnant women. Still, their exclusion from the printing trades was not inevitable.

Various prototypes of machines that could bypass hand composition had been invented as early as the 1840s, but the real incentive to develop mechanized printing came after the invention and adoption of high speed rotary presses in the 1870s and 1880s. The slowness of handset type compared to the new fast presses resulted in production bottlenecks that eroded profits, and led to investment syndicates like Reid's.³⁵

³⁵Mark Twain, himself a former printer, and, according to Cortissoz (1921:I:157), Reid's friend, was one of the more famous speculators who lost a fortune backing an unsuccessful rival invention.

One rival invention to the linotype machine also available in the 1880s was the monotype. Using a different procedure, it splits the task of keyboarding and casting into two different machines. Keyboarding, which unlike the linotype uses a conventional typewriter lay, is lighter work. Some non-union employers did adopt the monotype in the late nineteenth century, hiring women operators (Kelber and Schlesinger 1967:2-3; Cockburn 1981:41-58). In the U.S., its use survives only in specialized print applications, and there is no record of its impact on women's employment.

However, documented evidence exists for Scotland (Cockburn 1983:152-59). There in the 1870s and 1880s forces similar to those in the New York City newspaper industry at the same time were at play: (1) a strong (male) compositors' trade union; (2) an independent women's typographical union, established with the help of feminist reformers and suffragettes; and (3) anti-union publishers trying to enlist women workers to reduce wages. In 1872 employers introduced women and monotype machines into the Edinburgh printing trades, training them to replace men then on strike.

Other female compositors got work in other Scottish cities. By the mid-1880s they had gained a significant foothold in the trade. At first the use of women threatened only the Scottish male compositors,

but then, as Scottish publishers had lower wages to pay, they began to undercut established publishing prices. This practice directly threatened English compositors' jobs as well. The "women question" then became a matter of lively debate throughout compositors' chapel meetings in Great Britain.

In 1886, at an unusual joint conference of the Provincial Typographical Association, the Scottish Typographical Association, and the London Society of Compositors, they reached the following agreement (Cockburn 1983:34):

That while strongly of the opinion that women are not physically capable of performing the duties of a compositor, this Conference recommends their admission to membership of the various typographical unions, upon the same condition as journeymen, provided always the females are paid strictly in accordance with the scale.

This inherently contradictory resolution had the desired effect. Women compositors were not paid union scale, nor were they admitted to typographical unions, an experience duplicating that of their U.S. counterparts. However, unlike them, women printers did continue to work on the monotype machine in Scottish cities until 1910. Then the use of women printers and monotype machines reached such proportions that the male printers felt it necessary to take direct action.

There were various strikes throughout Scotland in which the employment of women was either the main or a

subsidiary issue; the culmination was an agreement to exclude female "learners" (apprentices) from the trade. As the printing industry expanded in the prosperous years 1912-1920, and as linotypes replaced monotype machines, women remained in the printing trades, but they were relegated to subordinate and less skilled industry jobs, where they remain.

Like their British fellows, ITU printers had taken the position that women could not be accepted as co-workers unless they completed a regular apprenticeship and received equal wages. The ITU was most concerned with maintaining restrictions on the number of apprenticeships available, so that their demands for a family wage and for healthy working conditions (such as a nine-hour day) would not be weakened by an oversupply of skilled labor.

The same restrictions applied to men, but aspiring women printers faced other constraints as well. Their male co-workers resented them, because they were excused from chores like running errands and heavy lifting.³⁶ Parents were reluctant to let unmarried daughters leave home to face the hazing and rough living condition to which apprentices were subjected.

³⁶Baron (1982:36), quotes a women apprentice in 1863 to this effect, which suggests that women apprentices may have been allowed during the Civil War.

Therefore, despite the dictates of trade union ideology, the apprenticeship requirement prevented all but a few women from becoming ITU members.

The restriction of apprenticeships is the main way the union consolidated its control over the composing room. Since most printers learned to operate the linotype machine as apprentices, its adoption helped them retain this control well into the twentieth century, until the advent of computerized typesetting. The reason the linotype machine had to be learned through apprenticeship was not due to its inherent difficulty, but rather to the political settlement reached between Reid and the Tribune's ITU printers.

This settlement gave the union near-monopoly rights over training and hiring linotype operators. True, the physical advantage of men over women in operating the machine gave the male printers another edge in eliminating women from the trade, but the process was already well underway in the United States once the male-dominated ITU absorbed the independent women printers' local.³⁷ Yet male solidarity could

³⁷Cockburn (1982:36) postulates the existence of a sex-gender system operating separately from the class system, acting sometimes in concert and sometimes in opposition to it. The ways in which physical difference is parlayed into advantage are part of the construction of gender, as is the differential access to technology by sex, "an analogue of the appropriation of the means of production by a capitalist class, which thereby constituted its complementary working class."

carry the union only so far.

Angered by the ITU's refusal to grant them pressroom autonomy and recognition as a separate craft (particularly in light of new pressroom technologies that required specialized knowledge), the pressmen seceded from the ITU in 1889 to form their own union. The bookbinders followed in 1892, the stereotypers and electrotypers in 1902, and the photoengravers in 1904. In each case changing print technologies contributed to making the crafts distinct, but as important to the unions' political re-organization was the AFL policy of encouraging separate trade unions along craft lines.³⁸ The consequences of this division and the subsequent splintering of craft unity continued to be felt into the 1980s, as the ITU sought allies and merger partners.

³⁸Baker (1957) discusses much of the history of the pressmen's union in terms of their response to technological developments. In the 1890s new and more complicated technologies made it difficult for the pressmen and compositors to continue to know each other's trades. Then, in the period 1890-1910, as new presses were invented, there were internal fights within the pressmen's union over which press operators could join the union. Between 1910 and 1950, other innovations led to new printing specialities, and so to new debates over which ones would be represented by the pressmen's union. Baker attributes the consistently less militant stance of the pressmen in labor disputes, compared to the printers, to the fact that the pressroom was mechanized continuously and over a much longer period of time, starting in the 1840s, than the composing room. It was transformed radically only once, by the introduction of the linotype machine in the 1880s.

Journalists and the American Newspaper Guild: the 1930s

The gulf between newspaper craft and editorial workers also widened steadily after the introduction of the linotype machine and its associated processes. As with the divisions between the craft workers, the cause was partially the use of the new technology, but even more it was the structural changes in the newspaper industry as a whole. Unlike the craft workers, the journalists stayed nominally under ITU jurisdiction until the 1930s, but they were barely organized, and their jobs were the least secure in the industry.³⁹

In the 1890s, the ITU had tried to organize editorial employees for several reasons. First, they wanted to counter the secessionist movement of the various craft specialists, an effort that was to prove futile. Second, they wanted to prevent the newsmen from interfering in their strikes. Until the 1900s most editorial workers still knew how to set type by hand; if the occasion demanded, they could work as scabs in the composing room. Third, the ITU hoped that organizing the newsmen would improve their image in the press.⁴⁰

³⁹In Great Britain the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) was founded in 1907. Previously, although reporters had been apprenticed, they had not had any kind of association or trade union (Burdock 1957).

⁴⁰These reasons and the history of the attempts to organize the editorial workers, follow Leab (1970).

The latter goal was particularly important just then, as the national union wanted to gain respect and influence in the national political arena, as part of their campaign to force Reid and other publishers to end open shops. As repeatedly emphasized in the Boycotter,⁴¹ the regular press was extremely biased in their labor coverage. The ITU hoped that newsmen, once organized and part of the labor movement, would no longer serve as apologists for publishers and management.

The ITU issued its first charter to an editorial employees' local in 1891, to a group of newspaper workers in Pittsburgh, who had been inspired by the events preceding the explosive 1892 steel strike there. This first local lasted only a year. The ITU, however, continued to organize editorial workers, eventually granting charters to about sixty locals.

In 1891 the union waived the apprenticeship rule to encourage more reporters to join; in 1896, despite the fact that the newsmen had only two locals, the ITU gave them a vice-presidency to stimulate organizing efforts. About thirty more locals came into existence

⁴¹Publishing their own newspaper was not a tactic used again by the printers, but it was adopted by journalists organizing the first chapters of the Newspaper Guild during the decisive strikes against the Staten Island Advance in 1934 and against the Newark Ledger in 1935. This is another sign of the widening gulf between the two groups by the 1930s.

between 1899 and 1904, but only a few lasted. The ITU granted charters until 1923, when the union decided by referendum to relinquish their jurisdiction over editorial employees.

Their interest had waned long before, barely ten years after the first burst of enthusiasm. At the union's 1906 convention, the editorial workers lost their representative vice-president. The next year the ITU constitution dropped all references to newswriters' locals. Behind these actions lay not only a failed campaign, but also the new reality brought about by the end of handset type. Since newspapermen no longer began as printers, they could not operate linotype machines; therefore they were not a threat to printers' job actions.

There was a mild resurgence of organizing activity among newspapermen just after World War I, this time from their own initiative. Fifteen more locals -- each with about twenty-five dues-paying members -- organized, largely due to causes related to the war. In 1919 alone inflation had raised the cost-of-living 15%, but the overabundance of journalists caused by newspaper closings due to wartime economic pressures and the influx of returning veterans meant that journalists had lower real wages, and fewer chances at jobs or promotions, than before the war (Leab 1970:13-18).

Another impetus came from the political ferment and ideas about implementing worker solidarity that accompanied the successes of the Socialist Party in the U.S., at its most influential in the decade before 1919 (Davis 1986:40-51). The new locals came from either the immigrant or labor press. Most mainstream newswriters still considered newspaper work its own reward. A by-line, the thrill of knowing the inside story, of meeting important or famous people, and a ringside seat at historic events, was the accepted compensation for long hours, low pay, and job insecurity.⁴²

The changed character of newspaper ownership also influenced the resurgence in industry organizing. By the 1920s, printers were much more likely to be employees than the printer-proprietors they had been only two or three generations before. Similarly, journalists were much less likely to be newspaper owners. In fact, working journalists often no longer knew personally the owner of the newspaper for which they worked.

Individual ownership had given way to corporations, and, increasingly, the operation of a newspaper became an investment, indistinguishable from any other financial undertaking. Profit was the primary goal. The major publishers were businessmen, not jour-

⁴²MacArthur and Hecht (1928) capture this attitude, as does Robertson (1928) for British journalists.

nalists⁴³ or politicians.⁴⁴ Publishers owned newspaper chains, not single papers. They had little personal contact with anyone except their high-level executives.

The expansion of newspaper chains added layers of management, and replaced the single-newspaper owner in much the same way that publishers with capital had driven out printer-proprietors previously. In 1900 eight newspaper chains controlled twenty-seven newspapers and about 10% of national circulation. By the 1930s sixty-three chains owned 350 newspapers, accounting for 40% of circulation (Leab 1970:24).

These changes were not unique to the newspaper industry. Similar developments in corporate structure occurred at about the same time in other industries. All were part of the concentration of capital that took place as corporations replaced entrepreneurs as the dominant force of capital accumulation.

⁴³Like Horace Greeley, who had the distinction of being both the founder of the New York Tribune in 1841 and the first chapel chair of "Big 6," elected at its founding meeting in 1850. He began his career as a printer in the 1830s and ended it in the 1880s as the publisher and editor of the Tribune, for the thirty years he ran it, one of the country's most influential newspapers. His editorial advice, "Go West, Young Man," is still quoted. Greeley Square, now the home of Macy's department store, is the Tribune's former location.

⁴⁴Reid, Greeley's successor at the Tribune, was a transitional figure -- both politician and businessman.

Although six chains dominated the U.S. newspaper industry by the 1930s,⁴ labor contracts were still negotiated individually between each newspaper and its various locals. As both production and advertising costs went up, many newspapers merged. Advertising contributed about 70% of revenues, so newspapers depended more on advertising than circulation for their existence. Since advertisers tended to put ads in the newspaper with the largest circulation, smaller dailies went out of business, and journalists lost jobs. Despite the high profits of the survivors, they did not pay their editorial employees more.

Editorial workers were also the hardest hit of any newspaper employees during the Depression. Faced with fixed costs of production like newsprint and craftsmen's contract wages, publishers cut back on the number of employees in the business and editorial offices. Throughout the Depression the craft unions generally managed to maintain their basic rate of pay. They also were able to cushion some of the blow for the laid-off members by their fraternal benefits and work-sharing programs (a tradition the ITU followed again in

⁴The chains were: Scripps, Hearst, Patterson-McCormick, Paul Block, Rider, and Gannett (Leab 1970:24). All but one (Paul Block) still control large newspaper markets today. Patterson-McCormick bought the New York Daily News in the 1970s.

the 1980s when computerized typesetting resulted in not enough work for their members.)

The editorial workers were laid off in large numbers without similar buffers. The layoffs, sudden newspaper closings, and unannounced paycuts taking place then at an unprecedented rate aggravated an already bad situation. Working longer hours for even lower pay, with less job security and still fewer opportunities, editorial workers had experienced steadily deteriorating working conditions since the ITU's initial organizing efforts in the 1890s.

The Depression accentuated their reasons for organizing, but it did not create them. Powerlessness and poor working conditions had long been characteristic of the trade. The impetus to renewed organizing among editorial workers in the 1930s came from New Deal legislation enacted to aid the recovery of American industry. The National Recovery Act (NRA) of 1933 gave employees the right to organize and bargain collectively through elected representatives.

This provision sparked the CIO mass organizing drives of previously unorganized industrial workers. Another of the Act's provisions was to establish codes of fair competition for each of the country's major industries. The intent of the codes was to aid the New Deal goals of economic renewal, among them: a shorter

work week, decent wages, the prevention of unfair competition, and the elimination of overproduction.⁴⁶

The Newspaper Guild originated in newsroom reaction to the publishers' refusal to act in good faith on the proposed regulatory code. At the 1933 national hearings in Washington, the publishers claimed that any code would violate freedom of the press. They objected to the minimum-wage and shorter work week adopted for other industries, on the grounds that editorial employees were "professionals" and so exempt from maximum-hour rules. They also wanted one-man news bureaus (such as Washington correspondents) to be classified as "executives" and so exempt from code provisions, and they lobbied to exempt newsboys from child labor laws.

In response to the publishers' intransigence, newsmen across the country began to meet -- often spontaneously -- to discuss ways of ensuring that the final code did protect them.⁴⁷ Those who eventually became active in the guild movement served various constituencies. Of the two dominant factions, one wanted to

⁴⁶According to the Handbook of NRA Laws (Washington, D.C., Federal Codes, Inc., 1933:1), cited by Leab (1970:33), the purpose of the codes was to achieve President Franklin D. Roosevelt's goals, namely: "to obtain wide re-employment, to shorten the working week, to pay a decent wage for the shorter week, and to prevent unfair competition and disastrous overproduction."

⁴⁷Kluger (1982:512-21;571-606) gives a fictional account of one such New York City group.

form a professional association.⁴⁸ They wanted other a craft trade union. A smaller group wanted more control over editorial and advertising policy. Still others tried to organize newspaper workers along Communist Party lines.⁴⁹ Before the national newspaper code hearings, the various groups had been isolated, but afterwards they united.

Their national organization became the American Newspaper Guild, and affiliated with the AFL in 1934. Only a year later, the American Newspaper Guild became a CIO industrial union, its membership open to all

⁴⁸Already in existence were the other "professional" guilds like the Dramatists, the Actors, and the Authors League, with whom this faction hoped to join in a writers' federation.

⁴⁹Gornick (1977) describes the intense involvement of Communist Party members in the labor organizing drives of the 1930s from the perspective of the rank and file. She does not mention Newspaper Guild chapters as particular targets of Communist Party activity. Leab (1970:281-82) concludes that while some Party members may have been active in Guild organizing, their influence was not decisive in its formation. Newspapermen were ready to organize with or without Party help.

By the 1955 Eastland Senate Internal Security Subcommittee hearings -- part of the McCarthy Era Congressional witch hunts -- both the local and national Guild leaders had turned vehemently anti-Communist, refusing even to defend members who had repudiated earlier Party membership, but who refused to testify about others. In the 1950s both the New York Times and the Daily News fired employees who refused to name names, without protest from, and sometimes with the active support of the Newspaper Guild (Aronson 1970:131-52).

previously unorganized newspaper workers.⁵⁰ Like the ITU before the 1890s, the first constitution created a decentralized confederation of local chapters based on metropolitan areas.⁵¹ Each such local was to receive a charter from the national organization, whose purpose was to facilitate communication between various autonomous locals. They in turn would be the parent group for chapters in publications in the same geographic area.

At first, the national organization had no salaried officers, and few powers beyond issuing charters and publishing the Guild Reporter, the national news-

⁵⁰Leab (1970:140-41) attributes the transformation of the parochial Newspaper Guild to an active CIO industrial union to the stewardship of the enormously popular and personally persuasive Heywood Broun, the American Newspaper Guild's first president. Broun was a widely read and influential syndicated newspaper columnist. In an August 1933 column, he had been the first to call for a union of reporters.

⁵¹The constitution which used the name "Guild" was drawn up by the noted constitutional lawyer, Morris Ernst. In his autobiography, Ernst (1945) says that the main force behind both the Guild's formation and its transformation into an industrial union was the publishers' continued refusals to meet with reporters, or with him as their designated representative. He also writes that both he and Broun became disaffected from the Guild in the late 1930s, when the leaders of the New York chapter were pro-Communist. His explanation differs from that given by Rosten (1937:215), who attributes Broun's early resignation from the Guild to an attack led by the Washington, D.C. chapter for his support of John L. Lewis and the fledgling CIO.

paper started by the New York chapter.⁵² But as in the craft unions, this situation did not last. The national office became increasingly dominant in local affairs and contract negotiations, building a large bureaucracy as it did so.⁵³ Nevertheless, the debates surrounding the union's formation continue to recur, kept alive by the publishers and by dissident Guild factions.

The 1980s: Lessons and Legacies from the 1930s

Professionalism and the Guild

In the 1930s the publishers claimed that reporters and editors were "professionals" or, sometimes, stretching the point even further, "executives," and so exempt from legislation designed to protect workers. Despite the recognition won by the union, even today the publishers continue to use this argument in their attempts to exempt Guild members from trade union

⁵²Although officially the national office assumed the publication of the Guild Reporter, the New York chapter, always the largest and the strongest, subsidized the printing costs for several more years. The initial press run in 1933 was 10,000, with 1000 copies distributed in New York City.

⁵³Although some locals have called strikes not authorized by the national office, they rarely succeed unless they are very brief, such as the 1978 one-day strike of the New York Times over seniority and pay equity, described in Chapter IV. For example, in 1974 Guild local leaders not only lost their month-long unsanctioned strike over salary increases at the Washington Post, but they hurt their careers as well; afterwards a leader told me that both in the union and at the newspaper they had acquired the uncomplimentary reputation of not being "team players."

jurisdiction. Most recently, these efforts have focused on workers using the new computer technology.

For example, the publishers claim that employees such as department heads, researchers, and even some clerical workers, are now "managerial" because they have access, through a computer, to salary or other confidential information. In the 1970s and 1980s this recurrent issue, known as "unit clarification," was contested repeatedly in hearings before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Washington, D.C.⁵⁴

The split among early Guild activists between those who wanted a measured "professional" relationship with management and those who favored a more radical approach using traditional trade union means -- negotiations, collective bargaining, and strikes where necessary -- also has endured. In the 1980s the advocates of "professionalism" are not necessarily reporters and journalists, nor are the militants more likely to be the clerical and service workers. In the New York City chapter trade union activists and officials come from both editorial and service departments, with support for feminist and health-and-safety issues the common denominator of the more radical faction.

⁵⁴Like the original NRA newspaper code, the NLRB is a product of New Deal legislation.

The Perception of the ITU-Guild Merger

Although the ideological arguments survive in recognizable form, the forum of the debates has changed radically since the 1930s. Apparent in early issues of the Guild Reporter is the excitement and passion with which Guild members and locals struggled with important questions. For example, frequent statements supported or protested: the national Guild's identification with labor causes; the use of strikes to settle disputes; and the challenges made to the NRA's newspaper code.

By contrast, in the 1970s, when the Guild faces the critical question of merger with the ITU, almost no members or locals respond. Instead the Guild Reporter's pages contain policy statements from union officials, but with no discussion or debate about underlying issues.²⁵ The lively published exchanges concerning whether to affiliate with the American Federation of Labor have no parallel when the proposed merger between the AFL ITU and the now CIO Guild is announced to the members in 1978.

During the early years there was genuine discussion and give-and-take at the grass roots level, but in the 1970s the merger decision is top-down. In a shift

²⁵See Hochwald (1978). One way to account for this shift is Michel's Iron Law of Oligarchy; another is the transformation of the Guild in the 1950s from a liberal to a Cold War trade union.

analogous to that which had taken place in the ITU by the 1890s -- when dissident locals of pressmen and bookbinders broke away to regain their autonomy -- the Newspaper Guild too, forty years after its incorporation, had become a centralized, bureaucratic, and unresponsive institution. Although the merger must be presented to the members for formal ratification, they have no say in shaping its terms.

According to some of my trade union informants, the merger between the AFL/ITU and the CIO Newspaper Guild, had it taken place as planned, would have helped revive the dormant American labor movement. They interpreted such an unprecedented event as a renewed commitment to the ideal of worker solidarity represented by industrial unionism, but lost in the establishment-oriented and bureaucratic business trade unionism that has characterized U.S. trade unions since World War II. By ending the rivalry between the Guild and the ITU over newspaper jobs and jurisdictions, the merger might have led to new possibilities for co-operation between "white" and "blue" collar workers, just as new forms of automation were blurring the lines between them anyway.

In the past the Guild and the ITU had often crossed each other's picket lines. Only as recently as the 1963 New York City newspaper strike had the two unions begun to co-ordinate their efforts, striking the

city's newspapers in concert. One of the conditions of settling this strike was that in the future all newspaper union contracts would have a joint expiration date. Thus, none would sign an agreement before all the others had finished negotiations. However, this effort was too little, and too late. Paper punch tape, which when fed into the linotype machine could set type, was already in use; it foreshadowed the contemporary computerized systems whose adoption would end the printers' craft hegemony and take away their union's bargaining power.⁵⁶

Despite the hopes that the merger plans augured change, the published announcements made by the union leaders involved to their members were far from revolutionary. Instead of the rousing calls to action made by the leaders of the 1930s organizing drives, the language of class struggle in the 1970s is muted, barely discernible.⁵⁷ One example is the 1977 statement of the

⁵⁶For a full discussion of the impact of paper punch tape and related forms of automation, see Kelber and Schlesinger (1967).

⁵⁷The reasons for this dramatic change are discussed in Chapter IV. There I argue that the social relations of work have altered so radically that workers now are moved to action by issues like affirmative action or health-and-safety which do not depend primarily on their identification as workers. Encouraged by appeals to an ethos of "professionalism" they see their job-related battles and accomplishments as individual, not collective.

president of the ITU, simultaneously pursuing merger talks with the Newspaper Guild, the United Paperworkers International, the International Mailers Union, and the International Printing and Graphics Communication Union (the pressmen).

Except for the Guild, these unions represent the crafts that were part of the ITU until they seceded in the 1890s. In his statement in the ITU Review the president says his goal is to develop through merger a "new, powerful, and pre-eminent union in the newspaper industry." There is nothing of substance about the goals of the new union, only a description of procedural matters regarding the merger's implementation. The president does not solicit the members' opinions or advice; rather he counsels them in generalities, such as,

We must forget our prejudices and animosities from past mistakes...we must create closer social and organizational contacts.²⁸

The reference to past mistakes is vague; the implementation of closer contacts is also not described. To my knowledge, one, and perhaps the only, place such contacts occurred was at meetings and social functions of the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and

²⁸ITU Review, September 1, 1977. The "past mistakes" are unnamed; no examples are given in the text.

Health (NYCOSH). Their members of different trade unions did share organizational goals.

The corresponding policy statement of Newspaper Guild officers in the Guild Reporter is also brief and non-explanatory. It emphasizes the fact that the merger creates a new trade union of 77,000 workers in the newspaper industry, thereby enabling the field staffs of the Guild and the ITU to combine their expertise for "more organizing and better bargaining."⁵⁹ Guild leaders do not address the sticky question of bargaining for what, or even more divisive, who to organize.

Nor is the impact of the new computerized technology mentioned directly, although it is critical in motivating the merger initiative. By analogy, however, both unions do allude to union busting, a corollary of the new technology's introduction. Their newspapers provide sympathetic coverage of the difficulties of the Washington Post pressmen, the first targets of an acknowledged and ongoing anti-union campaign there.⁶⁰

The Affirmation of Divergent Traditions

Instead of looking to the future, Guild leaders invoke the past in arguing for the merger. They present

⁵⁹Guild Reporter, July 15, 1977.

⁶⁰Partly because of a few members' acts of sabotage, the pressmen were not getting a fair hearing elsewhere (Hanrahan and Berlet 1977).

merger with the craft workers as a logical progression growing out of the Guild's incorporation of clerical workers in 1938. They remind readers of early alliances between the Guild and the ITU, for example, their common fight against the publishers at the NRA hearings. Also, the ITU's support was decisive in the Guild's first two, nearly year-long, strikes for recognition -- against the Newark Journal-Ledger in 1934 and against the Staten Island Advance in 1933.

Tradition, not change, is the rallying cry. Despite some resistance, again from those in favor of a "professional" identification, the Guild did repeat its history of the 1930s. Members voted to affiliate with other industry workers as part of a new trade union movement. Yet the merger never took place. From 1976 until 1981 it seemed just around the corner, until finally successive postponements proved fatal.

When the final agreement was sent to the ITU's national board, one of the union's vice-presidents exercised his executive veto and forced its defeat. This outcome too was a historical replay, stemming from the printers' nineteenth century organizational struggles. Included in this legacy was not only the cumbersome, top-heavy administrative bureaucracy, which gave any member of the national board veto power, but also the printers' self-identification as privileged and "skilled" workers.

This identity was not, as sometimes has been assumed, a "natural" accompaniment of their technical knowledge. Rather it was constructed and defended in the late nineteenth century by organized union printers against the dual threat of the publishers with their linotype machines, on the one hand; and, on the other, the women typesetters and the unorganized "unskilled" (unapprenticed) printers and printers' helpers.

The competition the male printers feared from "unskilled" workers would have been more likely if the linotype machine's rival portable models had been adopted in the newspaper industry for general use. Then women might have been assigned the tasks of mechanically setting and sorting type. Non-union, non-apprenticed "boys" could have been hired to do the heavy work of lifting and carrying page forms. The pressmen, after they left the ITU, did adopt such a two-tier system in the late nineteenth century.

The nineteenth-century fight to eliminate women from the composing room must be seen in the context of the craft workers' struggle to hold the line against skill dilution and to protect the family wage. But by treating all women printers as unskilled workers, despite their experience or qualifications, the nineteenth-century male union printers laid the foundation for their own displacement a century later.

In acting with the employers to adopt the linotype machine, they accepted physical strength as a metaphor for manliness. They thus contributed to a construction of gender in which men are seen not only as physically stronger, but also as the "skilled" workers; women not only as physically weaker, but "unskilled" as well. Even now, when very few newspaper jobs require physical strength, this dichotomy remains important to the printers' ideology and self-identification.

Class, Gender, and Technology Reconsidered

With hindsight, some historians criticize the printers and the ITU of the 1890s for shortsightedness (Friedman 1978; Aronowitz 1983). Yet the union's strategy had positive consequences as well. One is the system of internal participatory democracy which lasted until the 1960s, with elements even now still in place. Another is the strength and unity with which the printers met the challenge posed by cold type. Recognizing that its introduction made their old skills redundant, union leaders negotiated the landmark 1974 contract.

In return for the guarantee that all newspaper printers then employed would keep their jobs for as long as they wanted them, the printers gave up the right to go on strike themselves, or to support any other union's strike or job action. This clause terminated the ITU's power to determine the outcome of.

industry labor disputes. Also, unless they found a way to get new members, the union had made itself extinct. These concessions made the ITU vulnerable to criticism.

The introduction of computerized typesetting did create new jobs, some unionized and some not. The new jobs created within the newspaper plant itself come under Newspaper Guild jurisdiction. Contractually the newly hired computer programmers and operators, systems analysts, and data entry clerks (if not retrained ITU members) must join the Guild.

Still more of the new newspaper related jobs are filled outside it, some technical, some not. For example, laser printing, the transmission of copy over long-distance computer hook-ups, and the use of archival newspaper data banks to create spin-off publications all have created new non-unionized clerical jobs outside the shop. Most involve keying in or retrieving data from a computer terminal.

Since the keyboard uses the conventional typewriter lay, and since the non-unionized jobs are not very desirable -- low paid with few benefits -- women fill them. They, plus the workers in the unorganized shops that use cold type, are the potential targets of a large, nationwide organizing drive evoking the CIO campaigns of the 1930s. Although some members proposed that the ITU organize these new printers directly, the

plan that received the most serious consideration was conditional on the ITU-Guild merger.

The new newspaper workers' industrial union created could then have launched a concerted organizing drive of cold type workers.⁶¹ However, the merger's defeat by the ITU's executive board precluded this option for their expansion. Instead they began new merger talks, this time with the Teamsters' Union, the largest union in the United States, and often described as one of the most corrupt. Four of the last five national presidents have been jailed for criminal offenses, including theft, bribery, and extortion.⁶²

The Teamsters represent most of the drivers who deliver the printed newspapers to newsstands and subscribers nationwide, although not in New York City. Since automation has yet to affect newspaper delivery, the drivers still control distribution, making them now the single most powerful union in the industry. In any

⁶¹Along the lines of Local 925, now a recognized trade union local of the Service Employees International (SEIU), but originally Nine-to-Five, a feminist association founded in the 1970s to organize clerical workers. For a discussion of their relationship to the labor movement, see Aronowitz (1983:134,167).

⁶²In 1986 the fifth was reported to have stayed out of jail by becoming an FBI informant. In 1984 the head of the deliverers' local at the Daily News was also indicted and convicted of extortion. The definitive history of the union is Brill (1984).

newspaper strike or job action their co-operation is essential.

The Teamsters union was expelled from the AFL-CIO in the 1950s. For them, then, the proposed merger would have provided respectability and a way to rejoin the AFL-CIO. For the printers it would have restored their negotiating strength and enhanced their self-image. Unlike the Newspaper Guild, about half of whose members are women, the Teamsters are nearly all men, and men whose popular image conveys a cultural ideal of masculinity and independence.⁶³

Nonetheless, in the end, the printers turned down this merger possibility too. In this case, they reaffirmed their democratic tradition, refusing to abandon either local autonomy or their egalitarian ideals. Finally, in 1986, they did agree to merge with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), who represent the telephone company employees, like the printers hard hit by automation.

Conclusions: The Legacy of the Past

The transformation of the New York City newspaper industry in the 1970s and 1980s effected by the use of computers marks the end of another craft tradition. For the printers involved, the most radical break with the

⁶³Agar (1986) analyzes the reality behind the image of the so-called "independent" trucker.

past is the unprecedented lack of demand for their labor and the enforced idleness of their work day, not the loss of their craft skills per se. As an invention, the linotype machine spread more slowly than has cold type, and its introduction in the nineteenth century coincided with an expanding market for newspapers, in contrast to the current decline in newspaper readership and advertising.

In other ways, however, contemporary conflicts echo past struggles, revolving around the core issues of class and gender. Their nineteenth century resolutions prefigured and limited the possibilities for new solutions now. The two events that most influence my informants' present work lives -- the introduction of cold type and the women's affirmative action lawsuit -- have nineteenth-century precedents in the adoption of the linotype machine and in the Women's Typographical Union.

True, the outcome of the events is quite different. The use of the linotype machine ultimately strengthened -- not weakened -- the ITU. The women printers were far less successful in furthering their aims of job advancement and better job opportunities than the affirmative action plaintiffs. The reasons why events reversed themselves a century later are instructive in several ways:

First, they reveal that technology is not, as is often assumed, a force unto itself, "naturally" derived from an innate drive toward progress and efficiency. Rather, it reflects class interests, which fuel its development and shape its final configuration.

Second, technology also has been a tool used to define gender-appropriate tasks. Along with skills, some forms of workplace technology have been labeled as suitable for women, and others not. This too is not an inevitable process, due to biological or even social differences; instead it arises from the political fact that women's workplace organization, compared to men's, has been weak or nonexistent.

Third, past relationships of newspaper workers continue to influence their future. The proposed merger between the ITU and Newspaper Guild, first suggested in 1978, ultimately was defeated by the printers, who seemingly had the most to gain from a united newspaper workers' trade union. At issue in the vote was the printers' conception of themselves and their occupation, a legacy from the nineteenth century when their craft and union took their present form.

CHAPTER III

Occupational Subcultures in Transition

Introduction.

In recent debates about the usefulness of the concept of culture, some anthropologists favored discarding it altogether. Wolf (1972), for example, suggested that anthropologists had been so distracted by their pursuit of culture that they had ignored the realities of power and colonial relationships, to the detriment of the discipline. He advised redirecting attention to the questions of classic political economy. Cohen (1974) claimed the term had been applied in so many different ways, with such widely varying connotations, that it could no longer be useful in micro-sociological studies. He advocated instead studying subcultures, defined as bounded interest groups.

Nonetheless, the subject remains an integral part of the field. For one thing, culture is the one anthropological concept to have become widely accepted outside the discipline. My informants, for example, used it when they wanted to describe or explain work-related behavior or expectations that were not directly related to production. For another, the replacements meant to be more precise present their own difficulties. Words

such as "superstructure" or "world-view" and "cosmology" in reference to kin-based societies, or "ideology" and "consciousness" in regard to industrial ones, have connotations of their own.

Most seriously, none conveys the sense of culture as a basis for symbolic relationships or generative behavior (Douglas 1978; Hansen 1977; Mars 1982; Nash 1979; Sider 1986; and Worsley 1981). Without this sense, it becomes easy to lose sight of people acting in their own interest in ways which demonstrate continuity with their past and influence their future. As defined by Thompson (1978:176):

Interests are what interest people, including what interests them nearest to the heart. A materialist examination of values must situate itself, not by idealist propositions, but in the face of culture's material abode: the people's way of life, and, above all, their productive and familial relationships...

In this chapter, I apply this generative notion of culture to the analysis of the occupational subcultures of printers, journalists, and computer programmers.

The chapter is organized as follows. First I describe the ways in which my informants contributed to my understanding of their workplace culture. Next I review the use of the culture concept in American anthropology. I then examine specifics of the three occupations, using as a basis for comparison these variables: age, gender, ethnicity, socialization, and occupational community. Finally, I analyze the differences these

comparisons reveal, concluding with a discussion of the relevance of subcultures to workplace ethnography.

MARKING CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

In our conversations, my informants often drew my attention to culture by describing specific job conditions. At first, intent on documenting changes in workplace stratification, I interpreted their comments as polite conversation, making me feel welcome by acknowledging my anthropological interests. I noted without enthusiasm, for example, the samples of occupational jargon they patiently explained, like: the printers' "stone" (where typeset copy was locked in page frames), the reporters' "spike" (to impale unused stories), and the programmers' "bug" (a programming error).

In it, also, I put their explanations of the allocation of office space. For example, a printer giving me a private tour of the computerized composing room deliberately included in it the large area, now blocked off, that, before 1978, had contained rows and rows of linotype machines. Pointing to it, he said,

This space is double what we now have, even counting the computer terminals and laser transmitters; it's symbolic of our reduced role in production.

Similarly, as the ITU officials cramped in their tiny office were quick to tell me, "Our old office was three times as big." Then, showing me the floor marks where the wall partitions had been moved in, my guide said,

"You can see right there how much less important we are now."

The journalists and computer programmers who guided me through their departments were just as aware of the symbolic dimensions of space allocation. They pointed out how exactly the physical layout of the newspaper building replicates the hierarchy of the organization chart. Management offices are on the highest floors; editorial departments are on the next highest, and news departments are several floors below. In photography, the same ratio holds. The better equipped "quality" developing lab is several floors above the less prestigious "speed" lab.

The rule of thumb is that the higher the floor, the better furnished the office. Thus, members of the editorial page staff have private cubicles, better lighting, nicer office furniture, and more space to themselves than their news department counterparts. A few floors down, the newsroom staff, occupying almost a whole floor, has carpeted floors and windows in their walls, but working below them, members of the sports staff work in a cheerless dark yellow room with no natural light and no ventilation.

The allocation of individual work space also has recognized symbolic implications. In the computer services area, programmers share cubicles; systems analysts get one to themselves; and managers have individual

offices. Computer operators have no private space, although they may appropriate a desk drawer in the machine room for personal use.

Available space goes to computers and peripheral devices. Thermostat controls are set at optimum temperature and humidity levels for the machines, not the operators. Particularly irritating to my safety-conscious informants is management's adherence to a strict schedule of computer maintenance, without a corresponding commitment to monitoring radiation emitted from workers' video display terminals.

In these instances my informants' cultural observations are parallel, logical, and easy to place under the familiar ethnographic headings of "language" and "space." Thus, for example, the diffuseness of the linguistic boundaries of the computer professionals reveals the diffuseness of their occupational subculture. Words that were examples of occupational jargon, like "hardware" and "software" or "input" and "output" have now become cliches in everyday speech.

Other parts of their work life that they related to me were disconcertingly asymmetrical. For the most part, the printers and journalists describe rituals and ritual behavior; the computer professionals, on the other hand, use "culture" to describe style. Like notions of "corporate culture," the traits they regard as "cultural" are management attributes: freewheeling or

bureaucratic, flexible or rigid, liberal or strict in staff supervision.

At first, to account for the discrepancies, I made another premature assumption. I thought my informants were relating different aspects of their work lives to me, because of the different roles in which I appeared to them, particularly because their perception of me varied according to their occupations. To the printers, I was primarily a visiting researcher, the latest of a long line come to ask them questions about their craft, automation, and the 1974 contract.

As they had come to expect, my historian colleague¹ and I approached them first with written survey questionnaires. We returned later to conduct extended semi-structured interviews. To the journalists I was either a friend of a friend, or a fellow member of the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH). To the computer professionals, I was a fellow programmer; to some, a co-worker on past projects.

¹I interviewed some of the printers with Jeannie Friedman, then doing research on technology and the labor process. Taking the advice of our immediate predecessors in the composing room, the sociologists Nathalie Friedman and Theresa Rogers, we never formally asked management for permission to observe and interview. As they said, "We learned if you ask, they can say no." Nor did I ask the Newspaper Guild for permission to attend meetings regularly; I doubt it would have been granted. However, at some I was a guest.

Eventually, however, I came to recognize an underlying pattern in my data independent of the circumstances under which I met my informants. I observed that, across the spectrum, within and between occupations, social and temporal horizons in the newspaper workplace, have been shrinking, a process accentuated by the introduction of computerized typesetting in the 1970s. The integrated sense I have of printers' work lives, as opposed to the more fragmented work identities of members of the other two occupations, reflects this pattern, not my fieldwork methods.

CULTURE AS MY INFORMANTS SEE IT

Like any anthropologist, my informants look for culture in everyday transactions, such as language, ritual behavior, and the uses of time and space. However, the critical difference is that, in considering matters of culture, most anthropologists, in ways that differ according to their theoretical framework, also take into account social and productive relationships. Generally, my informants do not; they perceive the cultural realm as independent from politics and economics.

They mistake style for substance, and are unaware that rituals mask as well as reveal underlying social realities. Thus, for example, informal behavior in the workplace -- such as the use of first names in the newsroom, regardless of rank -- does not imply equality in decision-making. Nor does the appearance of autonomy

-- such as the printers' right to control access to the composing room, or the computer programmers' ritual cup of coffee before starting to work in the mornings -- mean actual independence.

Specifically, by workplace culture my informants mean the informal, symbolic, or ritual behavior connected to their jobs, but not directly related to production. Many American anthropologists would accept this definition. Its limitation is that it treats culture as a collection of discrete attributes, rather than as a process grounded in changeable, sometimes antagonistic, economic and political relationships.

THE ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE

The concept of culture has been central to the development of American anthropology. Culture, meaning the use of symbols, was thought to distinguish humans from primates, until this assumption was challenged by the explosion of field studies beginning in the 1960s. Since then, fieldworkers have observed apes, monkeys, and dolphins in their natural habitats using sign language and passing on learned behavior to their young. Cultures, plural, meaning whole and distinct ways of life, became the units of study for archaeologists and cultural anthropologists.

Yet, despite its unifying role in the history of the discipline, anthropologists never have been in complete agreement on the meaning and use of the term. It

was first explicated as a central theme, in its holistic application, by E. B. Tylor (1958 [1871]:1), one of anthropology's founding fathers, in this influential and still much-cited definition, as

that complete whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

A widely adopted introductory college textbook (Ember and Ember 1977:24) offers students a pared-down version of this definition, defining culture as a "system of shared attitudes, values, and behavior". In the century between these two formulations, theorists have devised numerous others, varying mainly in their emphasis on material or symbolic aspects of culture.² The variety of definitions reflects not only the diversity of theoretical viewpoints expressed through its use, but also the problematic nature of the concept itself.

Some of the difficulties inherent in Tylor's original statement are readily apparent. First, few contemporary anthropologists would define culture as an attribute of "man" when they mean "humans" or "people." Second, the definition presupposes congruence between

²Two major figures in American anthropology, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1963) summarize many of these definitions in an inclusive and classic compilation. Their work documents both the continuing influence of Tylor's definition on later generations of social scientists, and the near-constant reassessment of the culture concept since it was first introduced.

culture and society, at best a flawed assumption, but now an almost impossible condition in modern nations, in which political boundaries determine social ones.

Even under colonialism, when political and cultural boundaries often did not coincide, British social anthropologists assumed that they did (Beattie 1964). The concept of culture as a unifying whole congruent with a given society, or social system, coincided with the acceptance of functionalism as the dominant theoretical perspective in anthropology. Both were called into question during the 1960s.

Third, Tylor's definition is so all-encompassing that it makes the ethnographer's goal of describing culture in its entirety impossible to fulfill.³ If everything is cultural, then where are the boundaries? Even the second, pared-down version remains problematic. While recognizing that cultural features are systematic, that is, related to one another in patterned ways, nonetheless it begs the question, "Whose values? Whose attitudes? Whose behavior?"

Adherents of this approach often describe as the culture of a society the subculture of those who dominate it (Worseley 1981). Adapted to organizational research, it has a parallel in discussions of "corpo-

³Nonetheless, some anthropologists still advise this goal (Kuper 1978:237).

rate culture" (Deal and Kennedy 1982). Furthermore, this definition makes it easy to confuse attitudes, values, and behavior, as happened in the popular acceptance of a "culture of poverty" to explain the persistence of an urban underclass (Leacock 1971).

Another Tylorian offshoot popular about the same time is ethnoscience, or formal ethnography. Its practitioners attempt to describe whole cultures in their entirety, an elusive goal accomplished thus far only for minute and discrete categories, like color systems or types of firewood. Both theoretical approaches share the flaw of Tylor's original definition, an emphasis on content at the expense of action and analysis.

So conceived, culture becomes static, timeless, and oppressive, an agent of conformity not autonomy. This idea underlies my informants' descriptions of their workplace culture. To them, it is an external given, imposed from the outside, and resistant to change. The on-the-job practices they perceive as cultural are usually those to which they have had to learn to adapt without any choice in the matter.

They accept without liking them conditions such as: the noise, dirt, and male chauvinism in the composing room; or the relentless, competitive tension in the newsroom; or the constant gambling in the computer room. In conversation, often informants would turn to me, with a shrug and air of resignation, and say,

"Well, that's cultural, isn't it?" I came to recognize this phrase as signaling something which made them uncomfortable, a shorthand for describing things as they are, not as ideally they might be.

Culture in Workplace Ethnography

The concept of culture has been less central to the anthropology of work than to other anthropological specializations, for several reasons. First, its roots as a subdiscipline are in economic anthropology, a field dominated throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s by debates about maximizing behavior and the universality of economic man. At issue in these discussions is as much a biological model of rational man as the cultural one of socialization and learned behavior.

Second, the authors of the classic monographs about the industrial workplace usually have been the same nationality as the workers they describe, and so presumably have the same culture as well (Cunnison 1965; Dennis, Henriques, and Slaughter 1956; Sheth 1968). Even when fieldworkers have not been native, they come from metropolitan centers, and so have been presumed to be part of a common exported industrial culture.

Third, by definition workplace ethnography is partial, holistic perhaps in its approach to a "subculture," but unconcerned with culture as a totality or in

the abstract.⁴ This approach, it has been argued, is also the most appropriate for any anthropological analysis of complex societies. Cohen (1974:15), for example, claiming that the concept of culture is not helpful in microsociology, nonetheless outlines the basic, general patterns of behavior evident in the style of life or subculture of an "interest group." Members

speak the same language and presumably partake in the same culture of the wider society, but when one looks at their style of life one will discover peculiarities - in accent, manner of linguistic expression, style of dress, patterns of friendship and marriage, etiquette, manners - that are organizationally instrumental in developing boundaries, communication, and mechanisms for the organization of the group. (They)...thus co-ordinate their corporate activities through their style of life.

This description fits occupational subcultures well.⁵ It emphasizes some of the same features my informants do: language, dress, and styles of communication. In this context, the use of jargon -- whose importance I first misjudged -- makes sense. When programmers say to one other in passing, "Is your program debugged?" or journalists tease each other asking, "Wasn't that story spiked?" they are not only being precise or fostering camaraderie. By acknowledging the

⁴Nonetheless, non-anthropologists do use occupational cultures as a unit of analysis. See, for example, Kanter (1977) on office workers; Smith (1980) on journalism culture; and Hacker (1982) on engineers.

⁵Read (1980) is an example of an ethnography in which the ethnographer chooses to describe "style" rather than culture or subculture for similar reasons.

greeting, or responding in kind to insider jokes, they are marking boundaries that have no clearcut physical dimension.

Although Cohen's formulation of a subculture as an "interest group" solves the problem of boundary definition, it begs the question: what is the relationship of the parts to the whole? In regard to my data, the answer would be that members of the same occupation are an interest group, or subculture, and the culture they share the workplace culture as a whole. This answer is not entirely satisfactory. Not only is workplace culture -- whether one newspaper or the industry as a whole -- itself a partial universe, but its parts do not correspond conveniently to concentric circles or pieces of a pie.

Cohen (1974) also conceives of social classes as "interest groups," thus mixing levels of analysis by confusing the theoretically abstract -- the concept of class -- with the concrete -- interest groups. Solidarity does arise from interest groups, as he defines them -- as groups whose members are personally connected and who share common background or experiences -- but he is overly reductionist in implying that social classes are merely unidimensional pressure groups with opposed interests.

More compelling paradigms come from Worseley (1981) and Douglas (1978). Worseley argues that the

concept of culture is critical in studies of complex society, as a counter-balance to the weight given considerations of class. This is a more adequate solution to the same problem Cohen addresses by proposing economic "interest groups" as a substitute for the too-abstract "class".

Worseley (1981:15) suggests that in fact class struggles are waged over cultural issues, and that Marxism is in need of subsocietal categories like "subcultures" to get away from the "monotonous insistence on class at the societal level to the exclusion of all else." But, as he comments, "Nor is the concept 'subculture' entirely satisfactory, insofar as it implies inferior or componential status as a kind of alien body within a society that has its proper 'culture' of a quite different order, without the particle 'sub-' in front of it."

In this model, subcultures overlap; they are not exclusive, nor are they necessarily part of something else. Nor need overlapping subcultures combine into a consistent whole; they well may not. This conception avoids the common misrepresentation of a society's culture as the subculture of those who dominate it, a point made during the "culture of poverty" controversy. In that case, middle-class values and behavior became the standard by which the poor are measured.

Applied to the workplace, it allows further discussion which, if any, are primary. For example, Henriques, Dennis, and Slaughter (1956) argue that, in the mining community they studied, the extreme sexual division of labor -- men in the mines, women at home -- spills over into the cultural institution of the family, creating great strain.

Still other problems remain. Douglas (1978), reviewing the (largely American) anthropological literature on culture, faults it in two ways. Neither can be corrected by replacing "culture" with "subculture" as the unit of analysis. First, there is no room for the individual, making decisions from an array of possible choices (instead of blindly following a cultural dictate: this is the distinction between norms and actual behavior). Second, there is no basis for comparison between cultures, or subcultures.

As a means to overcome these difficulties, she proposes grid-group analysis, in which "grid" is a universal measure of hierarchy and "group" of solidarity. Zero group occurs when each person is at the center of a unique network of individuals; weak group when an individual has overlapping memberships in several bounded associations, and strong group when he or she belongs to only one.

Grid is more complicated, and has several components: insulation, autonomy, control (over people),

and competition. Like group, grid can be stronger or weaker -- a continuum rather than a polarity. These two dimensions in turn determine other features of the social environment such as cosmology and patterns of deviance, making possible comparisons and predictions.

Thus, for example, she describes the differential uses of space according to position on a generalized group-grid model. Taking village communities as an illustration, she predicts that strong-group/weak-grid communities, despite the prevalence of ambiguity and openness in social life, will still have tightly circumscribed private space. Since nothing else defines the individual as the unit of social intercourse, the use of space must do so symbolically.

Spatial re-arrangements in the newsroom since the introduction of cold type confirm this projection. There computer terminals -- separated by partial barriers -- have been set on desks, breaking up but not yet eliminating the open space in which reporters and editors used to work. This change corresponds to their more constrained environment. It also is a symbolic indication of the newsroom's convergence with the computer programming departments, where walled cubicles emphasize the solitary nature of programming.

Any combination of group and grid can occur, depending on circumstances; however, in her schematic

diagram, the two poles intersect, creating four quadrants, or ideal types. She writes (1978:15),

Instead of worrying about definitions of witchcraft or ancestor cults I am now looking for combinations of beliefs in all the possible social contexts in which the individual has to operate -- all the possible social contexts here being limited and clarified by the grid-group axes. Instead of isolated bits... I have now got structures of behavior... whose parts, *ceteris paribus* [other things being equal], hold together in ...[describable] ways.

Operationally, these structures are found at the level at which

excuses are required by individuals and made by them and where moral judgments materialize into pressures from other[s]... to act in certain ways.

Thus, they are always present in face-to-face communities, and may also connect individuals in more dispersed settings as well. In the workplace, these structures are found in work groups, but not necessarily in a work site or institution as a whole.

Another advantage Douglas (1978:14) claims for this bipolar method is that it cuts across class structure to identify cultural bias, defined as an array of beliefs locked in relational patterns. It eliminates sharp dichotomies, substituting sets of associated features that are found typical of various points on the grid-group scale. Also,

The action, or social context, is placed on a two-dimensional map with moral judgments, excuses, complaints and shifts of interests reckoned as the spoken justifications by individuals of the actions they feel required to take... The interaction of individual subjects creates a public cosmology capable of being internalized in the consciousness of individuals, if they decide to accept and stay with

it. The ...approach does not assume that they must ...it is compatible with a psychology of the will.

Conversely, though, the weakness of grid-group analysis is that it purposely ignores political and economic configurations at the macro level, a flaw shared with most applications of the "informing spirit" approach. For example, economic conditions such as capitalist or socialist, or boom or depression, fall outside the grid-group framework. They are seen as irrelevant to its application.

Despite this considerable drawback, Mars (1982) makes a convincing case for its usefulness in workplace ethnography. He points out that, first, it takes into account and allows comparisons on the basis of informal as well as formal structures. Second, it allows jobs to be categorized by their "on-the-ground" organization, rather than by the usual indices of income, prestige, or social class. (For example, the occupations of taxi fleet driver, bus driver, and chauffeur differ markedly in their grid-group dimensions, even though all depend on the skill of driving.)

Third, because intangibles such as worker satisfaction and world-view are associated with identifiable patterns of grid-group co-ordinates, knowing them means one can predict various aspects of social behavior, like worker militancy or workplace "fiddles" (scams). Mars illustrates this point by applying grid-group

analysis to ethnographic case studies of fiddles in Great Britain.

He assigns a totemic shorthand to each of the quadrants created by the intersection of the two axes. Clockwise, there are "donkeys" (strong-grid, weak-group), "wolves" (strong-grid, strong-group), "vultures" (weak-grid, strong-group), and "hawks" (weak-grid, weak-group). The animals' social organization typifies the occupational subculture each represents.

For example, "wolves" -- such as dockworkers or printers -- have tightly-knit work groups. They work in hierarchical teams, analogous to packs, in which seniority sets a strict division of labor and a proportional division of the spoils. "Vultures," who include waiters, bartenders, traveling salesmen -- and sometimes reporters -- are both dependent on and competitive with their co-workers.

Like their namesakes, they need the support of a group, but at the feast they act alone. In fiddles, they dodge the rules for individual gain. "Hawks" -- like entrepreneurs, or enterprising professionals -- are individualists; in organizations they bend the rules to suit themselves.

In contrast, "donkeys" -- such as clerks or assembly line workers -- are isolated underlings, bound by rules they do not make themselves. When they resist authority, they break the rules outright, instead of

bending them, as hawks do. Depending on the work environment, according to Mars, one can predict not only the type of fiddle, but how disruptive it will be.

In highly constrained donkey jobs, fiddles are destructive; workers who don't follow the rules can sabotage an entire operation. (Keypunching or data entry jobs are a perfect example.) In hawk jobs, though, fiddles and flexibility are part of the way things work, and often why they work. Here professionals (such as journalists or computer technocrats) working in any bureaucracy are an example.

Subcultures in the Newspaper Workplace

Coexistent with the dominant anthropological tradition is another notion of culture as a generative basis of creative behavior. Together with my informants comments, anthropological reassessments from this perspective helped me rethink the application of the concept to my research. Both discussions revolve around similar themes: drawing boundaries, resolving conflicts of allegiance and loyalty, and explaining the discrepancies between professed values and actual behavior.

In this alternative model culture is not only a vehicle of communication and socialization, but also a communal resource on which to base individual or collective action. This notion, along with the focus on overlapping -- rather than concentric or adjacent, plural society -- subcultures is particularly relevant.

Describing the dichotomy between the two approaches, Worsley (1981:25) writes,

A central distinction runs through the anthropological discussions like a geological fault, separating those who emphasize conservation -- culture as heritage -- from those who see culture as innovation.

For the most part, my informants share the view of culture as conservation. This perception contributes to their already well developed sense of fatalism. Additionally, the imposition of computerized technology has moved all three occupations "up-grid," making them more constrained, isolated, and subject to external controls.

Referring to the same phenomenon, Williams (1981:11-12) identifies two major intellectual traditions that have arisen since the study of cultures, in the plural, has become a subject of academic inquiry. He categorizes the scholarly literature on culture as either essentially idealist -- the "informing spirit"⁶ -- or essentially materialist -- the "whole social order" approach. Historically, anthropology as a discipline stems from the second, but its practitioners can follow either one.

The contrast is between

an emphasis on the "informing spirit" of a whole way of life, which is manifest over the whole range of social activities but is most evident in "spe-

⁶For the U.S. Henry (1973) is an example; he uses the ideal of opportunity to sum up American culture.

cifically cultural" activities -- a language, styles of art, kinds of intellectual work;

and:

an emphasis on a "whole social order" within which a specifiable culture...is seen as the direct or indirect product of an order primarily constituted by other social activities.

Each position is associated with a method. In the first, it lies in

illustration and clarification of the "informing spirit," as in national histories of styles of art and kinds of intellectual work which manifest, in relation with other institutions and activities, the central interests and values of a "people;"

in the second, in

exploration from the known or discoverable character of a general social order to the specific forms taken by its cultural manifestations.

Along with Douglas, Mars, and Worseley, Williams advocates a dynamic concept of culture. Worseley and Williams are also concerned with redeeming the Marxist use of "superstructure" from the sterile and overly derivative interpretations placed on it by dogmatists. Important to both purposes is a revitalized model of culture in which conflict occurs. This Williams (1981: 12-13) finds in a third approach, one which has elements in common with both the "informing spirit" and "whole social order" approaches.

As a convergence of the two, it has in common with the second

its emphasis on a whole social order, but it differs from it in its insistence that "cultural practice" and "cultural production"...are not simply derived from an otherwise constituted social order

but are themselves major elements in its constitution.

In common with the first, it shares

its emphasis on cultural practices as (though now among others) constitutive. But instead of the "informing spirit" which was held to constitute all other activities, it sees culture as the signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored.

In other words, discord can be expressed.

In the following discussion of New York City newspaper printers, journalists, and computer professionals, I follow Williams' "convergent" approach to culture, focusing on these variables: age, gender, ethnicity, socialization (including education, recruitment, and mobility); and occupational community.⁷ My analysis has two goals: first, to assess the impact of the new computerized technology within each occupation; and second, to reveal differences between occupations, illuminating what Williams (1974) characterizes as the shift from a "residual" culture to an "emergent" one.

Some of the occupational differences between variables are readily discernible, even from survey questionnaires. In regard to age, printers are by far

⁷Because all three occupations are unionized, their salaries fall within a similar range, between \$25,000 and \$40,000. By national standards, these salaries are relatively high, but in the New York City metropolitan area, they support a middle-class lifestyle, comfortable but not luxurious. Blumberg (1980) discusses the decline in real income and middle class living standards here through the 1970s.

the oldest, followed by journalists, and then by computer professionals. In regard to gender and ethnicity, they are also the most uniform, nearly all white men. The journalists have some women and minority members, the computer professionals have still more, nearly proportional to their presence in the labor force.

Other differences are less obvious. Analysis of the socialization and community variables -- formulated to measure cohesiveness (group) and hierarchy (grid) -- demonstrates that in all three occupations, although to different extents, the new technology weakens group and heightens grid. Nonetheless, all of the variables are related; taken together, they reveal extensive patterns of change.

THE NEWSPAPER OCCUPATIONS COMPARED

The Printers Described

AGE

The most senior of the newspaper trades now also has the oldest members. The average age of the printers in the composing room and in my sample is 62. Eighteen of the thirty-five printers I interviewed could retire if they wanted; they already are eligible for social security and union retirement benefits. However, by continuing to work, they earn much more. Their salary is about double what their pensions would be.

The youngest man I met is 42; he is called "Junior" or "the kid" by his peers. The oldest, still

working, is 84. He is teased by his co-workers for "slowing down" because he no longer works at the second job (as a messenger) he held for much of his career, and for outproducing the younger men; in fact, the night before I met him, he had beaten off a would-be attacker in Times Square.

Age is a recurrent theme in conversation. For example, in a discussion of the benefits the ITU offers members and their wives, my historian colleague joked, "Maybe I should marry a printer." The printer to whom she was talking laughed and said, "Keep your eyes open," then immediately added, "Of course, we're all a little old for you." Underlying the continual references to age are several important realities never far from their minds.

First, they are the last representatives of a dying craft. No younger men have been apprenticed in the newspaper industry since the 1960s. In addition, new hires were older when they started. Since the job was sought after for its security and opportunities for overtime pay, they had had to wait their turn.

They had served their apprenticeships and gotten their first jobs in small book-and-job shops. Many of the younger newspaper printers in 1980-81 had been substitutes when the 1974 contract was signed. They gladly took the opportunity then to become regulars at the

newspaper where they had put their union card. They are the last new hires in the industry.

Second, the lifetime guarantee means lifetime, not just until social security or retirement age. By 1980, when I was in the composing rooms, the men to whom early retirement with its accompanying financial bonus was attractive had already left. Mostly they were the younger of the regular printers, for whom the financial incentive was highest, and who anyway were the most inclined to make a fresh start. Also, the longer a printer worked, the higher his salary, so for most of the older printers, retirement benefits did not come close to the salary they were earning.²

Accepting the premise that craft deskilling robs the worker of highly valued skills, I was surprised to find those remaining in the composing room less nostalgic for the good old days than I had expected. True, they missed using their old skills, but they also take pride in having mastered the new equipment. When asked what aspect of the changeover touches them most deeply, they mention first the uncertainty of their employment. They are worried about the expiration date of the automation contract.

²Financial reasons were not the only motivation for printers' decisions to stay on. Differences between those who chose "early" retirement and those who did not are analyzed in Rogers and Friedman (1980).

The concern of the younger men is easy to understand. They would find it extremely difficult to find another newspaper job, or even another printing job anywhere at the salaries they currently earn. But even the men at or over retirement age worry about losing their jobs. As my oldest informant said, making an analogy that recalled his first job, working on the railroad during World War I, "When Diesel engines replaced steam, the firemen were laid off. Their jobs were gone, and so were they."

Actually the provisions of the contract are clear. On several occasions, when the printers we were interviewing raised questions, either the composing room foreman or a shop steward reiterated its terms. The guarantee is that printers now employed have a lifetime job at their current wage-scale, with automatic cost-of-living increases.

As further reassurance, both the foreman and the shop steward always added that they were confident that the 1974 contract would be renewed with the guarantee intact in 1984. This prediction proved correct. In 1984 the contract was renewed until 1987, and then renewed again. However, even in the 1974 contract the ITU was not guaranteed the right to collective bargaining; this was the primary reason the printers worried about their future.

Third, without younger men coming along, the seniority system for which nineteenth century ITU members fought so hard, has lost its meaning. Although still formally in place, the most senior shop members derive few benefits, and the more junior have none to which they can look forward. Since most shops have closed their doors to "travelers," their former geographic mobility is gone, leaving them locked in place on a frozen priority list.⁹

In the past that position determined first choice for new assignments. Now, however, there are no new assignments, and, if there should be, management has the right to select printers for retraining regardless of seniority (one of the terms of the automation contract). All that priority list position now determines is the order of choice for shifts and vacations.

GENDER

Almost all the printers I interviewed take for granted that nearly all composing room workers are white men. Asked why there weren't more women, they gave one of two contradictory answers. Either they said that the work was too demanding, or that associated conditions -- the dirt of the machines, the weight of the typecases, the late and sometimes unpredictable

⁹There are different possibilities for priority listing. The Times has "priority by classification," the Post "vertical priority".

hours -- were too onerous. Or else, they avoided a direct reply, instead pointing with pride to the ITU tradition of equal pay for equal work, which gives women members benefits equal to those of the men.

Since the 1870s, when the Women's Typographical Union became absorbed as just another ITU local, not many women have worked as printers in New York City. One exception is Trudy, one of the few women printers working in the newspaper composing room in 1981. A male co-worker, half-disparagingly and half admiringly, called her a "crazy woman's libber". "Do you know," he said, rolling his eyes, "she even carried a women's liberation banner in the Labor Day Parade," an allusion to Trudy's marching with the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) contingent instead of with Local No. 6 in the previous year's parade.

There is no doubt that women were made to feel uncomfortable in the composing room. The "free and open" atmosphere the men reported to be one of the benefits of the job seemed to the women to be excessive use of bad language. As a women union member said, "They sure don't respect women much." Women researchers (Tuchman 1978; Cockburn 1983) also have reported that they were made to feel unwelcome in the composing room simply because of their sex. For example, Gaye Tuchman, describing her fieldwork at a Boston newspaper in the 1960s, said

When I was doing research, whenever I went down at night when the paper got set up, the reporters and editors would not let me go into the composing room unaccompanied. Finally, toward the end of the research, there was a rule change. I could go down to the composing room on my own if everyone was sure that the head compositor was there -- that is, the guy who made up page 1 -- so that if I wasn't going down there in the company of an editor, someone still was responsible for the presence of a woman in the composing room. It was explained to me not that I was an outsider, but that I was a young girl (I was 24 at the time!), and it was late at night, and it was all men down there.

Our experience, however, was different, perhaps because, since the introduction of cold type, the men no longer see any point in defending the composing room from outsiders. Also, some of them told us they knew about feminism from their wives or daughters. Sometimes the printers played to what they assumed (correctly) were our feminist biases, but generally the atmosphere was friendly, not combative.

For example, someone referred to clerical workers as "girls," but quickly corrected himself, saying, "Of course I mean women." In context he was echoing the theme of a current advertising campaign, in which suggestively smiling women were featured in subway posters and newspaper display ads, captioned, "Hi, I'm Maureen, (or Janet, or Fran), call me..." The text underneath gave the telephone number of the newspaper's classified advertising department.

Included in the sample are all three women newspaper printers working in 1980-82. One is the daughter

of a printer, another the widow, and the third the wife. Like their male counterparts, they too are proud of the union's accomplishments in promoting gender equality on the job. One had "traveled," putting her union card in at several different cities during World War II. The second, left to raise a child on her own, praised the union for arranging her shifts for her convenience, and for making it easy for her to take (day)time off when she needed it.

Only the third, Trudy, feels herself to have been discriminated against on the basis of sex. Most of her co-workers do not take her seriously. Yet the discrimination she faced is real. She was never able to serve a formal apprenticeship; she was unable to get steady work as a linotypist, her chosen specialty; and, despite the ITU's reputation as a participatory democracy, she was never able to run for union office.

She made these points as she told us how she became a union printer. Unlike the other two women printers, she did not come from a family of printers. She met her husband through her job, not the other way around. Her position as an outsider may be the reason she saw the discrimination, rather than simply accepting the rhetoric that it didn't exist. She got her start when a male linotypist friend suggested it to her as an alternative to the back-breaking stitching she was doing as a pieceworker in the shoe industry.

At that point, she said, she asked him in surprise, "Are there any female linotype operators?" He answered, "Just a few." That was in the 1950s, but the answer has been the same throughout her working life. To learn the linotype, she went to vocational school, where, as she said, "You didn't learn a lot. You had to learn the work knocking about getting jobs."

Getting jobs was not easy. At first she tried writing letters to places listed in the "bluebook" (the guide to printing firms around the country), always signing with her first initial instead of her full name. Then, she said,

I'd get a phone call. Someone would say, "I want to speak to the linotype operator." And of course they expected to hear a man answering. When they heard a woman, boom, down went the receiver.

Finally, her friend helped her get a first job, but she became an ITU member only after she helped organize the New Jersey print shop where she was working.

Anyone working for a print shop when it became unionized automatically became a union member; this is the way the women printers got in. Once in the union, Trudy was able to get her first New York City newspaper job. She was hired as a proofreader, the customary specialty of women printers. Proofreaders sat by themselves apart from other printers. Sometimes they were in their own section behind a glass wall. Ostensibly the reason for their isolation was the need for quiet

so they could concentrate; however, this separation also maintained physical segregation of the sexes.

Trudy never was hired as a linotypist, although she occasionally was able to fill in on the linotype during the Sunday night "lobster" (graveyard) shift. Nor could she pursue her inclination toward union activism, although she remains is a strong and vocal ITU supporter. When we met her, she was urging that the new cold type workers be organized into the union, but she herself never has had another chance to be an organizer, or even to be as active as she would have liked in local union affairs. She told us

Since I've been in the union [1961], there's never even been a woman appointed to any kind of committee, for any kind of conference, or to any delegation, much less nominated for a union office.

Not until the 1970s did she find an outlet for her political energy. Then she became a founding member of CLUW, an organization that has made a significant impact on the American labor movement as a whole. One of their accomplishments was the appointment of a woman trade unionist, for the first time, to the executive board of the AFL-CIO.

Even after election to CLUW's national executive board, in her own union she remains a prophet without honor. Unlike her fellow board members, whose unions pay their travel expenses, she has to pay them from her own pocket. When this got to be too expensive, she had

to stop attending national meetings, and so could be active only locally -- hence the Labor Day Parade banner that annoyed her composing room colleague.

ETHNICITY

The printers are the most ethnically homogeneous of the occupational groups I compare. Predominantly Irish, Italian, and Jewish, they reflect the ethnic composition of the New York City working class in the 1940s and 1950s, when most of them were apprentices. Typically, they learned of an apprenticeship opening in a print shop from a relative or family friend. They worked there until becoming journeymen, after which they "traveled" or worked as a "sub" before getting a permanent place on a newspaper priority list.

Among the younger men, I was told, there had been a few black and Hispanic apprentices, but I did not meet them. Either they were hired by the minority presses or they had chosen to accept the retirement incentive bonus offered in the 1974 contract. Most of the printers explain the absence of minorities in the composing room by noting that apprenticeships usually were handed down in families. Since there were always more applicants than vacancies, the demand meant that there were never any left over for outsiders.

No one I asked told me of any instances of overt discrimination. One of the younger printers, himself almost the last person hired, said ahead of him on the

1960s priority list had been both a Negro and a Puerto Rican. Management would have preferred to hire either of them instead of him, he said, because he already had a reputation as a union activist.

However, both had taken other jobs before their numbers came up. But, another printer, listening to his account, said there was probably more racism than they had been aware of at the time. Looking back, he thinks examiners may have deliberately failed minority apprentices to keep them out of the union.

SOCIALIZATION

An Apprentice's Education

Most printers, but not all, have high school diplomas. Some have college degrees as well. Regardless of their formal education, all are well read and well informed about current affairs. Unless they were in a non-union print shop at the time it was organized by the ITU (in my sample, this applies only to the women), they all also served four-to-six year apprenticeships. Apprenticeship was by far the most important and powerful part of their education.

Kluger (1982:127-28) lyrically describes the content of an apprentice's education in a 1930s print-and-job shop:

He began with every menial chore ...breaking down forms, sorting handset type back into trays, scrubbing the dead lead with flux for return to the pot ...[then] the make-up stone... Every slug had to be scraped free of filings and certified type-high before being set in the chase, or it would not

print... Typos had to be tweezered out gingerly, proofs taken by mallet with enough force to get a clear impression but not mash the type, and chases locked tight... or the form would disintegrate...

[Next] the linotype...The pot had to be kept at just the right temperature, for if too cold, the lead came out in pieces...if too hot, it could take your fingers ...The tiny toes on the matrix of each character often bent on the way down from the magazine housing it, and if a misshapen one landed askew to the plunger, hot lead flew...

Most palpable of all was the insidious metal. It made him into an anti-Midas; everything he touched turned to lead. The shavings got under his nails, into his hair, down his neck, beneath his skin... Like bullets, the castings that came out of the linotype were called slugs...

The male printers I interviewed had the same experiences, learning the same skills, in their apprenticeships, which had taken place sometime between the 1920s and 1960s. Although less eloquent, they conveyed a similar sense of its intensity.

The Purpose of Apprenticeship

Although some of the older printers implied that the younger printers had served easier apprenticeships, its importance as a rite of passage never changed. Said one who was an apprentice during the 1920s,

It was a tough apprenticeship, because back in those days if you were an apprentice, you did the lowly jobs that had to be done. Even if it meant sweeping the floor or something like that, you did it. That was all considered the "boy's" job.

My informants differ on whether the four to six years the union required were really necessary to learn the trade. The length of apprenticeship may have been more instrumental in restricting occupational entry or

as a rite of passage, than in ensuring technical skill mastery. Nonetheless, it was crucial in assuring job security and in building solidarity.

Part of the apprenticeship was spent in classes at the union's trade school one day a week. That shared experience, said my informants, gave them friends in every major print shop in the city. These old friendships continue to make them feel part of an occupational community that in other ways no longer exists.

It was reinforced by the practice of "tramping," or "traveling," one of the benefits of becoming a journeyman. For some, this experience -- depositing their union cards at any union print shop which had jobs available -- is the happiest memory of their work life. They enjoyed being able to go wherever they wanted, knowing they could find work, a union practice predicated on the universal fraternity of printers. Others, less inclined to roam, used to join in the spirit of fellowship by gathering with other printers at a bar or other neighborhood hangout at the end of their shift.

AVENUES OF MOBILITY

The Printers' Retraining Program

In keeping with their principle that all members be able to perform all aspects of composing room work, the ITU insisted that its members whose jobs are "guaranteed" under the 1974 contract learn all there is to know about the new cold type processes. Thus, all

the printers have been retrained in all the new photo-composition and computer typesetting equipment. This means that they not only learned to operate the video display terminal, which everyone needs to know, but also to operate the controls of the "pizza pie," the laser satellite transmitter, a skill only a few use.

Composing room jobs are not rotated, nor were they before the changeover, but the union insistence on universal retraining means added security. If future manning requirements change, and management tries to argue that outside specialists are needed, the union has a basis to counter their claims. After cold type was introduced, the union restructured its job categories, keeping, as before, four specialties.

The new jobs are: Input Typist, Ad Assembler, Proofreader, and Technician.¹⁰ Typically linotypists have become clerk-typists (of classified or display ads, not of editorial matter); handmen, who used to lock the page in place and who worked most closely with

¹⁰There are also "limbo jobs" which are unclassifiable in this scheme, such as typesetter and scanner, but which involve "affiliated machine operations". The director of the union's retraining program, himself a former linotypist, describes these operations as not "skilled" but requiring some knowledge. His aim is to provide enough retraining so that the initial four categories become two or one. If he could redesign the training the printers received as apprentices, he would have had them better trained in layout and design; then they could have gone into the art department after the changeover to cold type.

the editors to fit in late-breaking stories, now do paste-up (pasting together the page components from the columns and headlines that are the output of the computer's typesetting system); proofreaders now tabulate computer symbols to determine departmental usage; and the machinists are now technicians. As before, they service the machines in the composing room.

Since automation, machinists, of whom there are two or three to a composing room, have the most job mobility. Their job used to be to maintain the linotype machines and paper-tape punches, equipment used only in print shops. Now they take care of video display terminals and high-speed computer printers, standard office devices. Thus, alone among the printers, the machinists have greater mobility as a result of cold type. This mobility, however, is only lateral, a consequence of the homogenization of labor, rather than of expanding opportunities.

Mobility: Past and Present

In the past restless or ambitious printers could "travel," or "tramp around," finding work by depositing their union cards at any open ITU shop in the country. Tramping was one of the attractions of the trade. Aside from the romance of the road, it was a way printers tried out new locations, to see if they wanted to establish themselves there. Because there are no longer

enough jobs to go around, computerized automation has put an end to this form of geographic mobility.

Printers also used to have three possible routes to upward mobility. They could be promoted to foreman, or elected to union office, or they could start their own small business, typically a print shop. When automation sharply curtailed the first two possibilities, some of the younger printers used the contract's buyout provision to get the money to try the third. The men in my sample, though, did not. Either they felt they were already too old, or they had insufficient capital (the contract entitled the younger men to larger sums). For most, security is an important reason why they decided to become printers in the first place.¹¹

Promotion to Foreman

Because of the ITU policy of training apprentices in all aspects of the craft, in theory all journeymen in the composing room have an equal chance to become foreman. In practice, however, hard work and competence are not the only criteria for promotion. Foremen tend to be college graduates, and to have specialized technical expertise. Also, unlike the nearly automatic

¹¹For example, two of my informants as servicemen in World War II worked as army newspaper reporters. After the war, one was offered a job as a wire service reporter, and the other a job as a news bureau deskman. Both declined, choosing instead to become apprentice printers, because of the better job security.

promotion from apprentice to journeyman which meant an overnight change in status, promotion to foreman proceeds gradually along a ladder. Not all stepholders make it to the top.

The career of a general foreman we interviewed is typical. He is responsible for production on all three shifts, for drawing up work schedules and vacations, and for mediating grievances which otherwise would go to arbitration. Both his father and uncle had spent their working lives in other mechanical departments at the same newspaper, a factor which helped him get his first job there, but not, he said, his promotions.

He received his first promotion, to the position of assistant to the general foreman, after eight years in the shop. He credits it to his familiarity with photocomposition, one of the early automated processes that was introduced in the mid-1950s. His next promotion came six years later, in 1963, when he became the assistant general foreman.

In that position he was able to participate in the early stages of cold type composition, the factor he thought decisive in his 1968 promotion to general foreman,¹² his current title. There has been no

¹²Chinoy (1955:44-45) describes a similar pattern among the autoworkers he studied. A college education and knowledge of technical processes were both decisive factors in management's choice of foremen.

turnover in any of the foreman job titles since the 1974 freezing of the priority list; unless someone retires, none will become vacant.

Election to Union Office

Thus, the only arena of upward mobility left is trade union politics, played out on a much smaller scale than in the past. In the 1950s Local No. 6 was characterized as a democratic trade union, because of its internal two-party system, and because of the high percentage of its members who had held union office. The process was particularly democratic in the ITU because of the constant turnover in officeholders (Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956). Usually printers held office for a comparatively short time, serving only one term before returning to the shop floor.

However, by 1981, the president of Local No. 6, Bertram Powers, had been in office continuously for almost two decades. New to the job during the long 1963 New York City newspaper strike, he and his party still are given credit for the favorable terms they negotiated then. He also is highly praised for his role as the chief architect of the 1974 automation contract.

Even members who at the time were reluctant to approve an eleven-year-contract ("there's no need to go back to the membership for anything," explained one), now say that without Powers' leadership, the ITU would have been finished years ago. Their widespread pride in

his shrewdness and satisfaction with his party means that neither is likely to be unseated in an election. Nonetheless, at the local "chapel" level (the chapel chair is the equivalent of a shop steward), there are still hotly contested races.

Union positions may be even more desirable now than formerly, because they offer a break from the tedium of the new work routine, and from the boredom of not enough work. In one composing room, an election had just taken place before we began interviewing there. At issue were the opponents' conflicting views concerning the proposed Newspaper Guild-ITU merger.

The winner, a NYCOSH activist, favored the merger. He himself, however, thought that his personality more than his stand on issues determined his victory. Also a star bowler in the printers' league, he said he was simply better liked than his opponent. Particularly important, he thought, was that in his previous office as Unit Grievance Chair he had been careful to pay attention to all the grievances brought to him, even if they were made by the shop's chronic complainers. Since the election had been very close, he concluded theirs were the votes that put him in office.

In the past someone with his abilities would have gone on to run for higher office. After chapel chair, the next step would have been to run for office in the local, which combines several newspaper chapels into

one voting unit. Then, if he and his slate won again, they might run for regional or national office. Now, however, rewards consist of appointed instead of elected office. For example, chapel chairs are also delegates to national committees, the most important of which then dealt with the then-pending Guild merger.

Running for union office is the last arena where seniority matters. Several informants told me they had waited their turn to run. Either they had made an informal agreement not to challenge the incumbent, or they knew someone senior to them wanted to try for the same office.

OCCUPATIONAL COMMUNITY

After the "Sub" System

The renowned occupational community of the printers is no longer much in evidence, although traces remain. One of its key components -- the substitute system -- ended with the 1974 contract, which gave all substitutes then working a chance for permanent employment at the newspaper at which they had their card. Previously, the system worked this way. Printers who wanted to get on a newspaper's priority list first "put their (union) card in" as a substitute, something they could do at only one newspaper at a time.

They then made themselves available for a particular shift by showing up before it started. They were hired either directly by a printer who wanted to take

time off, or by the shift foreman who needed more men. As vacancies in the newspaper's priority list occurred, they would be filled, in order of seniority, from those on the substitute list.

This system contributed to occupational community by encouraging and facilitating social contacts. At the beginning of a shift substitutes would gather together, hoping for work. Those who did not get an assignment often waited to try again at the start of the next shift, passing the time together. Also, since union rules gave journeymen printers the right to pick their own replacements, the substitutes cultivated friendships with those already on the priority lists, especially those they knew.

Although the origin of the system had been to reduce costs by keeping the number of permanently employed printers down, in practice it was costly, and subject to abuse. The fraternal impulse of the printers to share their work led to inefficiency and redundancy. The foreman explained it this way:

The cost of the old sub system was terrible. We had substitutes, and we had a couple of hundred on the sub roll. Well, how that worked against efficiency, you can imagine yourself. The hiring is done right on the floor. If the foreman didn't hire the substitutes, and they all walked, that was thirty or forty leaving the floor, walking past the composing room where all the other men were working. So you, as a printer with a steady job, you think, "Aww, they didn't work tonight."

And that happened a second night and a third and a fourth night, and you knew these people who were subbing. Maybe some of them you went out with

socially, you knew their families. And you'd begin to feel guilty because of how much work you were turning out. Because of the work you were turning out the boss does not need to hire substitutes. And they're not working, so psychologically you slowed down, whether you wanted to or not. Without premeditation -- it was a psychological load on the back of the guy that had a steady job. Took its due, had to. People felt guilty. A lot of the other unions had as their hiring hall the union itself, so that a member never saw that happen. But the compositors were different -- all of the hiring was done from within the shop itself.

Except for the substitute system, other components of the printers' occupational community had already become less significant before the 1974 contract. Residential closeness, for example, had been lost to urban development. The printers continue to work in Manhattan, but they live scattered throughout the entire metropolitan area, some commuting up to four hours daily. By the time I interviewed them, many had lost their interest in socializing with one another outside working hours anyway.

They had worked together at least ten years, and sometimes far longer, without any new faces to break the monotony. Having no political outlets in which to channel disagreement, they sometimes took out their frustration on one another. I witnessed one such flare-up. A printer who had been out on sick leave returned to find his usual place, where he stood to do paste-up work, taken. He got into a verbal scrap with the new occupant. The two goaded each other, until finally the displaced worker shouted, "Why don't you retire and go

to a home?" At that point other printers intervened to separate the pair, and calm them down.

Even those still so inclined were prevented by geographical inconvenience from getting together. Although never primarily a residential community, in the 1950s the printers were less dispersed. Also, when all the New York City daily newspapers were clustered near Times Square, they were part of the surrounding Irish-Italian working-class neighborhood in a way they no longer are.¹³ They drew on local residents for casual help, such as the hourly workers hired Saturday nights to fold the supplements for the Sunday papers.

In these jobs neighborhood residents did not tolerate outsiders. They were particularly violent toward blacks. An informant who grew up in the neighborhood had worked weekends in the 1960s loading delivery trucks in Times Square; he witnessed black kids who had shown up hoping for the same job verbally abused and threatened with baseball bats. Another said that if

¹³One informant says his sense of the relationship in the "old days" is that the newspapers were held to ransom by the local political bosses. The Times, for example, located in gang-dominated Hell's Kitchen, always hired pressmen from the neighborhood. The pressroom was overstaffed, and the pressmen took bets, while management looked the other way; some of the pressmen through their patrons may also have channeled the payoffs that allowed the newspaper delivery trucks to idle in the streets, and block traffic. Some of the neighborhood political district leaders also had jobs in the Times production departments.

blacks showed up at the shape-up of the loading dock -- the territory of the deliverers' union -- they had guns pointed at them and were told not to return.

Literacy is another common bond sociologists use to account for the printers' characteristic occupational community, differentiating them from other manual and craft workers. Certainly after the 1950s this was no longer distinctive. Nor were printers devoting their time to fraternal organizations any more; many no longer even belonged. Similarly, they no longer use the common bond of working night and weekend hours to arrange social activities off the job. Instead, they, like other industrial workers, spend their leisure time at home, often in distant suburbs. Well before the 1974 contract, consumerism was overtaking work as the focal point of their lives.

Still, even now, traces of the old occupational community remain. For example, most of the time I was in the composing room, retirees were visiting, there to see old friends and to admire the latest equipment. Since there have been no new hires, the retirees still feel at home. There is a printers' bowling league in which retirees continue to play, as members of their former team, not in a separate retiree's division. But most important in retaining communal traditions are the policies of the union.

The members I met, active or not, are interested in union affairs. They read the ITU publications, the Bulletin and the Review; sometimes they quoted them when they answered questions about the impact of automation and the future of the union. To these aging and security-minded men what matters most about the union is that it remain capable of carrying on its fraternal benevolent tradition, the spirit of "looking after our own." At present this sentiment is expressed creatively in a job rotation scheme that protects members in commercial "book-and-job" shops, where there is not enough work to go around, and no lifetime job guarantee to compensate them for the loss.

It works this way: printers who have worked a sufficient number of weeks to qualify for New York State unemployment insurance (about nine months) voluntarily give up their jobs to make room for other union printers whose unemployment benefits have expired. The ITU supplements the government unemployment checks with payments from its own unemployment fund, which is supported by payroll contributions from the employed. (About 16% of a working printer's wages go to this fund.) Laid-off printers thus receive about 80% of the income they would have earned if they had a job. About 1200 commercial printers in the metropolitan area participate in this job-sharing scheme.

In the composing room the tradition of "looking after our own" takes a different form. Although the newspaper printers are not as hurt financially, they share the problem of not enough work to go around. Their informal solution is that some men always leave early, even if they are scheduled to work a full day. They clock themselves in, then leave. Others clock them out, also on a rotation basis. If, as sometimes happens, for some reason the shift foreman asks for specific workers by name, others fill in for them. No one openly acknowledges what almost everyone knows, that the men sent for are not in the building, and, in all likelihood, have gone home.

The Journalists Described

AGE

The journalists I interviewed, using the "snow-ball" method of sampling, range in age from their early thirties to their late fifties. Because of my interest in the impact of the new computerized processes on their daily work lives, I chose informants who had worked at the same newspaper in the same job before and after cold type was introduced. Thus, even my informants in their thirties have worked at their newspaper an average of seven years, and in their current department an average of four years.

In their twenties they were going to school and working at first jobs elsewhere, a typical pattern at New York City newspapers, where reporters first have to prove themselves before they are hired. Even so, the age range of my sample approximates that reported nationwide (Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman 1976:22):

Compared with the labor force, journalists are substantially overrepresented in the twenty-five to thirty-nine age group, have proportionate representation in the forty to forty-four age group, and are underrepresented both in the under twenty-five and the forty-five-and-over age groups. This rather remarkable concentration of manpower suggests that people both enter journalism relatively late and leave it relatively early.

They explain the late entry by the higher-than-average educational attainment of journalists, and by the fact that a college education is increasingly the norm. The relative absence of journalists in older age groups, they write,

suggests that the field may... experience a considerable exodus of its most highly trained and experienced manpower. This result is consistent with casual observations about journalism -- that it is a young person's field because news-gathering requires a great deal of physical stamina, that advancement to managerial positions is relatively difficult, that many journalists become bored with their newsbeats but find it difficult to develop new ones, and that journalists who work under union or guild contracts achieve their maximum earnings relatively early and become blocked economically if they are not promoted into managerial positions.

GENDER

Now that both the newsroom and composing room have the same equipment -- video display terminals and high-speed computer printers -- the presence of women

is one of the most obvious differences between them. Even in traditionally all-male departments like sports, graphics, and business, women are visible, although in less than equal numbers. Nationally, in 1970, men outnumbered to women fulltime employees in print journalism by a ratio of 4:1 (Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman 1976:22). By 1980, it was about 3:1.¹⁴

The ratio I observed in New York City newspapers in 1980-1982 was approaching 2:1, the result of affirmative class action lawsuits at major newspapers across the country.¹⁵ At the New York Times in the mid-1970s, for example, one was filed on behalf of all women in jobs under Newspaper Guild jurisdiction, plus those working as assistants to ranking executives (titles not covered by the Guild). Using Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the suit charged the Times' management with discrimination in hiring and promotion, and sought compensation in back wages and in equal employment person-

¹⁴Newspaper Guild Reporter, November 26, 1986.

¹⁵Research by the New York Times women's caucus shows that in 1971, only 13% of that paper's news department employees were women, almost half of them in the lowest-paid positions. In 1974, after caucus representatives had begun to meet with management, women were 22% of the overall news operation, and better represented in better jobs. By 1977, 31% (231 of 739) of the editorial staff (counting international bureaus) were women, some at high levels and very well paid.

nel policies.¹⁶

The class action covered about six hundred women, of whom approximately two hundred were working in the news or editorial departments. Before the suit was filed, there were no women sportswriters or photographers, and on the table of top management (the organization chart of management hierarchy) there were only two women represented in eighty-six jobs. For the women whose journalistic careers began in the 1950s, from whom the named plaintiffs came, the discussions of the women's caucus were a revelation.

Talking to each other for the first time -- ignoring the usual secrecy surrounding pay and promotion -- the members of the women's caucus found that they shared many of the same experiences. Among the instances of discrimination they recounted were these: (1) women reporters who asked for promotions were told by their editors to get married instead; (2) women reporters married to bureau correspondents were allowed to work only as stringers (parttimers) when their hus-

¹⁶One source the caucus used to determine salary differentials was the actuarial tables used by the Newspaper Guild pension plan. These tables break down men and women's salaries separately by age and experience. Analysis revealed that, on average, men earned \$2000 more annually. In the newsroom, the average salary was \$60 a week higher for men doing comparable work. Furthermore, six of the women, or 23%, were working for the specified union salary for their job, as were six of the men, or 7%. All the other men were being paid above the minimum.

bands were on foreign assignments;¹⁷ and (3) many women reporters and editorial workers were not even aware of the existence of merit (discretionary) raises, much less that they were entitled to them.

Prior to the affirmative action lawsuits, the division of labor within the newsroom and other editorial departments at major newspapers across the country had been clearly delineated between women and men's jobs. "Picture researcher" was a woman's job; except in rare cases, "reporter" was a man's job. "Classified adtakers" were women; their job was to answer phones and transcribe callers' ads. Sales personnel who worked outside the office, visiting commercial advertisers, were paid large salaries plus commission; they were always men.

Even before the lawsuit was settled in 1978, management at the Times and the other metropolitan newspapers facing similar legal action had begun to hire more women as reporters and to promote more women to editor and other supervisory positions. They narrowed the salary differentials between men and women in the same job, and they ended overt job sex-typing. In 1980-82 among the "firsts" at New York City newspapers

¹⁷For a discussion of the impact of this policy on his marriage and career, see Astrachan (1986:4-8).

were a woman map artist, and women editors in charge of both a sports and business section.

For the most part, however, these promotions did not go to the qualified women who had been named plaintiffs in the legal action. Also, in terms of absolute parity women still had a long way to go. At the paper with the best record, only three correspondents in twenty-two foreign bureaus were women. Only one woman was listed on the corporate masthead; only one of twelve associate editors was a woman; and none of the regular columnists were women. In addition salary discrimination and so pension inequity remained.

The women who were promoted often found themselves in untenable situations. One example told to me concerned a recently promoted business editor. Previously in charge of a weekly cultural page, she now was responsible for the entire business section, a part of the paper in which she had no prior experience. Working for her were about sixty fulltime employees, and forty parttime, almost all of whom felt, sometimes rightly, that they knew more about running the department than she did.

According to my informant, who was her subordinate, she was constantly slandered by co-workers and staff

The abuse she gets, the sexual attacks on her...they say she's a lesbian, she's a this, she's

a that, she slept with that one, and that one, and that one besides...it's unbelievable.

and used by management:

They got her in a position where they can't lose, no matter what they do. Either she's incompetent, or she's an example of how liberal they are. And she just takes it.

He illustrated his last point with an anecdote of how his boss had been manipulated into taking the blame for a decision in which she had no part. Without even consulting her, her superiors had killed a column about the U.S. withdrawal from the 1980 Olympics in Moscow because they thought it was too controversial. But then, when confronted by the irate contributor, they blamed the decision on the editor. In reality, she knew nothing about it until the columnist complained.

According to my informant,

No one else would have been placed in such an awkward position, nor would they have allowed themselves to be used in such a blatant way.

He predicted, rightly as it turned out, her early resignation.

ETHNICITY

Like the composing room, in the newsroom and other editorial departments there are at most a handful of minority employees.¹ Here, too, hiring practices in

¹The ratio is different in the business and commercial offices, where minority women work as clericals. One minority woman was a named plaintiff in the Times women's affirmative action lawsuit; she works as a classified ad-taker.

New York City conform to those reported nationally. Only about 4% of working journalists come from minority backgrounds, and they are concentrated in the newspapers that serve the black and Hispanic communities (Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman 1976:26).

Proportionately, there are even fewer minority reporters than women, and nearly none in executive positions. The Daily News, however, as a result of community pressure including a threatened boycott and large demonstrations outside their 42nd Street offices, did hire two (male) black columnists in the late 1970s. In the 1970s minority affirmative action lawsuits were filed at two New York City daily newspapers, under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

At the New York Times the lawsuit was a class action; like the women's lawsuit, it was eventually settled out of court. At the Daily News, there were two lawsuits, the first of which came to trial only in 1987. The plaintiffs -- four black journalists -- first charged discrimination in pay and promotion practices, later adding charges of retaliation by newspaper executives.

Rather than claiming a general pattern of discrimination, the minority reporters (two black men, one black woman, one Korean man) in the first lawsuit cited specific instances to support their charges. For example, a black reporter was replaced by a white one when

the Abscam bribery scandal, which he had uncovered, became national local news. In another instance, the black woman testified she was the victim of sexual harassment as well as racial discrimination.

In 1975, not long after she had begun to work at the paper, one of the newsroom editors approached her. When she rejected his advances, he told her, in front of others in the newsroom, that she would spend the rest of her career "rotting" in the captions department. She said,

It was a humiliating experience. He called me a streetwalker and screamed at me in front of fifty people. Ever since then, I've been on the shit route: captions, nights, Brooklyn, and back to nights again. They've destroyed my career.¹⁹

The jury agreed with her. As of spring, 1988, the exact amount of the financial damages due her, and the other plaintiffs, is still undecided. When final judgment is rendered, the paper's approximately seventy-member black caucus will go to court in the second of the lawsuits, on behalf of all the paper's minority employees.

SOCIALIZATION

Formal Education

National figures indicate that about one-fourth of working journalists has had formal training in journalism, either as a graduate student or undergraduate major (Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman 1976:36).

¹⁹Testimony cited in Freedman (1981).

New York City may be an exception, reflecting a hiring bias toward those with previous experience rather than academic training. Of the journalists I interviewed, all have liberal arts college degrees, and two have social science doctorates. None has a journalism degree.

Yet there are indications that even here formal credentials are becoming more important. Although some editors still question the value of academic (as opposed to practical) training, most entry-level jobs now require a college degree. Copyboys or copygirls who in the past, I was told, needed only to exercise initiative or influence to be hired, now are college graduates, often with a journalism major or degree.

Rites of Passage

Describing their education as reporters and editors, my informants mention similar rites of passage. Detailing changes in status as they progress from novice to veteran, they recall experiences such as: interrogation by gruff managing editors when they applied for their first reporting job; then, initiation by covering the mundane events -- like the first day of school, or a 4th of July parade, or a birth at the zoo -- that are a cub reporter's first assignments; and, finally, a chance to scoop the competition on a big news item or an exclusive interview.

Even years later, a former editor carried a badge of his passage from outsider to insider. Reaching for his wallet, he said, "I had to learn to count headlines -- ens and ems -- I still have the editor's marks on a card here."²⁰ Other rituals they mention concern validation, such as being treated as a peer by the printers in the composing room, or being recognized by public figures at press conferences or news events.

Justifying the arduous series of steps leading to promotion, a senior editor remarked, "We all had to go through it." His statement sums up reporters' rites of passage. They are the same for everyone, but also individual. Unlike printers who as apprentices move through them as a group, reporters go through separately.

Recruitment Patterns: The Strength of Weak Ties

The way in which journalists find their jobs illustrates what Granovetter (1973) calls the "strength of weak ties" to transmit information along an extended network. Like manual and craft workers, people in managerial, professional, and technical positions rely on personal contacts to find new jobs. In their case, however, the ties are "weak" -- sporadic, incidental, maintained as much by chance as through design -- not

²⁰The contemporary equivalent is a programmer's hexadecimal ruler.

"strong," as might be supposed, with the people most intimately connected with the candidate's welfare.

The reason, he suggests, is that the stronger the ties, the more likely individuals move in the same or overlapping circles; thus, they will hear about the same jobs. Those who are weakly linked move in different social orbits, and so have different sources of information. Typically, journalists learn about their first jobs from a distant friend or acquaintance rather than from a closer tie.

For example, the two most recently hired of my informants had each known someone already working at the newspaper who had told them about an upcoming opening there. In one case, it was a distant cousin; in the other, a former college roommate. In other words, for journalists, weak ties are as important for learning about job opportunities as were printers' strong kin-based ties for obtaining apprenticeships.

AVENUES OF MOBILITY

The Star/Drone Syndrome

In his classic account of how newspapermen are socialized to the mores of the newsroom, written thirty years ago, Breed (1955) identifies three stages through which a neophyte can expect to pass. First, he is a "cub" learning through osmosis. Next, he becomes "wired-in" -- someone who is competent and knows the ropes. Finally, he is a "veteran," a "full, responsible

member of the group, who sees its goals as his," and who therefore can be counted on to handle matters of policy sympathetically.

In these terms, my informants still in their thirties are "wired-in". Unlike the "veterans," some of whom refused my requests for interviews, they are not yet fully committed to the newspaper, nor do they necessarily identify themselves with management. Of course, Breed's model is now dated. Only one of my younger informants has had a career which approximates these three stages, having worked his way up from messenger to copy desk editor. Already, at age thirty-five, he describes himself as a "dinosaur, one of the last of those around here to make it on my own, working my way up from bootlicker to middle management."

In the late 1960s, a long-haired college dropout living on the Lower East Side, and working at an all-night bowling alley, he responded to family pressure to "do something" by taking a test for a clerical job at a newspaper. A few weeks later, a telegram arrived offering him a job. Overly impressed by the telegram (which he later learned was the standard way the personnel department communicated with anyone hard to reach by telephone), he went for an interview, expecting to be hired immediately as a reporter. Instead he took the messenger job offered, deciding that a foot in the door was better than nothing.

His assumption was correct. His first promotion, after a few months, was to a union position in the mailroom. In another few months he was promoted again, this time becoming an assistant supervisor. He stayed there about two years. Then, bored, he talked to someone at the paper he had come to know, and was told to apply for a job opening in the editorial department. Four months later, he did become a reporter. Since then he has worked as a reporter or editor, receiving several more promotions along the way.

When I met him, nine years after he answered the ad, he was an editor in the news department, overseeing a staff of about twenty fulltime and thirty parttime employees, well on his way to becoming a newsroom "veteran." Now, however, his example would be hard to follow, for several reasons. One is the "professionalization" of the newsroom, particularly as it affects entry-level jobs like copyboys and stringers.

Before my fieldwork I thought that the job of copyboy (and copygirl, a title that came into existence in the mid-1960s) might have been eliminated by the new technology. I reasoned that since everyone uses computer terminals, there no longer would be a need for anyone to hand deliver paper copy. I was wrong: they still have jobs to do.

For one thing, since there are far fewer printers than video display terminals, copy is printed in a few

central locations. Copyboys and copygirls then separate the stories, which are printed on perforated paper, and deliver them to the appropriate desks. Also, as an editor explained, "Computers have not eliminated the huge number of errands that need to be done." Copyboys and copygirls still run errands. They fetch coffee, take lunch orders, and pick up copy or photographs coming from outside the building.

What has changed are the job requirements. Interest and enthusiasm are no longer enough to get an aspiring reporter a trial. Knowledge of computers is an asset, and, even to get an interview, an applicant needs either a college degree or previous experience. In the case of stringers, the number of jobs has declined. In the past they used to cover events too specialized or too distant to be included in a regular reporter's "beat;" if a stringer did a good job, he or she might be invited to join the regular staff.²¹

Now editors are much more reluctant to use outsiders, because they do not want their professional judgment questioned, either in justifying the added expense, or in explaining why someone not on staff is better qualified for an assignment. The editor who has

²¹Tuchman (1978:24-25) discusses the relationship of stringers to the "news net." Typical of their use in the past was my first job; as a college student, I was

a parttime staff of some thirty stringers is a deliberate exception to this policy; he is committed to keeping the door open to those like himself able to prove themselves on the basis of merit.

A second change in the newsroom is the operation of a dual tracking system, in addition to, and probably replacing, Breed's three-stage model. Reporters now become either "stars" with bylines, plum assignments, rapid promotions, and high salaries, or "drones" working at union scale and unlikely to be promoted to management. Within a few years after being hired, newsroom staffers are tracked. One consequence is the underrepresentation of journalists in the forty-five-and-over age group. Those blocked in their careers, not on the star or management track, often leave, the largest percentage for jobs in advertising and public relations (Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman 1976:147).

Newspaper photographers are also tracked. There are two separate photo developing labs, one for quality and one for speed. The quality lab does color work for the Sunday supplements, and makes the prints used when graphics matter. Under deadline pressure, editors use the speed lab; then the delivery of a print matters more than the aesthetics of the copy. Assignment to the quality lab is more prestigious than to the speed lab.

According to an editor who uses work from both,
All the good engravers are up in the quality lab,
all the slow, careful plodders and craftsmen, and

they've got all the jerks downstairs -- the drunks, the antisocial types, the people who are permanently resentful, the people who overuse the union as a weapon -- they're all downstairs working in the speed lab, and all the other guys are upstairs working slowly.

Being assigned to the speed lab is as sure a career dead end for a photoengraver as a reporter's assignment to the captions desk. To the editors, only quality lab workers are "professionals," and entitled to respect.

Even for reporters tracked into a successful career trajectory, the star-drone system has drawbacks. Success does not always live up to expectations. An editor, describing the disillusionment of a recently promoted colleague, said,

This guy was part of the copy desk establishment, constantly sniping at corporate decisions, challenging decisions in his department, saying at every turn, "Why are we doing that?" But also he was good, he was young, he could be trusted to do the job right, but he identified with his colleagues. He'd come up through the whole system. It's really the copy desk where you get that sort of rite-of-passage treatment, that you learn how to become part of the news department.

At first he had a sense of euphoria, like we all did, but then, inevitably, disillusion sets in. Part of it is that he didn't get a big raise. He got a lot more responsibility but they didn't pay him what he thought was commensurate with his title. If you have a dream that you're going to be something, everything else has to come along with that. You've been taught to believe that if you're going to get what you've always wanted, you're also going to get paid a lot of money and live a good life, not just that you're going to be the Sunday Metropolitan Editor, underpaid and overworked.

Then, switching to the management point-of-view, my informant said,

They know they've got you. He wanted the position, in fact never wanted anything else. He's only 29, so what the hell is he worried about? We'll take care of him eventually. We all had to wait, let him wait too. It is unfair, but by their standards, it's not.

The contrast in perspective between the disillusioned younger editors and the older executives -- both "veterans" in Breed's sense -- is more than a difference in positional outlook, between management and subordinates, or between seniors and juniors in the same system when the juniors know they stand to inherit the seniors' privileges eventually.

Creative Tension in the Newsroom

This deeper division illustrates the third of the critical changes in the newsroom since Breed described it in the 1950s. Management now considers even the intellectual and creative skills of the editors and journalists expendable. The longtime struggle to reduce the number of workers in the mechanical departments has been extended to the once immune editorial departments. Thus, while older journalists do have company loyalty, and do feel that the rewards are worth waiting for, and are justly distributed in the end, my younger informants are far less sure.

The management philosophy governing the newsroom in the 1980s is known as "creative tension," a shorthand for tighter management controls on workers whose productivity can not be measured strictly by units of

output. Under the guise of encouraging "creativity," managers promote tension by pitting co-workers against one another. They rationalize that reporters and editors work better if they feel insecure, rather than becoming "fat and lazy," as an executive said. In the newsroom a common tactic is to assign two reporters the same story, only one of which will be published.

"Creative tension" intensifies the competition for available assignments, jobs, and promotions.²² Additionally, it inhibits the camaraderie for which the newsroom was noted (Breed 1955; Dreier 1978; Kluger 1986). Several informants noted that the charged atmosphere made it difficult to develop co-operative working relationships. Given the enormous pressures that accompany career ambitions, it is not surprising that promotion does not live up to employee expectations.

For one thing, they are quickly disillusioned by what they can accomplish even in the areas in which they are supposedly in charge. Opportunities for truly autonomous decision-making are rare. They celebrate

²²The management philosophy of control which underlies "creative tension" extends beyond the newsroom. In the newspaper that promoted it most rigorously, there was tension throughout the building. Security guards posted at the entrance had instructions not to admit outsiders unless they were met at the door by an employee who had to show identification. Even in the composing room, the printers were the most cautious about being interviewed, saying, "Who's going to hear this?" or "Hey, I better be careful what I say here."

small victories, and, as an informant said, "The way to keep sane is to be able to laugh at all the [bureaucratic] insanity all around." An example he gave is of being told to assemble a composite photograph of all the American Olympic team finalists, even though who they were would be decided only in last-minute time trials. He protested the assignment, pointing out the expense and difficulties involved, but to no avail.

His superiors insisted, but then, once he had spent well over his budget on overtime and express courier services to obtain the picture, they decided not to use it after all. In such a situation, he said,

You can laugh, you can cry, or you can go home in a sulk for four days, as another editor did after this fiasco. I'd rather laugh.

The use of computers may have exacerbated the feeling journalists and desk editors had of insanity all around, but it was not its source.

The Journalists' Diminished Job Satisfaction

Still another cause of diminished job satisfaction among editors is the use of video display terminals, which has shifted the focus of their job from the newspaper's content to its production. As an editor said,

Now that our role is to be compositors -- to rationalize capital investment and save costs -- we have less time to do what an editor used to do -- encourage writers, improve copy, nurture stories, and be enthusiastic for what we think might be an important story.

Terminal use also keeps editors at their desks, editing copy through their terminals, a practice which considerably lessens the give-and-take on determining the final version of a story. A reporter, commenting that if he had to get to his editor, he could, summed up their impact this way: "Computers get through closed doors, which is good, but also bad, because the doors remain closed."

Because reporters and editors stay at their desks for long periods of time, their opportunities to develop social relationships and to acquire informal networks has diminished. Friendship networks are one basis of job satisfaction and, to some extent, of future company loyalty. Developing these networks used to be an important part of the "wired-in" stage of a career. In the past, for example, interviewing sources had the appearance, if not the emotional reality, of interpersonal relationships; now, even the appearance is gone from the newsroom itself.

Not all my informants are sure they want to spend their working lives as newspaper journalists. Aside from the other difficulties, they are uncomfortable in the antagonistic atmosphere in the newsroom, brought about by the managerial philosophy of "creative tension;" the 1970s corporate takeover of two of New York City's three daily newspapers; and the "bad faith" bargaining engaged in by management preceding the legal

actions of the women's and minority caucuses, and prior to the several-months-long 1978 newspaper strike.

Like the disillusioned newly promoted editor, they are keenly aware of promises made and then broken. They see management as unfair and capricious not only in making promotions, but also in getting rid of employees, as illustrated by the treatment of a news section clerk who had been at the paper thirteen years. A high school graduate, he started as a mail sorter and then transferred to his present job. His co-workers considered him nice enough, but not too hard-working or smart; he was unlikely to get another promotion.

Still, he resented being passed over, and wanted to quit. The last straw was when management decided to eliminate his job entirely, converting his clerk's position to that of a copyboy, a demotion in rank and pay. The difference in annual pay would have been \$8500, the amount management offered the clerk to resign. Outright firing would have been difficult, and time-consuming; the employee's job title was covered by the Newspaper Guild, and he had tenure and seniority.

Nonetheless, he accepted the buyout offer, and made plans to open a small business. First, he wanted to start a nursery school with his wife, a pre-school teacher. When those plans fell through, he bought a candy store in Times Square. He then went on vacation from the paper, in what was to be terminal leave. Man-

agement, knowing he had bought the store, then tried to renegotiate their first deal, this time offering considerably less severance pay. The employee refused to go along with this second offer, resold the candy store, and took back his part of the agreement. Saying, "Hey, my leave's not terminal yet," he returned to his old job.

The editor who told me about this incident was his supervisor. In favor of buying out "deadwood" employees as both the humane and cost-effective way to get rid of them, he had recommended the clerk as a good candidate. To my informant, the episode was one of many examples of how the bureaucracy failed to serve its own best interests. Not only, he said, had they lost the chance to rid themselves of someone who contributed little to the paper, but they had demoralized the rest of the department:

All below him this decision is being felt by all the kids [that is, aspiring copyboys and copygirls] who want writing assignments instead of just being sent on errands all the time who were going to have a chance to do stuff that they don't get now because this big obstacle is in the way. And he has the best hours too, Tuesday through Saturday, 11 to 7, because he's been sitting in that spot for so long. So what they've accomplished by their stupid little finagling is to disillusion five other people at the same time. But they don't care how many people leave. There will always be talented people who want to come to work here.

Doubtless people do want to come, but they may not want to stay. Turnover is high. Several of my informants were looking for other jobs. During the

months-long 1978 newspaper strike, some had tried alternatives. One became pregnant, another wrote television scripts, and a third finished a doctoral dissertation. Although all returned to work when the strike was over, they had friends who did not. One newswriter became a fulltime novelist, another went to work at a television network, and a third was recruited by an out-of-town newspaper.

In the newsroom observed by Breed, by and large the journalists were content with their lot. Not so my informants, many of whom dream of leaving their jobs to work free-lance. For most, of course, leaving their jobs is just talk; they would be hard put to find jobs which pay as well as those which they have already, since New York City newspaper salaries are among the highest in the nation. Thus, like the printers whose goal is to own a small business, their dreams may be unrealistic, but they reveal the same frustration with their work lives.²³

OCCUPATIONAL COMMUNITY

Lost Camaraderie in the Newsroom

Unlike printers, New York City journalists do not form an occupational community. They have no kinship, neighborhood, or other communal ties which incorporate

²³Chinoy (1955) is the classic work on this topic.

the workplace and extend beyond it. Exemplifying a different type of occupational social structure, they have individual ego-centered networks, which include "loose ties" to contacts who serve as "bridges" between different circles of friends and acquaintances.

In fact, the likelihood of an individual's finding a desirable job depends in part on acquiring and keeping distinctive personal networks. The less overlap with potential rivals, the more probable the jobseeker will have the advantage of being the first to learn of an upcoming opening. As Granovetter (1973:1378) points out, "Weak ties, often denounced as generative of alienation, are here ...indispensable to individuals' opportunities."

Yet, if never a "community" in the strict sociological sense, both journalists and sociologists have characterized the atmosphere of the newsroom as one of camaraderie. According to Breed (1955:331-31), the newsroom of a generation ago was a

friendly, first-namish place. Staffers discuss stories with editors on a give-and-take basis. Top executives with their own offices sometimes come out and sit in on newsroom discussions.

When, less than thirty years later, a New York City newspaper ran a 1980s circulation campaign based on this image, the effect was unintentional irony. In extensive radio, television, and poster advertising, publicly recognized "star" reporters and columnists

proclaimed, "Imagine How Much Fun It Must Be to Work at the Daily News!" Newsroom staffers were not convinced. They thought the slogan insulted their intelligence and parodied their working lives.

Few found it "fun" to be working at the Daily News against the backdrop of these events which occurred in the ten-year period, 1975-1985: (1) the corporate takeover by the company that owns the Chicago Tribune; (2) the acrimonious charges of discrimination made by the black caucus against the paper's editors and executives; and (3) the trial and eventual conviction for bribery and extortion of the head of the paper's Deliverers' Union.

Events of the 1970s at other metropolitan newspapers such as Rupert Murdoch's takeover of the New York Post and the affirmative action lawsuits at the New York Times also contributed to the prevailing atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion, felt even among the top executive editors (Argyris 1974). Employees who in the past who thought they were looked after by a benevolent management now are more likely to assume they are being sold a bill of goods. Already feeling betrayed by past policies, they are unlikely to believe new promises.

In short, by the 1980s there was a new climate of wariness and isolation in the newsroom, brought about by professionalization (a shorthand for greater task

specialization and a more stratified division of labor); by more tense labor-management relations; and accentuated by the impact of the new production technology. Therefore, the most intense feelings of camaraderie I witnessed firsthand were inspired by nostalgia. This occurred at the annual reunion of the editorial staff of the Herald Tribune, one of the New York City newspapers that ceased publication for good during the long 1963 newspaper strike.²⁴

For many of those who had worked there, the Herald-Tribune is the epitome of what a newspaper should be (Zinsser 1983; Kluger 1986). Contrasting the difference between today's newspaper offices and the glorious one he remembered, a former reporter (Zinsser 1983:1-2) writes,

When I went to see an editor at the New York Times ...I felt I had strayed into the wrong office. [The vast city room] ...was clean and carpeted and quiet. As I passed long rows of desks I saw that almost every desk had its own computer terminal and its own solemn occupant...[it] was a cool and sterile environment; the drones at their machines could have been processing insurance claims or tracking a spaceship in orbit. What they didn't look like were newspaper people, and what the place didn't look like was a newspaper office.

I knew how a newspaper office should look and sound and smell... The paper was the New York Herald Tribune and its city room, wide as a city block, was dirty and disheveled. Reporters wrote on ancient typewriters that filled the air with clat-

²⁴Some of those present blamed the craft unions for forcing some New York City newspapers to close. Referring to the president of ITU's "Big 6," someone said, "The printers love Powers; the journalists hate him."

ter; copy editors labored on coffee-stained desks... Crumpled balls of paper littered the floor and filled the wastebaskets... The walls were grimy... the atmosphere was hazy with the smoke of cigarettes and cigars. At the very center the city editor ...bellowed his displeasure with the day's work, his voice a rumbling volcano in our lives. I thought it was the most beautiful place in the world.

Almost twenty years later, at the 1981 reunion, another former Tribune reporter toasted his fellows by saying,

I know I speak for many of you here, and many others not here, when I say this was the best place I ever worked. I loved the people, I loved what we were doing, and we put out the best damn newspaper this town ever saw.

The entire event celebrated the fellowship of the old days. Old friends toasted each other, repeated old jokes, and traded gossip and news. In so doing, they also renewed the weak ties that still bind them.

The Synthetic Family

It is hard to imagine any of my younger informants, now in their thirties, at a similar event twenty years hence. They are too cynical, too ambivalent about their jobs, and too alienated from the institutions for which they work. The metaphor they apply most frequently to describe their office relationships is not "community," or "camaraderie," but "family," an inappropriate and impossibly overburdened ideal.

During the 1978 newspaper strike, both sides invoked the image of "family." Editors, telephoning striking staff members, argued family loyalties should

override any notions of solidarity on which the Newspaper Guild based its claims to their allegiance. In printed leaflets addressed specifically to Guild members, management urged them to cross the picket lines, on the grounds that, "We all share the common obligations of the New York Times family."

Some Guild members found these arguments persuasive; they ignored the pickets and return to work. As a striking editor commented,

They don't even realize it's a corporation. Or, if they do, they think the corporation is like their parents, ready to supply them with all their needs, with their best interests at heart. And it ain't so.²⁵

Nor did management mean to project this image.

To them the appeals to family meant sticking together against the outsiders they perceive the unions to be. Most Guild members, however, did not respond to the somewhat outdated authoritarian model of the family -- based on blind obedience -- upon which management based this appeal. For them "home" might have been nearer the mark. As a printer said nostalgically about

²⁵Despite the corporatization of the newspaper industry that dates back to the 1920s, only recently have editorial departments been held to bottom-line accountability. According to an informant, not until the early 1970s was his department (and, he assumed, other editorial departments as well) made accountable to a budget overseer. The secret of his success, he said, was that he learned early on to play the "budget game" well, never spending under his allotment, and always being able to account for how he spent it.

the Mirror, another defunct New York City newspaper, where he had worked 38 years, "It was like a home, but like a home, it broke up."

Compounding the erosion of social ties at the workplace is the computerized typesetting system, which eliminates many of the personal interactions that made the newsroom of the past a face-to-face community. One editor describes the change in terms of physical and emotional health, saying,

The man who sat to my left for many years had a son who suffered schizophrenic attacks. He never told me, but I knew each time a setback was reported from home. I fetched him coffee on those days and tried to help where I could. In turn, he sustained me when my mother's illness overwhelmed her. We never talked about it, but we knew more about each other than many husbands and wives do.

Now it is hard to know what's going on when people spend most of seven hours with their faces, brains, and hands virtually buried in a machine. Contact withers, support systems fail. We do not face each other to work; the hum of the machines drowns out the mumbles and curses that are the barometers of human tension levels.

Recently a fellow worker returned from an assignment elsewhere on the floor and began to transmit copy from his VDT with formats all screwed up, producing type in columns one word wide. A couple of us alternated getting up from our seats and going around to his terminal to see if we could trace the difficulty. But it wasn't until one of these visits that he failed to recognize me that I got any inkling how bad the problem was. He was quickly diagnosed as having an inoperable brain tumor, but I torture myself wondering if we might have gotten him to diagnosis sooner if we worked and talked facing each other, noticing as before how we look and behave.²⁶

²⁶Testimony of Betsy Wade, immediate past president of Newspaper Guild Local 3, before the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Labor and the

Reporters and editors are more tied to their video display terminals than they were to their typewriters in the past, because they have far fewer reasons to get up. Reporters write their stories at the terminal, communicate with each other through them, and gather and check facts through on-line data banks, instead of walking over to the archives. By definition, time away from a terminal is unproductive.

Also, because often there are fewer terminals available than people who want to use them, once logged on, reporters are reluctant to surrender a machine. They eat with one hand on the keyboard, timing their breaks to fit in with machine waiting time as a computer program justifies and hyphenates their story. In effect the machine schedules break time, interfering with users' ability to make plans to meet each other for lunch or even for a cup of coffee.

Unscheduled breaks occur only when the system unexpectedly fails. Everything then comes to an abrupt halt. When computers first were installed, I was told, this happened at least several times a day. People in the newsroom would laugh and cheer, pleased by this evidence of machine fallibility. Now, though, since they can lose up to a day's work this way, system failure causes as much anxiety as rejoicing.

The Computer Professionals Described

AGE

The field of computer programming has existed only since the end of World War II.²⁷ It became a career option for liberal arts college graduates only in the 1960s. The average age of those I interviewed is 32, making them my youngest group of informants. Although all are old hands in the field, to the printers and older journalists the computer specialists are just "kids" from whom they resent having to take instruction. One newsroom veteran said sarcastically, "These "whiz kids" understand nothing about the news business, and they're arrogant and abrasive to boot" (this from a tough city editor)!

Despite its short history and its practitioners' relative youth, two major innovations in data processing since the 1960s distinguish generations of programmers. The first is the development of "high-level" programming languages, designed to resemble English rather than mathematical formulas. Their adoption is associated with the growth of commercial computer applications in the early 1960s. The second is "on-line" or "interactive" processing, which has become widespread since the early 1970s.

²⁷As distinct from electrical engineering; for a concise history of its origins, see Kraft (1981:3-7).

On-line data processing makes possible near-simultaneous record updating, and, among other applications, provides the basis for word processing and for the text editing and typesetting programs designed by the Harris and Mergenthaler corporations for newspaper production.²⁸ Since both developments have implications for the deskilling of computer programmers,²⁹ and for related changes in workplace relationships, I include in my sample only computer professionals who have been in the field at least seven years, long enough to have experienced one or both of these two transitions.

GENDER

Throughout the 1970s careers in data processing were touted as the opportunity of the decade. New applications for computer software made it seem that the

²⁸This development is also known as "time-sharing" or "foreground" processing, to distinguish it from "background" or "batch" processing, the older method in which records were updated as a punchcard or tape file. Other applications include airline reservations and library book check-out systems. In text-editing programs, and in newspaper production, writers and editors using only a relatively few commands (sometimes embedded in dedicated function keys on the terminal keyboard) exercise great power over copy layout. Still, the actual machine-intelligible instructions that carry out commands remain complex and opaque.

²⁹For example, programmers from the 1960s can read machine code much more quickly than the primarily COBOL programmers of the 1970s, while those who entered the field after the mid-1970s sometimes do not recognize the difference between "foreground" and "background" processing. See also Kraft (1977:99-107).

demand for computer professionals would never end. Job forecasts showed a decline in the demand for most other jobs open to college graduates, including teachers, librarians, and even engineers, but a sharp increase in those in computer programming and related occupations.

Anticipating this trend, some economists in the 1960s predicted that electronic data processing would provide unprecedented career opportunities for women. First, they thought, clerical labor would be upgraded, since keypunching, for example, requires more skill than filing. Second, women with college degrees in science or mathematics would be able to put their underutilized training to good use (Baker 1964; Murphree 1986). To some extent, this prediction has come true.

However, in the 1980s, data entry through terminals made keypunching obsolete, and de-deskilling reduced the number of jobs requiring analytical thinking. Still, nationwide, women are reported to be one-fifth to one-quarter of all computer software specialists (Kraft 1978:1). In 1980-82 in the largest New York City newspaper computer department, about twenty, or one-third, of the sixty people working in various job titles as software specialists were women.

This percentage is higher than the national average, probably due to the outcome of the women's affirmative action lawsuit. As part of the 1978 settlement, management agreed to hire more women in mana-

gerial titles. Since the computer production department was just being established, a disproportionate number of women systems analysts and technical managers were hired to comply with the court-ordered quotas.

The women programmers, systems analysts, and managers in my sample have enviable employment histories. They receive regular salary increases, and they have been promoted steadily. They earn more than they could in any other job in which they can picture themselves. In agreement that computer programming is a good field for women, they differ as to why women are doing so well. The most frequent explanation I heard is that the technical skills required of candidates free the occupation from sex-typing, because either one has the requisite knowledge (as measured by the technical interview which is a critical part of the hiring process), or one does not.

Since applicants must pass the same test, the reasoning goes, the hiring decision must be objective and unbiased, thus allowing qualified women to get jobs. Kanter (1977) extends this argument to encompass all managerial positions in corporate structures. Accordingly, as aspects of an organization become rationalized, the jobs in it become more open to outsiders, like women or minorities.

So, she argues, as long as management relies on unwritten rules, they will choose people like themselves, who understand one another because they are alike. Once jobs become part of a bureaucracy, however, they are open to people who are different, because decisions must be based on written rules. Despite its logic, my observations of computer departments do not support this model, since few women or minorities are to be found in the higher echelons of management.

Other informants take a more cynical view. Said one, unconsciously rephrasing Marx's theory of the reserve army of labor, "They're so desperate for programmers around here that they'd hire anyone who can hold a pencil and chew gum at the same time." A third explanation, combining elements of both informant responses, is the most persuasive. According to Kraft (1977), like printers and other craft workers before them, computer programmers are becoming deskilled.

Deskilling computer-related occupations has created a bureaucratic hierarchy of job titles. Women are concentrated at the lower end, much more likely to be employed as coders, documentation writers, or applications programmers than in the more prestigious, creative, and better-paid jobs of systems analyst or systems programmer. They are even less likely to be project leaders or technical managers.

In other words, as the field becomes routinized, a pattern of sex segregation is becoming apparent. In the early 1980s women programmers employed directly by New York City newspapers were cushioned from the gender-related impact of deskilling, because it was offset by the implementation of court-mandated affirmative action hiring goals. It was felt, however, by their co-workers who were consultants from the firm where I worked in the late 1970s; there no women were promoted to managerial positions.³⁰

My informants vary in the extent to which they see either their success, or their failures, as gender-related. Most think themselves judged on the basis of individual merit, a perspective bolstered by what Kraft (1977) calls "ersatz" professionalism, "ersatz" because computer professionals serve companies, not personal clients. They also lack the autonomy and independence that are the attributes of true professionals.

Nor are the gender-related implications of deskilling obvious yet to job forecasters and training counselors, in part because government statistics mask the process. The U.S. census groups together several distinct job categories under the heading "computer software specialist," too general a classification to

³⁰Only a handful of consciously feminist firms depart from this pattern.

reveal that the participation of women in the upper ranks of programming has steadily declined.

My observations of the workplace supporting the argument that computer programming is a male-dominated field. Despite the greater percentage of women who work there, computer departments appear to be almost as much a male preserve as the composing room.³¹ Heavy equipment is designed to accommodate male proportions. For example, tape drives are unnecessarily high, so that tapes are mounted at arm's length for someone at least six feet. Extra tapes are stacked on top of the console, difficult for anyone less tall to reach.

Within the department, there is a strict military style chain-of-command, top-down. Communication between departments is done through designated liaisons. Sports references pervade conversation, and language expresses a masculine bias, as in these metaphors for failure: systems "crash", programs "abort" (Rothschild 1982). Interpersonal relations are described in mechanical terms; a dispute, for example, is a "blow-out".

Competition is a pervasive theme. Even friendly exchanges are games of verbal one-upmanship; the winner is the one who has the last word. In contrast to the printers, who bowl together in teams after work, com-

³¹In part a reflection of the cultural identity of men with machines. See Cockburn (1981).

puter professionals of both sexes use their lunch hour to play the fiercely individualistic game of squash. More than a friendly game is at stake. A woman manager told me that when she played squash with a subordinate who had been passed over for her job, her opponent told others in the office, "I'm sure I'm going to lose," which she then proceeded to do.

ETHNICITY

The computer professionals are the most ethnically diverse of the three occupational groups I compare. Even so, stratification by race, class, and gender is evident. As described by Greenbaum (1979:99), in reference to career ladders, discrimination by sex, race, ethnic group, and age exists between and within ladder categories.

In general, computer operators are men, and the set-up and support functions are performed by women. Both kinds of operations titles -- operators and the more clerical input/output support functions -- are filled by recruitment procedures that usually draw young working-class people, often from immigrant and minority populations.

But, as she notes, discrimination in computer programming titles is based more on sex and class than ethnicity.

This circumstance has been attributed to various causes, including: the relative newness of the field; its bureaucratic basis in rules; and its foundation in measurable knowledge. But most significant is probably the fact that computer programming departments were

expanding just at the time -- the late 1960s and the 1970s -- that the federal government was monitoring compliance with minority affirmative action laws. Failure to comply meant that firms were not awarded federal contracts, a powerful incentive.

In New York City the ethnic representation of minorities -- blacks, Hispanics, and Asians -- in the middle ranks of programmers in the newspaper industry approaches that of the city's labor force as a whole. However, the total number is less than two hundred people, so small that it is difficult to know if minority representation is proportional or merely tokenism.

Also, of the three occupations I consider, only programming has immigrant workers, as programmers and in supporting job titles. Among the reasons for this difference are: the field is not unionized; the skills involved do not require fluent English; and the programmer shortage makes it possible for non-citizens to get "green cards" (legal permission to work).

SOCIALIZATION

Education

As career ladders have become more rigid, so have educational requirements for programming jobs. Computer science majors have replaced the liberal arts degree as the primary educational credential for entry-level jobs. Master's degrees have become more common for managers and systems programmers. On-the-job training

that employers or software vendors used to offer free-of-charge now must be paid for, usually by employees, who attend classes on private time.

One consequence is that job entry is restricted by social class. Higher-level jobs that require formal technical training go to those whose families have the resources to finance their education, or to those who earn enough themselves to pay for post-graduate education. Other liberal arts or community college graduates get clerical jobs at the lower end of the programming spectrum: they "code" or write documentation.

The changes in educational requirements are also part of the deskilling process. Mid-level jobs for which on-the-job training courses used to be provided in the 1960s and early 1970s are less numerous, as the occupation becomes more divided into distinct levels. At the bottom, coders do not need to understand the internal workings of the machine; that knowledge is reserved for the system software specialists, the only ones now who translate machine-format instructions.

Coders can learn what they need to know in a few months. Systems programmers, like printers' apprentices, need years. Unlike printers, though, their formal education is not integrated with their job. They attend school at their own expense and then find a job on the basis of their credentials, rather than through trade union membership. Among my informants, those in

the most technical jobs tend to be thinking about returning to school.

Typical of this trend is a woman in charge of a Mergenthaler systems group. She graduated from college Phi Beta Kappa in mathematics and has a long job history of varied programming experience. Nonetheless, she worries that her lack of an advanced degree will hurt her chances for future promotions.

Also, she said,

People aren't willing to share what they know anymore, not like they used to when we were all learning together and showing each other what the computer could do. It was exciting then. Now, maybe because I'm older or maybe because I'm a boss, nobody is willing to teach me anything. Programmers hoard information, and I think the real reason is that they want to protect their jobs.

Her explanation agrees with the sociological assessment of the field as becoming more and more bureaucratic, routinized, and rule-oriented; and also with the resulting reduction in the number of challenging jobs, making the field less open and less attractive than it used to be.

The computer professionals' rites of passage are more individuated than those of the printers or journalists. Accomplishments they describe as career milestones concern personal autonomy, not shared mastery. The field is so new, and the backgrounds of the practitioners so disparate that these markers are not uniform. Achievements like learning another computer

language, or debugging a systems problem, are occasions for private celebration, sometimes recognized only by the participant. In the strict sociological sense, they are barely rites of passage, because they are not uniform or publicly witnessed.

Recruitment As A Market Transaction

Only a few of my informants had intended to make their career data processing. Their original ambitions included jobs like mathematician, librarian, or elementary school teacher. When they were unable to find jobs, they turned to the new field of computer programming. Almost all found their first job through the "Help Wanted" classifieds.

The ads specified a B.A. degree, and said something like "Logical thinking a must!" or "Must be able to keep track of details." Usually job applicants had to take a general aptitude test before being hired. Only one person in my sample did not follow this procedure. He began in operations, later becoming a programming trainee in another shop. He is now a newspaper programming project leader.

After their first job, programmers find it easy to get others, at least until they are competing for managerial titles. They can continue to find new jobs through the "Help Wanted" columns, or they can use the services of professional job recruiters. Known colloquially as "headhunters" due to their ferocity, these

recruiters work either independently or through employment agencies to fill job openings for employers.

Sometimes they place classified ads themselves. Another common tactic recruiters use is to dial every extension in a programming area looking for a client to send on job interviews. If the programmer accepts a job as a result of an interview arranged by the recruiter, the recruiter is paid a commission between 10% and 20% of the new hire's first year salary.

As with journalists, programmers also find new jobs through weak ties, but there is an important difference. The weak ties that connect computer professionals are likely to be among office co-workers or work-related acquaintances, rather than from a broader social circle. Furthermore, the market operates even when programmers find jobs through weak ties.

For example, the consulting firm for which I worked could have taken on additional contracts if they had more programmers working for them. So, to increase their staff, they offered their consultants an incremental bonus starting at \$1500 for every new employee they could recruit. This practice was cost-effective and resulted in several new hires.

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

In-house Promotions

Although my informants report finding the field of computer programming fluid, the career ladders that give them a sense of mobility also serve to keep them in place (Greenberg 1979:145-48).³² Operations, applications programming, and systems programming are now physically separate departments, with no procedures for transferring from one to another.³³ However, as a result of the women's affirmative action lawsuit, all newspaper job openings must be posted on building bulletin boards so that employees can apply.

However, in general, in-house promotions to programming titles have not been successful. The primary reason is that the training provided is so poor that even capable trainees find it hard to become competent. One illustration of how upward mobility through in-

³²Goldner and Ritti (1967) discuss this phenomenon among professionals in general.

³³My informant who successfully moved from operations to programming has an unusual career history. He had the advantage of being white, and he made the switch only after earning a master's degree and changing employers. After beginning in operations in the mid-1960s, he quit to go to library school, but he found after finishing that he couldn't earn enough to support his family. He returned to data processing in the early 1970s, this time as a programming trainee at a municipal agency. Next, he went to work for a firm developing software packages to be used in libraries. When that firm was taken over by a conglomerate in the mid-1970s, he found a job as a systems analyst at the newspaper where he now works.

house promotion is the exception rather than the rule in programming comes from the printers' retraining program.

Of the four former printers trained as computer programmers under the provisions of the 1974 automation contract, none now works at a newspaper. One accepted the buyout offer. Another found a computer-related but non-programming job at a television network. The director of the training program does not know what happened to the other two; he views it as an "experiment that failed."

None of the paper's programmers I asked has even heard of the retraining program. They do know about two promotions made from within the applications programming department itself; neither has been a great success. The first is a minority woman who had been hired to do clerical work. She insisted that if she were promoted to become a programmer she could do the work, a judgment with which her boss agreed.

He wanted to promote her anyway as evidence of nondiscrimination, since management was then trying to fend off legal action by the black caucus. During my fieldwork she was still working as a programmer in the job to which she had been promoted; she was competent, but she had not been promoted further. According to someone who worked with her, "She could have a hot-shot if her training had been more than being given a lot of

computer manuals to read." In other words, her lack of formal courses or adequate training kept her from advancing further, making her promotion in the long run another failed experiment.

The second example is a case of class bias, not reverse discrimination. A computer department secretary was promoted to the programming staff. My informant, her co-worker, told me that when she first learned of this promotion, she was impressed: "I thought to myself, this is great! Promotion from within, based on merit, the system really works!" She was disillusioned when she realized that the former secretary was in a job created especially for her. She explained,

So my boss decided Sonya was too bright to be a secretary, and he made up this job. It was posted as open in the building, but it was meant for her all along. No one else could have gotten it, nor is this the way they usually get programmers. But Sonya is white, poised, and articulate, and, in fact, when I was interviewed for my job, my first thought was "Is this woman really a secretary?"

The answer turned out to be, not for long. Unlike the black woman, who had herself and the black caucus to thank for her promotion, the second woman was the department head's protege. Her mentor gave her manuals to read, and he gave her challenging assignments for practice, and helped her complete them. She thus avoided the poor training that would have been an obstacle to career mobility.

The Programming Division of Labor

Both cases of in-house promotion, however, illustrate how educational tracking holds in place separate and unequal career ladders based on race, sex, and class. Even within the relatively small applications programming departments of the New York City newspapers, there are several distinctive career ladders; one each for would-be managers, for technical experts, and for outside ("independent") consultants.

One implication of this division of labor is that, like journalists, computer programmers are tracked early in their careers. They are typed either as "technical" or "managerial". Given the rapid pace of technological changes in the computer industry -- which affect both hardware and software -- it is almost impossible to be both. Particularly in large offices like the newspapers, where outside consultants are hired to implement major new systems (like text-editing or typesetting), the path to promotion lies in being considered "managerial" material.

Programmers whose bent is "technical" either become resident experts or they become consultants themselves. Technical types are less likely to be company loyalists, particularly if they are ambitious. If they stay too long at one place, they run the risk of not staying current in the field.

For management the most important aspect of computer operations is to keep their current production systems running. For applications programmers, however, this routine work is boring and a career dead end. They do not share it equally, with each programmer doing his or her fair proportion of "development" (writing new programs) and "maintenance" (updating old ones). Rather, maintenance programmers are at the bottom of the programming pecking order.

Technically-oriented programmers (sometimes called "technicians") write new programs. They are at the top of the applications programming hierarchy, but to stay there and at the cutting edge of new releases in software and new models in hardware, they must continually retool themselves. They must prove themselves over again in a new environment, either by becoming consultants or by frequent job changes.

Outside Consultants

In the newspaper computer departments, consultants serve two purposes. First, some are experts in the typesetting systems used (Mergenthaler or Harris); they are leased as part of the equipment purchasing agreement, to implement the programs and to make any necessary adjustments ("tailoring"). Although such arrangements originally were scheduled to last only a few months, some modifications proved complicated, so they dragged on. At one newspaper, Mergenthaler consultants

were still working three years after their system had been put into production.

Consultants' second purpose is to handle routine office programming applications, thereby reducing the number of programmers directly employed. During my fieldwork one newspaper was hiring its own programmers to take over from the Mergenthaler consultants, while at the same time also transferring some applications programming to other outsiders, less specialized and so less expensive.³⁴ Their goal in both moves was to shift Mergenthaler system work to a small permanent staff.

All in all, during 1980-82, between half and two-thirds of the active programmers in the newspapers' programming departments were outsiders, so-called "independent" consultants. Their widespread use is another indication of the ongoing deskilling that affects newspaper industry programmers (and elsewhere) even as it continues to affect craftsmen like the printers. For example, the three newspaper programming projects being worked on by staff programmers I interviewed are designed to leave even less work to the remaining printers, but they affect other jobs as well.

³⁴Including some from my old firm. Still, this strategy cut costs. Consultants earn at least 25% more than their in-house counterparts, and their firms bill the newspaper about double their salaries.

Most important is pagination, a program to typeset whole pages of type -- instead of just columns -- at the same time. A second innovation in progress is the automation of out-of-town subscribers' mailing labels. This project is in conjunction with the planned production of a new national edition, to be printed in Chicago, omitting New York City local news. When their current subscription expires, out-of-town subscribers will be asked to subscribe to this new edition.

Third, the "morgue" -- the clippings files which reporters consult to get background for stories -- is being made part of an electronic "on-line" data bank in New Jersey. The first project further reduces the work of the composing room. The other two eliminate some jobs through automation, and remove others to non-unionized plants outside New York City. Inevitably, some of the lost jobs will belong to programmers.

The Programmers' Job Market

Applications programmers in the newspaper industry already do very little original work. Even so-called "new" projects usually are modifications of "canned" programs or "packages" -- marketed for a specific purpose, like printing mailing labels. This aspect of deskilling even affects systems programmers at the top of the technical hierarchy. Said one,

Systems programming is less interesting than it used to be, because there are fewer challenges. Operating systems are no longer modified, as used to be commonplace, because with so many new re-

leases it became impractical. So now even systems programming is much more routine, confined to installing new releases rather than customizing systems. It's getting more like the boring stuff applications programmers have to do, the same thing all the time.

For the time being, however, programmers are not worried about finding jobs, but they are concerned about finding jobs they want. Job changes are frequent. Co-workers assume that anyone who comes to the office better dressed than usual is going on job interviews; if he or she also takes a long lunch, people joke, "The negotiations must be serious." One informant held three high-level technical jobs during 1980-81, looking for work she found challenging. Changing jobs so often is unusual, but, as another systems analyst remarked of his own job tenure at a newspaper, the longest he had worked anywhere, "Four years in this business is a long time."

My informant who changed jobs twice within the same year was working as the newly hired head of the Mergenthaler text-editing group when I interviewed her. At first she was excited by the responsibilities of the job, but soon she saw that there would be little technical or personal challenge in it. As an example, she described what happened when she found a system "bug." She noticed that when a news story was transferred from the typesetting system to the archival system, the date

of the transfer was being substituted for the date of the original story. Then, she said,

I fixed it, but I was very careful in how I went about it. I never promised I could do it, but then, using macro language, I thought I could, so I went ahead and tried, but I didn't tell anyone what I was doing. I didn't jump up and down and scream when I saw I had fixed it -- I kept my cool -- but I felt like it.

Her satisfaction came not only from being able to fix the problem, but from having recognized it in the first place. Senior systems analysts had insisted nothing was wrong. They claimed the intent had been to pick up the date of transfer, although that explanation makes no journalistic sense. Their complacency and lack of initiative bothered her; it was her first indication that she had accepted the wrong job. She had no desire to become like her newspaper colleagues, unmarketable experts in the Mergenthaler system, unwilling or unable to move on.

Describing her situation then she said,

This is a nice comfortable office in which to work, but there's a whole world out there, not connected to the Mergenthaler system. And recruiters, you know, are only interested in your last job.

Staying at the newspaper, she thought, she soon would be typed as a Mergenthaler expert, a specialty in little demand. The rest of her career history would be ignored when she looked for another job. To avoid this, she quit after only two months to take a job designing

the compiler of a new personal computer, the current growth area in computer software.

Surprisingly, considering the emphasis on technical skills, subjective criteria play a large, not always acknowledged role, in hiring and promotion. For example, one day when I was visiting the newspaper's computer area, I happened to see a programmer take a nonworking terminal from someone else's desk without first asking permission. When the terminal's "owner" noticed it was gone, she was furious, and complained to her boss. He bawled out the first programmer for moving the terminal; she apologized, and returned it. The incident seemingly ended there.

However, I later learned it had lasting repercussions, changing the boss's opinion of the reprimanded programmer from "reliable" to "immature" and "not good with people". He subsequently decided not to promote her to a supervisory position when one became vacant. The other programmer made the same point to me. She said she was fired from her first office job for "not smiling enough" and "not enjoying the work," although her boss had no complaints about her performance:

He told me I would find out in business personality counts more than ability. At the time I was in college and I laughed about it with friends. Now, though, I see his prediction has been more accurate than I like to think.

OCCUPATIONAL COMMUNITY

Professionalism and Attenuated Diversity

The occupational community of computer professionals is attenuated at best. Coming from diverse ethnic, social, and educational backgrounds, they have no communal or fraternal ties that extend beyond the workplace. Within the workplace, the fragmentation of work keeps people isolated. Even in small newspaper computer departments of fifty to sixty workers, not everyone knows everyone else.

Some of my informants working on different projects have never met. This is a striking contrast to the composing room, where everyone is acquainted. Printers who work on the same shift know each other very well; friendships and enmities go back years. In the computer areas, few people have worked together long enough to accumulate any personal history together.

The structure of the industry and job market encourages mobility. Often programmers find new jobs through paid recruiters, a demonstration of their fragile social ties. When computer professionals find jobs through weak ties, the links are usually workplace-based, rather than, as in the case of journalists, through acquaintances and friends outside it.

The influence of trade unionism among computer programmers is negligible, even where, as in the news-

paper industry, they are unionized. At New York City newspapers all non-managerial computer-related job titles are under the jurisdiction of the Newspaper Guild (with the exception of a few former printers -- retrained machinists -- who now do maintenance work on computer terminals).

In the Guild, however, they are a small minority. Consequently they feel, often rightly, that their concerns come last. Even the one Guild activist I met among the programmers feels, despite his own commitment to trade unionism and the labor movement, that being in the Guild has held him back in his career. His reason is not, as I first assumed, that management has targeted him as an activist.

Rather he believes programmers should have their own union, along craft lines, instead of being submerged in a too-large industrial trade union. Strategically, he reasons, having the power to shut down the computers is the contemporary equivalent of the printers' past ability to stop the presses. Yet this implicit power is not recognized either by management in wages or by their fellow trade unionists in respect.

The Ethic of "Ersatz" Professionalism

Other programmers want to remove themselves not only from the Guild but also from the labor movement altogether. They think trade unionism reduces them to the lowest common denominator, rather than advancing

them according to their merit. They could do better on their own, they say, an attitude encouraged by the ease of movement between jobs for programmers, consultants, and technical managers in the 1970s.

Taking the place of trade unionism in the consciousness of these computer professionals is an ethic of "professionalism," by which they mean they have a body of specialized technical knowledge and a responsibility to their clients, which differentiate them from the less elite and less well educated clericals and operatives. Sociologists do not agree that this definition is sufficient. Without the missing elements of control, they argue, computer specialists can not claim professional status.

The extent to which they have specialized knowledge, as opposed to skills, is also a matter of dispute. While some computer consultants genuinely serve clients, the overwhelming majority of computer professionals, consultants or not, are employees. Even the federal government does not consider computer programmers true professionals.

In a 1971 decision, the Department of Labor ruled that systems analysts, but not computer programmers, belong to the professional ranks. Nonetheless, according to Greenbaum (1979:103),

managers and data-processing associations continue to push the image of professionalism as a form of internal regulation... [it] is being kept very much alive today by plans to push voluntary certifica-

tion of programmers, systems analysts, and data-processing managers.³⁵ The Institute for Certification of Computer Professionals (ICCP)...administers the examination for a Certificate in Data Processing (CDP) arguing it recognizes expertise and professional attitude. While the CDP has begun to gain wider acceptance, it is usually recognized as a form of individual accomplishment rather than formal authority.

The roots of both contemporary professional associations and trade unions lie in medieval guild organization. No matter what the trade, guilds restricted entry to the occupation, eliminated competition between members, and exercised monopoly control over their performance and rewards. Occupations which sociologists consider professional, like doctor and lawyer, retain these controls. As Kraft (1977:94) explains, historically European guilds arose

as much out of a desire to protect monopolistic privilege as a desire to extend useful knowledge and protect it against charlatanism; they arose to protect the vested interests of what were essentially self-employed small businessmen, not highly skilled employees; and they ultimately helped reinforce great social divisions by providing vital services to those who could pay for them rather than those who simply needed them.

To him the most salient feature of guild organization is that it brought together independent, self-employed entrepreneurs, who defined not only the con-

³⁵The consulting firm I worked for is an example. In order to attract clients, the firm's founders wanted employees to become certified. They offered to pay the out-of-pocket expenses of anyone who took the test (about \$300 in the late 1970s) and to pay a bonus to anyone who passed. Only one of the six who tried did.

tent of their work but also the conditions under which it was performed. This description fits the organization of ITU printers more closely than it applies to computer programmers or managers. For example, a systems analyst told me of an instance in which she tried to exercise professional control. She refused to work on her firm's military software contract. Instead of the reassignment she expected, she was fired. She took her present newspaper job because it is in an industry whose computer applications are not defense-related.

The "ersatz" ethic of professionalism to which computer professionals subscribe lacks substance. Additionally, it serves the interest of the so-called professionals less than that of management, for whom it has been a highly successful tool in keeping effective trade unions out of the workplace. Computer professionals do not control either the contents or the conditions of their work; nor do they control who is admitted to the occupation.

Moreover, they confuse labor market conditions such as their ability to change jobs easily and to command relatively high starting salaries with true independence. Even their claim to a specialized body of knowledge in common is questionable. Compared to the shared skills learned by the printers in their long apprenticeship, or the shared socialization experiences of the journalists in the newsroom, programmers have

only individual training, often in very specific products or languages.

In a given shop, their areas of expertise may not even overlap, as in the example of the newly hired systems programmer who was the only one familiar enough with macro language to recognize and fix the date transfer error. Such fragmentation of knowledge seems to contribute to a pervasive sense of insecurity. A recurrent theme in my interviews with computer programmers and systems analysts is the inadequacy of their training; almost all those who plan to continue in technical careers are considering returning to school for formal education.

Yet their personal style is bluff and overconfident. One rarely hears anyone say, "I don't know," in answer to a technical question, perhaps just because they feel continually pressured to prove themselves (like the programmer who didn't tell anyone she could fix a bug until she actually had done it). Certainly the fact that management can not easily evaluate the technical merits of the staff they supervise seems to encourage the computer technicians to become self-promoters.

Their overriding concern is to meet the promised deadline, even at the expense of properly working programs and "professional" behavior, in the sense of being responsible to clients. The widespread practice

of hiring consultants and subcontractors also rewards those on shortterm contracts for appearing competent, without necessarily being so. If a system seems to work, as it did in the case of the incorrect date being transferred, it suffices, because no one has a longterm commitment to the product or to the company. The commitment of computer professionals is to their individual career, more dependent on mobility than loyalty.

CONCLUSIONS

"RESIDUAL" AND "EMERGENT" SUBCULTURES

Since the introduction of computerized typesetting, the newsroom and composing room physically resemble each other. Layout and equipment are almost the same. Formerly a hub of noisy activity, the composing room is now a quiet, carpeted office, undistinguishable from many others. Accompanying the converging similarity of office spatial arrangements and worker dress styles in all three occupations is a homogenization of labor resulting from the widespread application of computerized automation. Whether this trend eventually will result in a homogeneous work culture is still an open question.³⁶

Although the printers grumble that they have been replaced by computers, in reality it is linotype machines and typewriters that have been replaced by

³⁶Nash (1981) discusses this topic.

computer terminals, while the printers' role in production has been taken over by the editorial and programming staffs. In some respects, this has fostered an overarching impersonal workplace culture, in which isolated and interchangeable individuals perform fragmented and repetitive tasks.

The ongoing homogenization of labor -- despite the heterogeneity of the labor force -- is illustrated by the retrained mechanics among the printers, whose new ability to repair computer terminals makes them the only remaining ITU members still able to find new jobs. Yet despite management intentions to the contrary, the work of programming is subject to individualization, quirky, privatized code which is hard for anyone but the author to decipher (in some instances, deliberate job security, but in others due to the inherent complexity of the application).

Thus, in some ways, programmers are a later-day incarnation of artisan printers, whose functions they have taken over. Like them, they are skilled, in demand, highly mobile, and able to change jobs relatively easily. Yet there is a critical difference. Printers who tramped could sit down at a linotype machine and immediately handle it almost as adroitly as if they had been working on it for months. Programmers need time to familiarize themselves with the particular computer configurations and systems in a new shop.

Another similarity between them is reflected in the symbolic importance invested in work space and equipment, treated as if they were private, rather than communal, property, and employee-, not employer-owned. This shared attitude accounts for the similar disputes which arise -- such as the proofreader angry that his customary place at the mock-up board was appropriated in his absence, and the programmer furious that someone removed "her" terminal while she was away.

Their different means of resolution, however, demonstrates that underlying social relations are not the same. In the composing room the two people involved "had words" in public, in front of an audience of their peers, their fellow workers, who then mediated the disagreement. In the computer area, the woman angry at her subordinate complained to their mutual boss, in private, behind closed doors. There was no face-to-face confrontation in front of witnesses.

Thus, so far, there remain three quite separate occupational subcultures, each with a characteristic labor force, social organization, and ethos. Diagrammed schematically, they fit on a continuum, the printers on the left, most anchored in the past. At the right are the future-oriented computer professionals and technocrats. The journalists are in the middle, focused on the present.

Moving from left to right, both temporal and social horizons contract. On one side are union printers, grounded in kin-based and working-class associations that connect workplace and community. Moving from apprentice to journeymen status as a cohort of peers, they identify strongly with the ITU's democratic and benevolent traditions.

At the other extreme are individualistic computer professionals, who identify more with management than labor. Adhering to an ethic of "ersatz" professionalism, they are more likely to make short-term work commitments based on careerism, rather than ideals, or institutional loyalties, such as the journalists' to a newspaper, or the printers' to the union. While such loyalties can themselves be opportunistic, at least they are not solely ego-oriented.

THE OCCUPATIONAL SUBCULTURES COMPARED

In Williams' (1974) terms, the printers typify a "residual" culture and the computer professionals an "emergent" one; the journalists have elements of both. The contrast can be seen in work-related social relationships; in values, and in comparing each of the variables I have just described. Comparison of the three occupational subcultures, variable by variable, reveals an overall transformation from cohesion to diffuseness,

lessening occupational community and diminishing workers' resources for collective action.

Specifically, the comparison reveals these differences in:

AGE AND CAREER TRAJECTORIES

In the United States, workers are presumed to be in the fulltime active labor force from age 21 -- the legal age of maturity -- until they retire, customarily age 65. However, none of the occupations I compare has an age distribution that fits this pattern (nor would any with substantial numbers of women workers). Each deviates in a different way.

In my sample, the average age of the printers is 64. The average age of the journalists is 43, about the same as print journalists nationwide. It is 31 for the computer professionals, because of my selection criteria of experience; otherwise, the average age of a sample of all newspaper industry computer programmers would be a few years younger.

Although these age distributions conform neatly to a schematic in which anachronistic printers represent an aging, residual subculture, and computer professionals a younger, newly emergent one, such an interpretation is misleading. For each occupation other causal factors enter in, namely:

(1) The end of apprenticeships and the freeze on hiring new printers in the New York City newspaper

industry since 1971, leading inevitably to an older population of printers;

(2) The relatively late entry of journalists into the New York city newspaper job market (since most have advanced degrees or experience elsewhere before they are hired here), combined with their relatively early exit from the profession if their careers stall; and

(3) The rapid expansion of data processing and computer programming as an area of expertise, in which the most desirable recruits are recent college graduates, trained in the latest innovations and so not yet technically obsolete.

Therefore, more important than the difference in age distributions is the fact that each occupation has a distinct career trajectory. In their thirties, computer professionals are at the peak of their careers; they are managers, department heads, and entrepreneurs in charge of consulting firms. This is not true of either printers or journalists.

With seven to ten years experience, in their early thirties, most of the printers now employed in the newspaper industry still were waiting for a permanent place on the newspaper's "sub" list. In the newsroom, journalists of similar age and equivalent length of experience still are at the "wired-in" stage, not yet "veterans" or managers. Whatever else the implications, it seems likely that the need of many computer

professionals to seek new challenges has helped fuel the growth in entrepreneurial data processing and consulting firms in the past decade.

GENDER

The proportion of women to men also varies across the same continuum, increasing steadily from left to right. In the composing room they are a mere handful. In the newsroom, they are about a third of the editorial staff. Although there is still sex-typing in specializations -- consumer affairs and food editors are likely to be women, sports columnists and foreign affairs correspondents men -- now there are some exceptions. In the past there were none.

Consistent with the greater ethnic and educational heterogeneity in general in the field, women fill about half the jobs in programming. Nonetheless, across the board, in all three occupations, few women have supervisory, managerial, or union leadership positions. Also, despite the recognition and respect they have achieved, the women in my sample, regardless of occupation, still report instances of discrimination.

Examples are: the linotype operator never able to get a job in her specialty; the reporter who didn't know that merit raises existed, much less that she deserved one; and the programmer blocked in her career because her firm had no women managers. Across occupations the common denominator is that conditions have

improved, thanks to affirmative action and the women's movement, but workplace equality has not been achieved.

The only woman printer with school-age children is also the one who feels most strongly that she has not experienced sex discrimination. On the contrary, she is grateful to the ITU and to her employer for allowing her to take days off when her children needed her. Her situation reflects the fact that the impressive affirmative action legal gains of the 1970s affect only hiring and promotion practices; they do not include benefits for working mothers. Management, workers, and the unions still consider any concessions on their behalf favors instead of rights.

Only a few of the other women in my sample have children, and they were either almost grown-up or no longer living at home. This data supports Cockburn (1983), who argues that the transformation of the workplace to include women is not necessarily a step toward gender equality. Rather we are moving toward androgyny, a new stage succeeding patriarchy, in which some women adopt male models, while others continue to labor under the burden of the "double day" or else become fulltime mothers and homemakers.

ETHNICITY

Of the three occupations surveyed, minority workers are represented proportionately only in computer programming and related job titles. The printers'

ethnic composition, predominantly Irish, Italian, and Jewish, reflects that of New York City's working class in the 1950s. Given the tight control ITU members exercised over apprenticeships and vacancies, other applicants were unlikely to have the personal connections necessary to gain access to the trade.

Despite community pressure exerted in public demonstrations and reader boycotts, and despite the successful minority affirmative action lawsuits, almost all journalists working at a New York City daily are white. The primary reason also lies in recruitment practices. Mentors and informal sponsors play an important (though lessening) role in hiring and promotion.

Members of minorities find it easier to get jobs in programming and technical staff positions. In the 1980s there is more ethnic diversity in New York City than ever before; therefore it stands to reason that blacks, Hispanics, and Asians are found in the greatest proportion in new and expanding occupations. Also they find it easier to get jobs and promotions when formal qualifications are the prerequisites.

PATTERNS OF SOCIALIZATION

Difference in recruitment patterns are related to social relations at work. Printers become printers through family connections, and they continue to use the idiom of kinship to describe their relationship to

one another. Like members of other craft unions, ITU members refer to one another as brothers.

Describing the relationship of his co-workers to the ITU, a detractor extended the metaphor of fraternal traditions, saying,

In a union like this especially, in any craft union, people like to feel that they are protected, mothered, and cared for from the cradle to the grave by Mother Union.

United by real and metaphorical kinship, their relationships to each other in and outside of the composing room are the most egalitarian of the three.

Journalists typically find jobs through weak ties. Once on the job, they must prove themselves in a very competitive environment. My informants, particularly those still in their twenties and thirties, do not find the newsroom convivial, nor do they make many friends there. The warmest relationships they describe are with their mentors. By definition, a mentor-protégé relationship is asymmetrical.

Computer professionals find jobs through brokers. At work people form instrumental friendships, focused on the task at hand. When team leaders form new project groups, for example, they activate these networks. Since computer professionals change jobs frequently, even newcomers to the field soon know people working in different places. When they want to change jobs, or to

recruit others to follow their lead, they often contact former work acquaintances first.

The motive is not always altruistic. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s entrepreneurial consulting firms were paying their employees to be recruiters, paying them a cash bonus for every new hire. Employment agencies, however, still dominate the technical job market; when they match an employer with a employee, it is a strictly market transaction.

Members of the different occupations also behave differently toward one another outside work. For example, the printers know each other quite well. Their backgrounds are similar, and they have worked together for years. After working hours, they used to go out together, socially or on union business.

With some exceptions, journalists and computer professionals are less likely to meet off the job. For the most part, they limit off-the-job socializing to lunch hours. Now, however, in order to maximize computer terminal and printer use, journalists and programmers stagger their lunch hours. Thus, although they may make arrangements to lunch together, they are unlikely to do so as a matter of daily routine.

Dispute resolution also conforms to underlying patterns of social relations. Printers' disagreements take place on the composing room floor. Like a family fight, conflicts are played before an audience who has

a stake in resolving them. The public nature of the quarrel is in marked contrast to those of the journalists and computer professionals. Journalists tend to carry on feuds privately, remembering grudges over time as accounts to be settled. Programmers, working in the most isolated and hierarchical setting, take their grievances to the boss. As well as seeking redress, they are protecting themselves by putting the matter on record, but the record is secret.

In summary, task fragmentation and the more minute division of workplace labor is reflected in the compartmentalization of social life. The integration between work and community that dominated the printers' working lives is being replaced by a sharp division between personal and work life. Thus, the transition from craft to technical labor is accompanied by: (1) a change from personal to instrumental ties at work; (2) a shift from multistranded, tightly knit cohort social networks to single-stranded loosely linked ego-centered ones; (3) greater ethnic and sexual integration of the workplace; and (4) the replacement of kin and communal spheres of influence by market forces.

AVENUES OF MOBILITY

The End of Seniority

Members of each occupation experience mobility differently. In the past, being a newspaper printer was a more secure and better-paid job than working in a book-and-job shop; thus, for some printers getting a job as a newspaper printer in itself represented upward mobility. To get a permanent position on the priority list, one had to first serve an apprenticeship, typically in a book-and-job shop, and then become a "sub". This procedure was orderly, predictable within limits, and based on seniority, before and after hiring.

Seniority determines the order in which printers are promoted to foreman, appointed to union committees, and run for union office. However, even before computerization, promotion to foreman also depended on formal education and technical knowledge, and seniority and experience had begun to matter less as criteria for promotion. Commenting on the difference now in leadership style, particularly since his newspaper changed hands from a small corporation to a large newspaper chain, a foreman said,

As you work with various supervisors and managers you pick out traits from various people that you particularly like, and traits you see that you don't like, you put aside. I guess it's according to what a person admires in the people around him that molds him into the kind of person he becomes if he becomes a foreman or general foremen or manager. It's like weaving a web over many years to become a person you might wish to work for.

Of course in places where they hire someone with a college education and training and a formal background and the promotion was rather rapid, that person doesn't have the opportunity to gather that part of it in, and sometimes they can become very unsuccessful in the job and very unhappy with themselves.

He might as well have been describing the rapid promotions being made in the newsroom and computer programming departments as well.

The Consequences of Career Tracking

In the composing room, chronological age corresponds to privilege and authority; this is not necessarily the case in either the newsroom or the programming and systems areas. In the newsroom, tracking leads to a division between stars and drones, or between reporters who are going places and those for whom promotions and plum assignments, if any, will be few and far between. For journalists the consequence is uncertainty and insecurity, feelings which may abate if recognition and promotion comes early, but otherwise lead to soured job expectations and rapid job turnover.

In computer departments, promotable programmers are identified as technical or managerial and given appropriately challenging assignments, while others perform routine and boring tasks. Ambitious and capable programmers, however, if they feel they have been wrongly slotted, do have alternatives, given the shortage of experienced programmers and systems analysts. One reason is that entry-level jobs no longer provide

on-the-job training. Instead of aptitude tests, employers now require formal qualifications. Since these credentials are transferable, it follows that jobholders have less company loyalty than they used to. To some computer professionals, job mobility is an end in itself.

One of the most frequently exercised options is to join an entrepreneurial consulting firm, where an experienced programmer can either rise through the ranks or meet new potential employers. In effect, the consulting firm acts as an employment broker, with the term of the consulting contract a trial period. If the client hires a consultant, they pay a fee to their firm. Generally, the consultants hired manage the projects they created, while the programmers recruited as consultants are hired for their technical expertise.

For both employees and employers frequent job changes by technically trained personnel have advantages besides mobility (real or imagined). Programmers stay current in their field, enlarging their opportunities to advance, and employers avoid having employees accruing costly benefits or becoming vested in obsolete computer systems. Questions of loyalty do not enter into the equation on either side; decisions are based almost solely on market considerations.

OCCUPATIONAL COMMUNITY

In the social science literature, the New York City newspaper printers of the 1950s are the model of a non-residential occupational community (Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956). This community began to decline soon after, but even today vestiges remain in the printers' bowling league, in the book-and-job shops job rotation scheme, and in ITU local politics. At no point in their history have either the journalists or computer professionals matched them, despite the prevalent popular image -- to which some journalists themselves subscribe -- of the newsroom as a substitute home.

According to my informants, in the past this description was more apt, before the separation of business from editorial departments became blurred, and before newspapers became like other large impersonal corporations. Already on the decline, the use of computers further reduced camaraderie and social interaction; and by monitoring newspaper workers' productivity, they add to the pressures of an already extremely competitive work environment.

For the computer professional, the question of community arises only rarely (Greenbaum 1979; Kidder 1981). Projects are completed under tight deadlines, and once their contribution is made, the programmer or analyst moves on to the next assignment. Computer use

has also contributed to the deterioration of social relationships between departments.

Lack of contact has eroded long-established friendships between editors and printers forged in the daily ritual of "locking up" page proofs. No equivalent relationships have sprung up between editors and systems analysts, because the two rarely meet. For example, my informants in different occupations at the same paper do not know each other, unless they participate in off-the-job activities like NYCOSH or the women's caucus.

CULTURE IN THE WORKPLACE: A REASSESSMENT

When my informants refer to culture, they imply a definition in which culture is the symbolic expression and primary repository of values and behavior. Though more abstract than technology, they refer to it in analogous ways: as immutable, overbearing, and beyond their control. Technology represents the overwhelming forces of progress, and culture stands for equally overpowering aspects of social life. This perception encourages fatalism and passivity.

Although their definition derives from anthropological usage, recent reformulations avoid its pitfalls. Divorced from connotations of a "partial" culture, and treated as not mutually exclusive configurations of values, behavior, resources, and social relationships, the concept of "subcultures" transforms a

stagnant model of culture into one which is applicable to understanding and transforming changing circumstances. The strategies workers and their unions adopt to cope with, or resist new technology, will succeed only if they are predicated on present and emergent, rather than past or imagined, cultural patterns.

The shifts in occupational subcultures I have described are not specific to the newspaper industry. They are likely to be replicated in most major U.S. industries, as computerized automation continues to affect all kinds of production, bringing with it a similar shift from craft to technical and clerical labor. In the newspaper workplace of the 1980s, the imposition of new computerized technology has moved all three subcultures "upgrid." They are more constrained, more alienated, and offer fewer opportunities to exercise competence or maintain social connections.

In this process of cultural change, an entire constellation of social relationships has been altered. Social and temporal horizons have contracted; and the trade union ethic of collectivity has been replaced by one of individualism and professionalism. Where once work and community life were integrated, now they are separate, compartmentalized, and private. Conversely, then, when this fragmentation is overcome, the personal and political consequences can be quite powerful. This is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Deskilling and Resistance in the Automated Workplace

Introduction

Another consequence of the current wave of newspaper automation is a restructured labor force, resulting from the changeover from craft to clerical and technical-professional labor. According to some definitions, this shift has implications for social mobility and for the analysis of social class in the United States. In mainstream sociological theory, "class" is a category in which membership is derived from an analysis of variables such as: education, income,¹ occupation, neighborhood, status, aspirations and the like.

The shift from skilled craft to computer service or clerical jobs would therefore represent a change from working to middle class for the workers involved as well. The shift to mental labor, with educational job prerequisites and the possibility of promotion to managerial ranks (and out of job titles covered by trade unions), also would indicate upward social mobility. Alternatively, rather than treating class as a hierarchy, Marxists define antagonistic social classes,

¹The income for all three occupational groups I analyze falls within a similar range, from \$25,000 to \$40,000, "middle-class" by New York City standards.

whose relationship to one another is predicated on their relation to the means of production.

In capitalist society, in theory, there are just two classes: the capitalists, who own the means of production, and the workers, who do not, and so must sell their labor. Applying this definition, members of all three occupational groups I describe belong to the working class. However, not all Marxist theorists would agree. In attempting to apply Marxist analysis to contemporary capitalist society, some make a distinction between productive and non-productive labor, and between ownership and control of the means of production.

Although there is universal agreement that the printers, as manual craft workers, belong to the industrial working class (even if they compose a labor aristocracy), both these distinctions call into question whether journalists -- engaged in non-productive labor -- and computer technocrats -- who exercise control over the means of production, particularly if they have managerial responsibilities, can be considered true members of the working class.

According to these theorists, workers like journalists and computer technocrats can be categorized in several ways: as the "new middle class" (Braverman 1974), or as the new "petty bourgeoisie" (Poulantzas 1975), or as occupants of "contradictory class locations" (Wright 1979). These analyses make the common

point, with which I agree, that the determination of class must be based as much on political and ideological grounds, as on economic relationships. However, to some extent, these analyses still conceptualize class as an individual attribute, and not as a process.

For purposes of the following discussion, stratification refers to hierarchy, while proletarianization, or the formation of social class and class consciousness is a process, rather than an "attribute" or "thing." The two are different levels of analysis. As Thompson (1978:97) says,

Class formations arise at the intersection of determination and self-activity: the working class "made itself as much as it was made." We cannot put "class" here and "class consciousness" there, as two separate entities, the one sequential upon the other, since both must be taken together -- the experience of determination, and the handling of this in conscious ways. Nor can we deduce class ...as a function of a mode of production, since class formations and class consciousness ...eventuate in an open-ended process of relationship -- of struggle with other classes -- over time.

Moreover, according to Rapp (1982:171),

The concept of class expresses a historical process of expanding capital. In the process, categories of people [are] swept up... and deposited in different relations to the means of production, and to one another... In the light of the historic process of accumulation in the United States... what actually are... accumulated are changing categories of proletarians.

Therefore, formulation of class as a process involving collective consciousness is necessary to understand the consequences of the current wave of workplace automation for class composition and allegiances in the United States. Taken as a whole, the

simultaneous erosion of the newspapers workers' economic base (the decline in mid-level jobs); of their political base (the assault on the trade unions); and of their cultural cohesiveness (the increased ethnic and gender heterogeneity of the work force, the shift of recruitment and education to outside institutions, relatedly, the substitution of formal credentials for the job recommendation through informal networks, heightened occupational stratification, and the ethos of professionalism which serves to reward individual achievement at the expense of collective effort) can be seen not as upward mobility, or as a shift in class allegiance, but as a process of further depoliticization among members of the working class.

In the new, depersonalized automated workplace, with its attenuated social ties, "community" issues become particularly important, because they build on or sometimes create an ongoing interpersonal community, a necessary precondition for collective action, but one that is no longer a necessary condition of production. This principle is illustrated by the issues that motivated newspaper activists during my fieldwork, and by the networks which gave them support. One was feminism, supported by the women's movement (concretely by feminist lawyers looking for a case to test the federal affirmative action laws).

The other, the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) campaign for the safe use of video display terminals (VDTs), has roots in the "citizen action" (Boyte 1980) of the environmental, consumer, and "radicals in the professions" movements. Dreier (1978:71) connects the latter to the degradation of work, seeing the movement as a reaction, which

reflected a significant shift in the class structure of capitalism (and the organization of professional work within it), as well as the specific post-war demographic changes that produced a large age-cohort of college graduates in the late 1960s.

Equally important, however, is the fact that these struggles which originated elsewhere were redefined in terms of the workplace.

The remainder of this chapter has four parts. First, I examine the structural changes in the labor force brought about by the introduction of computers -- setting into motion the process known as deskilling (Braverman 1974), eliminating skilled manual craft jobs and creating new technical and clerical ones, a large proportion of which go to women and non-unionized workers. Second, I discuss the trade union response to these technological and social changes: (1) the failed ITU-Newspaper Guild merger; (2) the 1978 pressmen's strike and its aftermath for the Newspaper Guild; and (3) the differing trade union reaction to women's affirmative action initiatives. Third, I describe the NYCOSH campaign for video display terminal safety, in

the context of the organizational and trade union politics in which it played a part.

In the fourth and final section, I conclude that thus far the new wave of workplace automation has not affected the longstanding pattern of separation between work and residential communities characterizes American urbanization. Nor are the workplace conditions of the mass organizing drives of the 1930s replicated. Therefore, I suggest that collective action is as likely to spring from "communal" or "cultural" movements like the women's movement or the new health-and-safety activism, as from renewed trade union organizing that depends on so-called "class" or "economic" issues. Only both in conjunction will lead to effective political organizing for social and economic justice in the United States.

COLD TYPE AS "TRUE" AUTOMATION

Automation Defined

In the academic literature, the printers are a famous example of "nonalienated" labor in the industrial workplace, because they are autonomous skilled craftsmen (Blauner 1967).² However, although nominally

²Blauner (1967:171) idealizes the printers, taking them to represent manual craft laborers who find meaning in their work. As he explains,

Meaninglessness is rare in craft industries, because the products are unique rather than standardized and because the division of labor remains on the elementary level of craft specialization... In addition, craftsmen tend to work on large parts of the product: linotype operators set the type for all the pages of a book or magazine; hand compositors work on

a "craft" in the 1960s, the occupation of printing has been mechanized since the nineteenth century introduction of the linotype machine. That is, a trade which had been a true "craft" -- work of design and composition done by hand -- then became industrialized.

Some of the guild-like organization that had been part of the trade also changed then, in part in response to the adoption of the new technology, and in part to the rise of corporate capital. Instead of an association of independent locals, the union became a national organization in its own right, with its own constitution and bureaucracy. As described in Chapter II, in the late nineteenth century, the ITU became involved in electoral politics by taking part in party conventions; and in the affairs of local chapters, by levying national dues, running beneficent institutions, and participating in local contract negotiations.

Mechanization, however, is not automation. Writing in the 1960s, Baker (1964) distinguished three ways in which the word "automation" is used. First, there is

the whole page.

Giebal (1979) challenges Blauner's interpretation, demonstrating that the printers' job satisfaction derived from the favorable economic conditions under which they work, and not from their privileged status as "nonalienated" craft labor. His refutation of Blauner is supported by my data. The printers' responses to questions about how cold type has affected them focus on loss of job security, not of craft skills per se.

the popular, everyday meaning of "advanced technological change." Second in use is the more restricted meaning of "Detroit" automation, typical of assembly lines. Machines are integrated with each other through electrical controls, causing automatic movement of components, and repetitive operations produce large quantities of standardized products at high speed.

Detroit automation is still not "true" automation. This, the third meaning of the word, is the one properly applied now, in the 1980s, to the current wave of workplace automation fueled by computers, miniprocessors, and microchips. True automation involves self-regulation. A thermostat is a simple example, the system of interactive computers used in newspaper production is a much more complicated one.

Viewing the future from the perspective of twenty years ago, Baker saw the potential of "true" automation for reducing the tedium and monotony of many factory jobs, and for eliminating many dangerous and back-breaking tasks. She predicted that the benefits of white-collar, non-menial employment would be extended to more and more highly-educated workers, particularly women who would take advantage of new opportunities both in clerical work and on the assembly line. Key punching, she mistakenly thought, would be challenging work in itself (Murphree 1984).

As she explained, not noticing the contradiction, the diminished training time required for assembly line tasks would require workers to be more highly educated so that they could assume more responsibility and do tasks requiring initiative and judgment. In part, her prediction has been fulfilled in the newspaper industry, where more jobs have opened up for women since the introduction of computers. However, the present situation is not as advantageous as she envisioned.

Most jobs created by automation are not creative or challenging. The newspaper industry is no exception. Both clerical and manual jobs have been continually downgraded -- not just once, with the introduction of computerized systems, but in a series of steps. Work has increasingly been made subject to systems of both bureaucratic and technical control,³ routinized and fragmented into boring and repetitive tasks, and into alienating, ill-paid, and, most importantly, non-unionized jobs.

This process of fragmentation, routinization, and mechanization whereby craft workers lose their traditional knowledge, skill, and control over their occupation has become known as deskilling (Braverman 1974), or as the degradation of work (Wood 1982). In the

³As described by Edwards (1979), except that he sees them as sequential not coexistent.

academic literature, the printers are a classic case (Zimbalist 1979), although not all of them would agree with this characterization. For example, a forty-eight year composing room veteran, now a Kamex machine [used for graphics and page make-up] operator, prefers the new processes, because they are cleaner and more interesting. For him they represent a new challenge, unlike linotype, changing all the time:

I wanted to test myself to see if I could accomplish what was needed. I was saying to myself, "I wonder if I can adapt to this." Thank goodness, I think I did.

The Impact on Women's Jobs

In New York City in the mid-1970s, as a result of their 1974 automation contract, the skills printers had learned in a four-to-six year apprenticeship became obsolete. Reporters now type their stories directly into a computer, using a video display terminal instead of a typewriter, and bypassing the composing room entirely. Copy editors edit stories in the same way. Classified ad-takers type ads they receive directly into the computer as well, and the computer performs the task of justifying lines and counting column inches.

With only a few exceptions, like the retrained machine operator just quoted, the printers' new skills, as they are quick to note, are those of typists. In fact, they learned them in a six-week training course taught by secretaries as typing instructors. Thus, not only have their skills been degraded, but also their

status and self-image, since they now see themselves as doing "women's work," by definition "unskilled" -- in part a legacy of their successful nineteenth century struggle to keep women out of the composing room. As one said scornfully, "Any high school girl could do my job."

However, neither the linotypist's vision of high school girls taking over their jobs, nor Baker's optimistic prediction that the computer revolution would provide jobs for the underused skills of college-educated women, has come true. Reality has proved more complex. Computer-related jobs form their own hierarchy, with data entry clerks at the bottom and software designers and technical managers at the top.

Unlike printing, an almost entirely male occupation, women are well represented in these new jobs. Their presence in clerical jobs like data entry is not unexpected (Hochwald 1985), but they are also found in the well-paying jobs of computer programmer and systems analyst. To some extent, as Baker foresaw, education has made the access of women to technical jobs easier, but two other factors contribute as well. First, women always have had an easier time entering a new field before entry requirements become standardized (Davis 1979). Second, women get better jobs when there is a shortage of skilled labor, as has been true of computer programmers through the 1970s and 1980s.

However, it has been argued that the deskilling process has already begun in computer programming and systems analysis, in whole (Kraft 1977) or in part (Sullivan and Cornfield 1979), reducing the skill level necessary. Since their inception forty years ago, the expansion of computer applications has been accompanied by the increasing separation of "hardware" -- the circuitry -- from "software" -- the computer languages and programs. Like other instances of deskilling, the trend has been toward fragmentation and work rationalization. Examples include the creation of English-like computer languages, and the marketing of specific shared-purpose programs, like those used in newspaper production.

These advances encourage the imposition of hierarchy on programming teams, with less skilled coders replacing more skilled programmers where possible. Not surprisingly, the coders are usually women, and their supervisors, the technical-managerial project leaders, men. Thus, as long as computer programmers remain in short supply, the market for women's labor will continue to grow, but the computer-related jobs in which they work may well be less desirable.

The Impact on Productivity

New York State Department of Labor statistics show that between 1973 -- just before the automation contract went into effect -- and 1980 -- when I began

fieldwork -- the number of workers employed by New York newspapers declined from 18,200 to 16,000. Some of this decrease was due to changes which preceded the 1974 automation contract. As a composing room foreman describes it:

Even before automation productivity was up because I made it go up, by laying off subs regardless of how the other men felt. I refused to be forced into unnecessary overtime [reproduction]. My philosophy was: Okay, if we can't get the work out, we won't get it out. The first year I was here I cut the man-hours per page from 26 down to 22. It was hard, I can tell you.

But now with automation it's about eight printer man-hours per page. You read a lot of things and you hear a lot of things about productivity in the United States that's a big lie. I'm sure industry growth and production in the United States has probably multiplied five or six times since. But the actual work force -- actual workers that is -- has only increased by maybe half a million.

But the middle-management area -- the white-collar worker -- the so-called thinkers, engineers, and what-have-you -- has probably increased by three or four or even five million. So if the country itself is having a problem it's not because of productivity, it's because of poor managerial effort.

And I would lay that on the shoulders of middle management people. Every industry, this one included, has a middle management bureaucracy that feeds upon itself. Always as you create departments and as you add people to middle management, they look to put more and more people between them and the blue-collar workers. So they get further and further from the problem. It's very inefficient.

Increased productivity in the newsroom is also tied to automation. There, too, before cold type, levels of middle management had been rising. Throughout the 1970s, without any increase in the number of reporters, newspapers expanded their operations through zoning -- targeting news and advertising for particular geographic regions in separate editions.

For a while, since each zoned edition had separate classifieds, real estate ads, and neighborhood news, this meant more work for the remaining printers. Then, during my fieldwork, a new computer system transferred typesetting the classifieds to the "girls" in the telephone room. Instead of writing ads on special forms and relaying them to the composing room, as they had done previously, they now key them in directly as typeset input to the newspaper production system.

Recycling the same story for several different purposes, also maximizes profitability, a practice, like zoning, in effect before cold type but made even more cost-effective after its introduction. The sequence is: A reporter writes a story. First, it is published in the newspaper. Second, the news service extracts that story, and sends it out to their subscribers. Third, the information bank takes the whole newspaper, stores it in computer files, and then sends it out on microfilm to libraries and other archives.

In the past, in each of these instances, someone would have had to retype and reset each story. Now, however, they are saved automatically by the computer after their first appearance in print, and then electronically transferred to the information bank. Since only ads are discarded, no one even needs to decide which articles to keep, and which to eliminate.

Sometimes a fourth use made of the same copy is that a publisher reprints it in a book on a given topic -- such as vacation advice, or Congressional hearings. In this instance, at most what has to be done is to change the typeface or column width -- a keystroke -- so that it becomes book format. An ITU official said, explaining this process,

Presto -- press a button and another generation of material is born from one original story! Talk about productivity!

Management also uses cold type to make copy editors more productive. They now have the printers' former task of page make-up added to their other duties, giving them more, not less, responsibility. In their case, they argue, automation has enhanced their jobs. At a Newspaper Guild Dual Minimum Committee meeting I attended, a copy editor explained

Our situation is the opposite of the ITU, where their skills have been downgraded. The Guild has got to push to upgrade people on the basis of their newly needed skills. I'm an example. Now I have to code the stories on top of everything else, and there's a much greater potential for screwing up.

Just the same, the copy editors were subject to as much or more productivity pressure as everyone else. As another copy editor remarked, "De-skilling? Deskilling is more like it." Indeed, the purpose of that meeting was to find the appropriate rationale -- such as independent judgment or the amount of education a job required -- to enable the Guild to bargain effec-

tively to raise the minimum pay scale for a group of mid-level employees, mostly editorial workers, whose jobs had become more demanding since cold type.

The Impact on Middle Management

In the trend toward hierarchy, the organization of computer-related occupations conforms to the bureaucratization that has already taken place in the composing room and the newsroom. A printer who witnessed the growth in middle management at one newspaper describes it firsthand:

When I was a boy here, an apprentice [in the mid-1940s], and in my early years as a journeyman, the men in all the different craft unions reported to one man, the Mechanical Superintendent, instead of a Production Manager. And that Mechanical Superintendent reported to the General Manager or the Business Manager, who in turn reported to the President or Publisher. And at that time they held weekly staff meetings with all of the General Foremen from all the craft unions, sat with the Mechanical Superintendent and the General Manager and hashed out the weekly problems or new equipment or new plans. It went directly from that group to the General Manager to the President.

That doesn't happen anymore. In this paper, theoretically at least, and in all newspapers now, the manufacturing process is broken up into pre-press and manufacturing press, and you have an Assistant Production Manager who is the pre-press assistant production manager, and you have an Assistant Production Manager who manages the manufacturing end, the printing of the paper. These two in turn report to an Assistant Production Director who reports to the General Manager or Business Manager as the case may be.

And of course there may be even more layers put in there. Here instead of a Business Manager right now we have a Finance Officer, a Chief Finance Officer, and a Treasurer, and between them they take care of the business end. Over the past fifteen years all I've seen is growth in that area.

As newspaper publishing became more like any other business, hierarchy increased in the newsroom. In

the same period, according to Dreier (1978:76),

The growing size and complexity of the daily newspaper tended to bureaucratize newswork ...At each stage of the process -- identifying newsworthy events, gathering and reporting the news, and editing the copy -- journalists have less control over their immediate tasks.

As Smith (1978:13) points out, the newsroom hierarchy of the newsroom is reproduced in the design of their computer systems. Depending on their password, journalists only have limited access to material stored in the computer:

Each user of a video display terminal has to "register" with the computer before it will offer him a window on the text it holds, and each layer of the hierarchy in a newsroom has access only to those parts of the text which it is entitled to see. The electronic newsroom is a great stickler for rank and a meticulous observer of security.

Now, with machines to maintain the hierarchy of command, the trend toward increasing layers of middle management is probably over.

In the newsroom, for example, the added responsibilities of the copy editors include some formerly managerial functions. Therefore, the likelihood is that in time extended computer use will reduce the relative number of people in mid-level jobs. Unlike "simple" and "Detroit" forms of automation, which tended to increase management control by adding managerial levels (Marglin 1974; Stone 1974), computerized automation eliminates managers and staff because some of their former functions, like gathering information, monitoring producti-

vity, and writing reports can be done more efficiently through computers.

Furthermore, automation means that work can be moved to workers outside trade union jurisdiction. For example, New York State Department of Labor statistics show that in the period 1973-1980, employment in computer programming consulting firms more than doubled, growing from 914 to 2180. Their payroll quadrupled, from about \$3.5 million in 1973 to more than \$14 million in 1980. In the related area of data processing, firms and firm size also grew, with total employment increasing from 4,181 to 6,774, and total payroll from about \$12 to \$30 million.

This is the sector of the New York City economy that benefits from the practice of subcontracting, whereby employers, including newspapers, hire programmers for specific projects on shortterm contracts. Even clerical jobs like keypunching, included in data processing employment figures, can be subcontracted out to nonunion workers. Some NYCOSH and Newspaper Guild members would have liked to make these temporary workers the target of an organizing drive.

However, whether the changeover results in a net gain or loss of jobs overall is hard to say. Certainly within the newspaper industry, the actual number of new hires has been relatively small. Even in 1980, when all the new equipment was in use, and the printers had had

several opportunities to avail themselves of management buyout offers, the total programming staff was much smaller than the number of displaced printers who remained. Each composing room had between 350 and 500 printers still on the active roster. By comparison, the number of programming department personnel -- including support staff like consultants, operators, and clerical workers, ranged between forty-five and seventy-five.

The Pincer Attack: Unit Clarification

In addition to the decline in the actual number of potential industry jobs under trade union jurisdiction, the Newspaper Guild has been hard hit by a management offensive aimed at eliminating some of the still existing jobs from union jurisdiction. During my fieldwork all three New York daily newspapers had "unit clarification" petitions pending before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The reason given in these actions for excluding titles from the Guild is that they are "supervisory," with the authority "to hire, fire, transfer, promote, assign, or discipline other employees," or to "direct employees, or adjust their grievances."

On these grounds, in 1978, the Times was seeking 415 additional exclusions from their Newspaper Guild bargaining unit of about 2000 employees, the Daily News 300 from a unit of about 1300, and the Post another 100 from a unit of about 450. Included were employees clas-

sified as managers, supervisors, personnel handling confidential matters (in this category at the News were seventeen computer operators!), and the plant security guards and supervisors.

An earlier unit clarification petition filed by the Post in 1976 was settled in January, 1981, when the NLRB ruled on a suit filed by the New York Post. In a 185-page decision, they excluded 46 of the 156 employees management had requested. Twenty-six were in the business department, and twenty in the newsroom. Among the affected titles were: Chief Copy Editor, National Editor, various Weekly and Deputy Editors, News Editor, Day and Night Sports Editor, Editorial Writer (also the publisher's speechwriter), Art Director, Data Processing Managers, Analysts in the advance systems research department, Classified Sales Manager, Chief Telephone Operator, and several Home Delivery Managers.

Since management had won their case for less than a third of the employees they wanted excluded, Guild officials saw the Board's decision as a union victory, at a rather steep price. Contesting management just for this one petition cost the Guild national and local about \$300,000.⁴ Nonetheless, as the Guild negotiator for computer programming titles points out,

There is a danger that once titles like systems analyst are removed from bargaining, management can

⁴Guild Reporter, February 13, 1981.

reclassify all programming titles as "systems analysts." This tactic has been used in other shops.

Some of those in the contested titles, however, were unaware of the ongoing arbitration, much less what was at stake. A former trade union organizer, now a well-paid systems analyst, was delighted that she would not have to pay union dues if her title was deemed "managerial" and removed from Guild jurisdiction!

At present, "unit clarification" is an attack on the trade unions. Potentially it also is a means of reducing the ranks of middle managers and mid-level staff as well. Once formerly covered job titles are exempt from trade union protection, they can be removed altogether. Anecdotal evidence that some managerial titles in the newspaper's business departments have been eliminated comes from two composing room foreman I interviewed. They noted that when their newspaper's management changed (and installed cold type and computerized accounting), the new owners streamlined costs by leaving some positions, such as the purely supervisory "General Manager," vacant.

Other partial evidence comes from an analysis I made of the changes in job titles covered by the Newspaper Guild between the pre-automation contract year 1974 and the first post-automation contract year 1978. There were about 285 job titles, representing 2000 jobs. Job title grades range from 0 to 10. Examples

are: 0, assistant cashier; 3, keypunch operator; 5, secretary; 8, programmer; and 10, reporter.

According to a Guild representative, in 1967 the average wage was grade 6, but by 1980 it was about 8.5, demonstrating both a trend toward higher-paid white-collar work and a reduction (through attrition) of lower-paid clerical and service workers. The results of my analysis confirm this pattern. In these four years, forty-seven titles were dropped, and fifteen added. Of the fifteen new titles, all but one are 6 or higher.

The exception, a grade 4, is not a new title, but a newly renamed one. An "Ad-Taker" became an "Ad-Visor", reflecting the fact that computers had changed the job. Classified ad-takers used to write down ads dictated to them over the telephone; now, they input the ads themselves, helping the caller with word choice and abbreviations. In this case, change in job title reflects an increase in responsibility, without a raise in pay.

Without knowing the number of employees in each job title, this evidence is not conclusive. Although some relevant data is available in court-mandated compliance reports made by management to the women's caucus, and some numbers also were part of an analysis made by the Newspaper Guild Dual Minimum Committee, the categories used are not the same. Job titles change in every contract. Thus, even knowing the number employed

in some categories at various times does not provide data comparable over time, and so can not furnish proof positive that the number of people in mid-level Guild job titles is declining in absolute terms.

Further complicating attempts to unravel claims of deskilling or upgrading is the fact that the job descriptions now in use in the newspaper industry were written in 1948. They have not been revised since. Nonetheless, the Newspaper Guild has been reluctant to co-operate with managements effort to overhaul them.

Guild unit leaders did agree to allow a consulting firm to survey its members on how closely official job descriptions matched what they did, but at the same time they advised their members to comply as minimally as possible with management's request that they describe their jobs in detail. Management insisted that they needed to compare their salary levels with equivalent jobs in New York City to see if they were "competitive." To Guild leaders opposed to changing the obviously obsolete job descriptions, this argument echoed the justification for imposing a dual minimum wage scale and also was aimed at decreasing the Guild's bargaining power.

THE TRADE UNIONS UNDER SIEGE

The Failure of the ITU-Guild Merger

If the relationship between proletarianization and class consciousness were simply cause-and-effect, then the combined effects of deskilling and the management offensive on both the ITU and the Newspaper Guild should have led their members to quickly affirm the merger first proposed in the mid-1970s, instead of dragging it out to its ultimate demise. By creating a single, united bargaining unit to negotiate with the publishers, the merger would have ended rivalry over jurisdictional lines and disputes about crossing each other's picket lines. It also might have set a precedent for the creation of an industry-wide newspaper workers' trade union.

However, in this instance automation did not foster solidarity. The ITU had begun merger talks with the Newspaper Guild as far back as 1960, before cold type had begun to erode the printers' strength.² But by 1980, when the merger originally should have taken place, the printers I spoke to had as many reasons against the merger as for it. For one thing, despite the merger talks, jurisdictional disputes were still occurring in the post-automation newspaper workplace.

²The then ITU President Brown is quoted in a 1981 ITU Bulletin as favoring these talks.

the merger talks, jurisdictional disputes were still occurring in the post-automation newspaper workplace.

For example, in 1980 the issue of pagination almost went to arbitration. The ITU unsuccessfully argued page make-up was traditionally the work of their members. However, management sided with the Newspaper Guild, who insisted that pagination is "artistic" or "creative" work and so under their jurisdiction. The unfairness of the distinction antagonized the printers, since it was based more on class bias than on the reality of the printers' work. Before automation, they shared responsibility for the paper's aesthetics and final appearance.

Said one, mourning the loss of distinctive typefaces,

Electronic typesetting destroyed the design of the various typefaces that the newspapers used, because the computer people had no concept of the original proportions of type design, and so they allowed the computer to distort them, in the process destroying art. Typefaces aren't meant to be condensed or expanded by computer, they were designed to be seen in a certain way. They were beautiful as they were.

The compositors had also demonstrated their creativity in the past in work-related inventions. For example, even after cold type was installed, it was a compositor who found a way to get crossword puzzle black spaces printed using the computer. However, the corporation, not the inventor, got the patent and the credit.

Also, during the 1970s the number of typos in the New York City newspapers increased noticeably. Words

were misspelled, continuation lines dropped, paragraphs repeated or garbled and sometimes lost entirely. Although these mistakes are due partially to the new production processes, the more important reason is that the printers, former proofreaders, are no longer allowed to correct typos when they see them. Despite the fact that cold type makes corrections much easier, the printers have explicit instructions, which they resent, to fix mistakes only in classified ads and obituaries.

They therefore blame the paper's deteriorating appearance since automation on Guild members like the computer professionals and journalists, who are now responsible for their own proofreading. They complain about the third-rate printing and the improper word breakage that occur regularly, because the computers don't hyphenate words properly. They also object to the recurrent misspellings. Said one, noticing an error,

Imagine! A reporter wrote "champagne" the drink spelled "champaign," as if were like "campaign"! And they're supposed to be educated people!

The persistence of rivalry and jurisdictional disputes with the Guild, on grounds that the printers found unwarranted, is not the only reason many of the printers came to oppose the merger. Others they gave included, "Two weaks don't make a strong," meaning their union and the Newspaper Guild together; "The Newspaper Guild is weak because it has two warring factions, and because ambitious people get promoted out;"

and "The Guild isn't needed as much as the mechanical unions and the drivers," the last the argument that won the day, defeating the merger.

In other cities, the Teamsters Union -- the merger candidate succeeding the Newspaper Guild only to be rejected in turn -- is the parent union of newspaper deliverers, who distribute the newspaper to newsstands and subscribers. At this stage of automation, they are the only workers left whose walkout can prevent a newspaper from publishing. Furthermore, the printers' self-image, bruised by the devaluation of their craft skills to clerical "women's work," may have made them more eager to join the all-male tough-guy Teamsters, their trade union "brothers," than the Guild, almost half of whose members are women.

If these reasons made a possible merger with the Teamsters a strategic choice for the printers, for the American labor movement as a whole, the rejection of the Guild is another lost chance to reach out to the growing number of unorganized clerical workers who will inherit the printers' jobs as they retire. They may well work at non-union cold-type print shops doing subcontracted work at piecework rates, rather than at the newspaper's unionized plant. The Guild, already representing women and clerical workers, might have been able to organize these workers; a union of teamsters

and printers is unlikely to try.⁶

From the perspective of building working class alliances, the failure of the ITU - Newspaper Guild merger reflects the difficulty of basing organizing strategy solely on economic issues. Further, it illustrates that deskilling does not necessarily inspire unity and working class cohesiveness. A second example is the 1978 New York City pressmen's strike, and its aftermath, particularly its impact on dissident Guild members.

THE 1978 PRESSMEN'S STRIKE

Causes of the Strike

In August, 1978 the pressmen struck the Times, the Post, and the Daily News, in the last major strike to affect all three New York City daily newspapers. It lasted 88 days, and was reminiscent of the long 1963 and 1974 printers' strikes which also had shut down all the city's papers for months. Its immediate cause was the imposition of new work rules.

The pressmen had said they would strike if the new rules were put into effect. When the three papers, acting in concert,⁷ posted them on a Thursday night,

⁶Thus far, the leader in organizing clerical workers has been Local 925 of the Service Employees International, an offshoot of the feminist-organized 9 to 5 (National Association of Working Women) not of the traditional American labor movement.

⁷Their actions were co-ordinated by the Newspaper Publishers' Association of New York.

they walked off their jobs. They were quickly supported by the Newspaper Guild and by the Teamsters Union, representing the deliverers. Had the newspapers not shut down, the printers would have had to cross the picket lines, since they were forbidden to strike under the terms of the 1974 automation contract.

At the time there was debate about whether the Guild struck in sympathy with the pressmen, or whether they were locked out by management. Evidence could be mustered to support either interpretation of events. Supporting the lock-out position were signs that management wanted a strike, or, if they didn't actively want it, they expected it and exercised control over its timing. A spokesman for one paper said (quoted in Branson 1978),

In our judgment, it was time to bring the matter to a head. In the first place, it's no secret that July and August are a slow period in this business in terms of advertising revenue, and, if you're going to have a confrontation, it's better to have one in a slow period. Also, our new "cold type" technology, which replaced our older, heavier, "hot type" technology over the July 4th weekend, requires fewer people to handle it. It was our feeling that the present contract -- which both sides have observed since March 31st while a new one was being negotiated -- allowed us to hire fewer people than we had been hiring. Of course, the union does not agree.

At stake for the pressmen in the strike were not only jobs, but also the workplace control which had been their prerogative since the nineteenth century. This battle was expressed in terms of "unit" versus "room" manning. Unit manning, the older system, means

This battle was expressed in terms of "unit" versus "room" manning. Unit manning, the older system, means that a fixed number of men -- at New York City newspapers seventeen before the strike -- is assigned to each press, some to operate it and others to perform auxiliary tasks of cleanup and maintenance. The two functions are not interchangeable, and the men assigned to each do not have equal status.

At present pressmen have "frozen" categories -- pressmen, apprentices, and boys -- from which it is impossible to move up. However, they can be hired in different categories per night, in which case they are paid accordingly. Under room manning, the system proposed by the publishers, current employees would have lifetime job security in exchange for conceding to management the right to deploy pressmen any way they wanted and to reduce the number of total jobs through attrition.

The pressmen rejected the claim that cold-type technology made the older pressroom manning requirements obsolete. The pressroom is the mechanical department least affected by new technology. No new type of automation has been implemented there. The one change made since 1923 had been to install faster presses, which upped production, but did not reduce the physical labor involved. As the pressmen argued, the increased production made possible by the high-speed presses

allowed them to keep up with the higher number of copies required per press run due to greater circulation figures, but it did not decrease their workload.

Also, the pressmen felt the survival of their union was threatened. Across the country publishers were using the same tactics against them. In November, 1978, for example, the St. Louis pressmen also struck over proposed cuts in manning. Most alarming was the outcome of the 1975 Washington Post pressmen's strike three years earlier. There management had continued publishing with the help of union employees who crossed picket lines, and of automated production techniques learned by specially trained employees at the Oklahoma Newspaper Production and Research Center, a publisher-supported "school for scabs."

By 1977 enough strikebreakers were on the job in Washington to vote the Pressmen's Union out of the paper. Therefore, the New York pressmen saw the insistence of the publishers on reducing their ranks as a first step toward eliminating their union altogether. In essence, although in different guise, this was the same tactic the publishers were pursuing against the Newspaper Guild in the NLRB unit clarification proceedings taking place at the same time.

The New York strike lasted until the beginning of November. Neither side was a clear winner. In fact, as a veteran labor observer (Raskin 1979) points out, the

main outlines of the agreement were laid out at a preliminary meeting held between the Pressmen's Union president and the publishers before the strike began. Manning was reduced, but on a unit not room basis.

The number of apprentices and journeymen was lowered, as was the number of "boys" assigned to the clean-up crews, but by then the wait for an apprentice to become a journeyman was up to twenty years, anyway. Additionally, at one newspaper, the Times, management offered buyouts to speed attrition. Payments ranged from \$15,000 to \$29,000, depending on how long a pressman had been working, with higher amounts offered to younger workers. About 5%, or 29, of the Times pressmen took advantage of the buyout offer.

The Newspaper Guild's Role

In the publishers' race to get the newspapers back on the streets before Election Day, and in time to profit from Christmas shopping advertising, and in the craft unions' impatience to get back to work, Newspaper Guild negotiators found themselves last on everyone's agenda. Despite the publishers' give-back ultimatum -- which included dual minimums, or less money for new hires even if they worked the identical job -- craft union leaders insisted that the Guild's bargaining demands were too trivial to keep their members out.¹⁹

¹⁹Raskin (1979) traces the charge of triviality to a Guild demand for non-discrimination against homosexuals. Although it was never raised in negotiations,

Faced with this opposition, and with resistance from many of their own members who had already demonstrated their lack of labor sympathy by continuing to work through the strike, Guild leaders withdrew the picket lines they hastily had thrown up. As in a parallel situation at the Washington Post four years earlier, when the Guild struck without craft union support, the impact of their staying away on their own would have been slight.* The flow of words from wire services, columnists, and editors in exempt titles would have filled the news and editorial sections.

Ads set outside the newspaper plant, plus those typeset by the nonstriking printers, would have been sufficient to pay for the press runs. So, in recognition of their poor bargaining position, the leaders of the Guild urged their members to ratify the contract then on the table. In a close vote at a well-attended meeting, the members accepted their decision (Stetson 1978). The contract approved was slightly but not substantially improved from the pre-strike May offer. At the time the leaders had not recommended ratification, but then it had been put aside during the strike.

craft union leaders saw it on a list of potential demands, and refused to consider it seriously.

*The federal mediator in New York City in 1978 was the same as at the 1974 pre-cold type Washington Post Guild strike, when the paper continued to publish.

During my fieldwork three years later this decision was still controversial. Those in favor said that there had been no choice, and that nothing could have been gained by prolonging a strike that everyone wanted over. Opponents, however, draw contrasting lessons from the role the Guild had played. Their viewpoints are illustrated by two of my most astute informants.

Both are editors, from different departments, who like their jobs, whose careers are going well, and who, although functionally managerial, identify themselves as trade union sympathizers. Yet they interpret the 1978 events quite differently. To one, an activist, they demonstrate the Guild's potential power; to the other, a skeptic, and more typical of the membership at large, they prove its irrelevance.

"Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory"

In their disillusionment and distrust of the elected Guild leaders then in power, the two agree. They differ on the extent to which even a well-run Guild could have influenced the outcome of the strike. To the activist, events demonstrated that the union did have a presence, more effective than had been realized previously, but on which the Guild's leaders had failed to capitalize. In his opinion,

The strike surprised people by the extent to which the union did have a real presence initially. The strike vote had a turnout of about 1200 of the 1500 members, and the vote to strike was about ten to one. The talk around the shop was that they're going to force us to strike, and we'll disintegrate and we'll

have no power at all. But the strike experience proved that they couldn't publish without us. We did have some power, and the unit stuck together in some sort of way.

Other observers disagree with his assessment that the newspaper couldn't publish without Guild participation, for several reasons. First, there is evidence that management wanted a confrontation, and that, in this strike, they were the militants, not the union. One factor is its timing: at the largest and most influential of the papers, the New York Times, the strike occurred barely a month after the last linotype left the composing room. It appears that cold type in place, management was ready to take the unions on.

Furthermore, management anticipated the strike. As early as May, new hires were told that they couldn't start work immediately, because there was going to be a big strike that would force the papers to shut down. A photographer was interviewed for the position she now holds in May, 1978. Afterwards, she said she understood that the job was hers. But then, back at the out-of-town newspaper where she was working, she got a phone call from her new boss. He told her,

I have to put the whole thing off -- there's going to be a long strike here. When the strike is over, I'll hire you.

If the publishers, not the unions, precipitated the strike, then the Guild was locked out rather than acting independently from trade union principles.

Second, some of the key editorial workers continued to work during the strike, choosing job loyalty over worker solidarity. Thus, the degree to which the paper would have been handicapped by the Guild walkout is open to question. Since the papers did not publish, however, even top editors were acting only as caretakers. They had no decision-making authority or influence over how the strike was handled by the higher echelons of management. This situation reduced them to depression and rage, which they in turn directed at editorial workers who refused to cross the picket lines, whom they accused of "betraying a trust."

Third, how well the Guild stood together is also moot. Some members who were asked to work during the strike did, while others had no choice but to stay out since the papers were not in production. Still others stood with the Guild because management had alienated them by forcing them to choose a side within twenty-four hours. Nonetheless, one outcome of the strike was a new community of Guild members who took the union seriously and who identified with the labor movement.

They had become acquainted during the strike. They met each other attending meetings, working at interim newspapers, and borrowing money at the Guild credit union. Guild members who were committed to trade unionism came together on the picket line, some meeting

for the first time. When the strike ended, they saw it as a lost opportunity. As the activist said,

The Guild's role was entirely passive. I remember coming to pick up strike benefits and people would ask the Guild representatives, "Well, what are our demands? When are we going to do our contract negotiations?" And the answer was always: "Well, we keep asking them to come to the bargaining table, but they tell us all their negotiators are busy with the pressmen." Well, it shouldn't have stopped at that, but it did, a fact management used very nicely because then after the pressmen had ratified there was suddenly this impasse in the Guild negotiations. So, what are you going to do? The other unions [the stereotypers, photoengravers, and drivers] had ratified, so it wasn't a question of staying out, but of going back out. And management gambled that they wouldn't do it.

A gamble that was never put to the test, because:

What the Guild did, after all those mistakes, was to become militant. They called a strike. But then they neglected to put any kind of pressure on the people it had been supporting to support it. And very quickly they [through a decision made by the Allied Printing Trades Council, the umbrella association and governing body of the printing craft unions] said they wouldn't do anything. So the Guild leaders after some hasty consultation decided to pull down their picket line, which had been up only a matter of hours.

In his opinion, the worst of the mistakes the Guild leaders made was:

They told us to report back to work without a contract, and we would vote on the contract after we got back to work.¹⁰ So for us it was a question of going back on the assumption that no one else would go out again, and the picket line was pulled down before the other unions came back, so there was never any test of whether solidarity would have kept people from crossing

¹⁰The Guild was still without a final contract in May, 1979. By then, the Allied Printing Trades Council was ready to step in at the Times, where the Guild had authorized a strike. A measure of how disaffected their membership had become is that although the strike vote was 530 to 90, the meeting turnout was only about 25% of the total membership.

a picket line of workers with whom they'd been striking for eleven weeks.¹¹

It wouldn't have cost us anything to trust it at that point. The Guild leadership could have waited for two hours, and then said, if necessary, "They're not respecting our picket line. We've got to go back." It would have been no more of a defeat than what they did, which was to say, "We're withdrawing the picket line because they won't honor it." Obviously the Guild was not interested in forcing that kind of confrontation with the other unions. It was a very accommodationist thing to do. The reaction among the journalists at a loud noisy meeting was to approve going back. They rejected what I'm saying, rejected a repudiation of the leadership, and said, "Well, what could we have done?" They reverted back to that pre-strike consciousness of powerlessness. So we really snatched defeat from the jaws of victory.

He went on to say that in other ways the strike was a victory for the Guild, raising the consciousness of its members and creating new, if untested, labor solidarity between the Guild and the craft unions.

Events of the strike also laid the groundwork for election of reform Newspaper Guild leaders. Candidates of the new "membership" slate and their supporters were drawn from the community of Guild activists who had come together during the strike. Running against the incumbent "rank-and-file" slate, the membership caucus challenged the incumbents' conduct of the 1978 negotiations, their refusal to back affirmative action, and their reluctance to confront management on any issue at all.

¹¹Raskin (1979) makes this outcome seem unlikely.

Although they were elected to office on a platform that evoked the Guild's progressive founder, Heywood Broun, the circumstances they faced were quite different, as revealed by platform planks about the new technology and affirmative action. Their Statement of Principle begins,

As heirs of Heywood Broun, who founded the Newspaper Guild in the 1930's to protect newspaper workers, we are determined to renew his mandate in Local 3 to maintain a strong union, at once militant and democratic, run by and for the members.

The platform continues,

...a union that recognizes that most managements in our industry are accruing record profits.

a union that will fight to upgrade wages and benefits to reflect the union members' primary role in creating those profits.

a union that ensures that members gain, not suffer, from increased efficiency that comes with new technology.

a union that aggressively pursues affirmative action towards equality on the job for women and minorities.

In other words, the membership slate opposed the business unionism that had characterized the Newspaper Guild both locally and nationally since the 1950s.

In contrast to the rank-and-file slate, composed primarily of workers from the newspaper's commercial departments, the membership caucus was predominantly news and editorial workers. When in power, the rank-and-file faction used this fact to their advantage, by scheduling ratification votes at 6 o'clock Thursday

night. This is the busiest time of the week for the editorial staff, when they find it almost impossible to leave their desks.

According to one informant, the election of the membership skate followed a pattern that dates from Broun's tenure as the first president in the 1930s: journalists tend not to get involved in Guild affairs, but when they do, they become leaders. Their strong stands on affirmative action and the impact of the new technology conformed to this tradition. However, their feminism and willingness to confront management were not universally popular.

Despite their success in overturning the dual-minimum wage clause that had been part of the 1978 settlement, they were voted out of office after only one term (two years). In 1980, just before their election, there were no vacancies in the almost two hundred Guild shop steward positions. Two informants in the membership caucus had to wait their turn for a position to become available. Four years later, the rank-and-file slate back in power, shop steward positions were empty. A member of the membership caucus told me no one on their side was willing to serve, because they were too demoralized.

"The Strike Was Like a Dream"

Another editor equally affected by the strike draws quite different lessons from it. Although his analysis is just as radical, his conclusions are more cynical. He is pessimistic about the chances for a more relevant Guild or for greater trade union commitment from his co-workers. In describing the strike, he emphasizes three points: (1) it was unexpected; (2) it was manipulated, not only in its origin and timing, but through the financing of the interim newspapers, all of which were backed by one of the regular New York City dailies to maintain their advertising and circulation; and (3) when it was over it was like a dream.

In his words,

The strike was amazing. First, it was a big surprise. We never really took the possibility seriously. We had no real sense that it was serious at all. We were sitting at our desks on a Thursday afternoon, working on copy. There was this constant moving the deadline back, so they could continue to negotiate, until at 7 o'clock we were told that the talks had broken down, and there was a possibility we might have to leave the building. At 8:15 it actually happened, and we shut down for the night. That was it -- we all walked out, and five of us went down to Chinatown and had dinner and made jokes about it.

Like many of his colleagues, he found alternate employment during the strike. He wrote television scripts, worked as a free-lance editor, and filled in for a friend at a neighborhood newspaper.

Unlike many of his co-workers, however, he refused to work for any of the interim newspapers that

sprang up during the strike. Producing these papers has become an entrepreneurial specialty of publishers who move from city to city filling in the gap during extended newspaper strikes. For him refusal to accept a job at one of them was a matter of principle, and, fortunately, he did have other options. Nonetheless, the publishers' subsidy of "scab" papers, and the willingness of his striking colleagues to work at them, made a strong impression on him. Narrating the progress of the strike, he went on to say,

By the next morning [after the strike was declared] I was working for a small paper in Queens, for a trifling sum, and thinking about the strike as a lark. But the events of the next few months changed my mind. For one thing, management used the time of the strike to make buyout offers to people they wanted to get rid of anyway. For another example, almost immediately I was asked to work for one of the interim papers, and almost immediately I discovered that they were in effect financed by the papers, to hold advertising. The circulation lists of the Times and the News were provided to the newspaper, and advertisers were encouraged to take their advertising to them.¹² So I refused to work.

¹²The connection of the major dailies with the strike papers -- each in effect the sponsor of a different one -- was not secret. In addition to the fact that, as my informant points out, striking journalists should have known from internal evidence like circulation, advertising, and the channels of distribution, the tie-up was publicized at the time in weekly newspapers like the Soho News, Our Town, and the Village Voice.

The publishers did not want to lose readers or advertisers. Even so, some observers (Raskin 1979:78-80) argue that backing the interim papers was a tactical mistake, because it provided employment for the drivers, the one union without strike benefits. The drivers' return to work might have enabled the dailies to resume publication without the other unions, but delivering the interim papers gave them enough income to prevent their crossing the pressmen's picket lines from economic necessity.

Friends of mine did not, and there were serious divisions over this issue.

Anyone who is a working journalist had to know, or should have known, that those papers were not just the product of some sharp entrepreneur who had just come to town. A lot of people chose not to know, because the pay scale alone said something was wrong. People who worked there were getting paid half to three-quarters union scale, and they were getting the AP [Associated Press] wire service besides. Nobody can walk into town and pay that kind of money. Occasionally I heard there would be periods of public recognition of what was really going on, and then there would be confrontations between staff and management at the interim papers. A few times a whole bunch of people walked out in a dramatic fashion, as if they shouldn't have known what was going on before anyway.

The biggest surprise of all to him, as to the activist, was the way the Guild ended the strike:

To me the way the strike ended was incredible. The Guild did not have a contract at the time. When it became clear that the pressmen were getting close to an agreement, we wanted some agreement for our own union, before we went back to work. The agreement with the pressmen was reached on Saturday night, and the paper re-opened on Sunday. And the rest of the craft unions refused to stay out of work until the Guild and the publishers reached an agreement. As a consequence, there was mass confusion. Some people went into work. The pickets were removed without a vote by the union to go back to work. I didn't go back to work. I told my boss, "My union has a meeting Sunday night to vote on this issue. I'm going back when they say it's all right to return to work."

He attended that meeting with co-workers who had gone into work before the vote. Despite his own pro-labor sympathies, he refused to criticize them. Rather he saw himself as the anomaly, a throwback to his past as a campus radical in the 1960s or to the 1930s socialism of his parents. Although he voted against con-

tract ratification, he understood why others hadn't. According to his explanation, the publishers were better players in a game already rigged in their favor. They had set up the union so effectively that the members didn't even comprehend there was a contest on. By the time they realized they were playing for high stakes, the game was already over.

He describes the decisive meeting this way:

The meeting was one of the few I ever went to that was well attended. Very many people there said that Kheel¹³ had made an agreement with Governor Carey to get the papers back on the stands in time to endorse his re-election campaign on that Monday, which was the Monday before Election Day. That didn't surprise me, except it was done in an extremely high-handed brutal fashion, and a lot of naive middle class people got a taste of what union politics are really about. And we got screwed. They set the pressmen up, took them for a three-month ride, and then sent the Guild down the tubes with them, knowing that's what would happen. The contract we got is a lousy one. They demanded certain givebacks -- we were stuck. We were already back at work, and who the hell was going out on strike again?

The skeptic attributes much more power to management than the activist does. Interpreting the strike settlement much more cynically, he believes that the outcome was foreordained, engineered by and known to management all along. To the activist, the contest is more equal: labor still holds some cards. True, the Guild lost this round, but in the next encounter they

¹³Theodore Kheel is a prominent labor lawyer who has played an advisory or mediator's part in every major newspaper strike in New York City since the one in 1963. In the 1978 strike he was invited by the Allied Printing Trades Council to act as their adviser.

might do better. And in the meantime, he argued, something concrete had been accomplished. Changes in consciousness had occurred, and a foundation had been established on which to build in the future.

For the skeptic the potential for change lies in individuals, not in collective acts. To him, too, "the experience was incredible," but then:

Eventually everyone went back to work as if nothing had happened, incredible because a lot of people had entertained illusions of what they would do if they were free from the daily grind. The strike freed them, because after seven weeks we started getting unemployment checks, not an insubstantial sum, especially for those people who had near-union scale jobs at the interim papers. Even they collected unemployment. Almost everyone was cheating like crazy on unemployment. I was having a great time running around playing freelance writer, working on television scripts that never got produced. When the strike ended, I and all my friends were depressed when we had to go back to work, except that within three weeks, two weeks, it was all like a dream. It just disappeared, it's like it never happened now. Like some story to tell people -- it might have been two hours long, for all that people relate to it now.

In this instance, he does not mean relating to the strike politically, but rather as an opportunity for individuals to explore new options. People who had been given the chance to break out of their personal or professional shells, and even some who had accomplished new objectives, nonetheless willingly returned to the safe haven of their old jobs. Believing that people exercise control over their lives as individuals, he had not expected his co-workers to behave as if nothing had happened. He found their individual retreat more

astonishing than the collective one evidenced in the Guild defeat.

Not surprisingly, then, where the strike's lasting impact on the activist was his resolve to seek a political solution through Guild reform, the skeptic decided to make a personal change. When I interviewed him, he had already begun to look for a new job, something he said had not crossed his mind before the strike. Within a few months, he moved and was working at an out-of-town newspaper.

Finding individual solutions is the customary method to address problems at work. When Rupert Murdoch bought the New York Post in 1976, forty or fifty reporters resigned rather than follow the new editorial policy. They were protesting the deliberate lowering of editorial standards, resulting in assignments in which they were asked to get quotations without confirmation, to substantiate rumors about the sex lives of public figures, and to ignore accuracy if it interfered with a good story. In the past, said a former reporter,

Mistakes were made from sloppiness, or because there weren't enough editors, but you weren't supposed to make a mistake or not check an attribution.

He went on to say,

The only reporters who didn't resign are those who had pressing financial reasons like mortgages, or children in college. But of those who left, only two still work for a daily newspaper.

Yet, each journalist resigned as an individual, some with jobs to go to and some not; they did not issue a joint statement or make a collective protest.¹⁴

One reason is that, unlike the craftworkers, they had no strong tradition of worker control or collective protest on which to draw. For example, in September, 1980, the pressmen held up publication of the Daily News in order to protest the appearance of an anti-labor cartoon. The offending cartoon showed a slovenly worker setting off from home. As his wife hands him his lunchbox, she asks,

If Polish unions model themselves after our unions, does that mean they get more coffee breaks, shorter work weeks, featherbedding, lethargy, pension fund scandals, corruption, organized crime, products of inferior quality, and an inability to compete in world markets?

The pressmen agreed to resume work only when they were assured that their letter protesting the cartoon would appear the next day, which it did, over the signature of George McDonald, the then president of the Allied Printing Trades Council. In the composing room, the printers followed this dispute closely, and said such skirmishes used to take place more frequently.

Other instances of protest work stoppages by craft union locals include a 1972 incident in which New York Times pressmen delayed the paper's publication

¹⁴Josh Friedman, WBAI News broadcast, June 17, 1978.

briefly to oppose an advertisement calling for President Nixon's impeachment, and one in 1979 by the New York Post paperhandlers objecting to a headline, which read, "The Irish Are Pigs, Says Princess Meg." In the last instance the protest accomplished its purpose of altering editorial content; Princess Margaret denied making the statement, and the offensive headline was dropped. During the 1974 Washington Post Newspaper Guild strike, the non-striking printers several times inserted lines of type stating, "This paper is edited by rats".¹⁵

Without a corresponding tradition to draw on, journalists rarely have taken unified stands about editorial content, although the success of influential "underground" newspapers in the 1960s did affect conventional reporting. First-person journalism has become a respectable form, and advocacy-style reporting occasionally replaces the old "objective" who-why-what-where-and-when approach to news. In the 1970s, thanks to Vietnam and the Watergate scandal, a new mentality emerged even among establishment journalists; they no longer think of themselves as "members of the team."

In New York City, the movement for newsroom democracy communicated with its audience through the lively monthly journal MORE, which contained insiders'

¹⁵Village Voice, May 2, 1974, p. 6.

stories from area media workers and press criticism, from a liberal-to-radical perspective. It lasted eight years, from 1970 to 1978, when it was absorbed by the more academic Columbia Journalism Review. By the time of my fieldwork, the movement for "newsroom democracy" survived only in the memory of a few advocates. They were described to me by an editor as "idealistic dreamers, who want to see the sixth floor of the New York Times run like Le Monde."

Le Monde is the leading French newspaper, which, in the 1960s, transformed itself into a editorial collective. Although its original form has been modified, editors still share responsibility for major policy decisions. In the United States participatory journalism refers to subjective reporting, and not to deciding which events are newsworthy.

One exception to the customary journalistic practice of non-interference in editorial matters occurred when New York Post Newspaper Guild members tried to influence policy through a byline strike in January, 1976. Reporters refused to allow their bylines to be used under the stories they had written, their right under the Guild contract. They were protesting the publisher's decision not to run a consumer column written by a staff reporter because she was afraid it would offend supermarket advertisers.

This was the first time this protest tactic had been used -- the staff did not refuse to work, but only to accept individual credit. In the short run, it was ineffective. The column was never run, and the reporter who wrote it resigned. In the long run, however, it has been widely copied, and used extensively since, often to protest the slowness of contract negotiations. Moreover, it was followed by the women's caucus' successful campaign to improve the treatment of women in the news.

The Women's Caucus and Affirmative Action Initiatives

The women's affirmative action lawsuit began as an informal attempt by women in the news and editorial departments to improve their status within the paper and to improve the coverage of women in its pages. At the time, for example, women working at the paper were routinely relegated to certain jobs and departments, and expected, if married to a colleague, to subordinate their career ambitions to his; and, married or not, to accept lower salaries than men for comparable or even more demanding work.

Women's photographs rarely appeared on Page 1, unless they were wives of famous men. Women whose names appeared in the paper were identified as "Mrs." or "Miss" but never as "Ms." the title many preferred. Influenced by the women's movement, the initial caucus organizers decided to hold meetings open to all Times

women to share their grievances. They publicized them by posting notices in the women's bathrooms.

For some who attended, it was a revelation. Said one, "For the first time in my life, I didn't feel professionally isolated." Said another, "I worked on this paper ten years without even knowing that merit raises existed, let alone that you had to ask for them." Someone else, later an activist elected to Newspaper Guild office, commenting on those first meetings, told me they changed her life, saying "Sometimes you start down a road without knowing where it will take you at the end."

After the excitement and enthusiasm of their first meetings, the organizers began to hold regularly scheduled meetings in 1972. Their first collective act was to petition management to upgrade women's status. They expected that, once the problems were made known, they would be corrected. Instead, they found management representatives extremely reluctant to meet with them. When finally a few managing editors did agree to a meeting, it had to be with a few "leaders" and not with the group as a whole, as they had requested.

The women involved took this as a personal insult, and a divisive tactic on the part of management, as it was. It was also typical of Times management style. Argyris (1974) describes the same treatment given a group of radical reporters who had formed a

caucus in the early 1970s. Their requests for meetings with editors also were rarely granted.

When even after face-to-face meetings with management, nothing changed, the women's caucus looked for outside sources of support. The Newspaper Guild did not have a good record on women's rights. They had refused, for example, to back a reporter and caucus member in her fight to retain her job when she went on pregnancy leave; she had had to fight this battle by herself.¹⁶

In this instance, too, the Guild's first response was discouraging, although later the Guild contributed financial help. The union was more wholehearted in support of the minority class action (in which three of four named plaintiffs were men). In fact, when first approached by the women's caucus, Guild local leaders proposed that the women not file their complaints until after the minority action was settled,¹⁷ even though many more women than minorities work in the industry.

When the women's caucus declined to wait, Guild officials suggested the women's complaints be tacked onto the minority rights action. Then, as the caucus

¹⁶Documented in papers donated in 1980 by the New York Times women's caucus to the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, accession number: 80-M169.

¹⁷Ibid.

persisted anyway, the Guild tried to take it over by claiming that the proper forum for any affirmative action initiatives was in the Guild's human rights committee. The women's caucus never took this proposal seriously; they realized that if they took this course the issue would be buried in committee forever.

They therefore proceeded independently. In 1973 they filed charges with the United States Equal Employment Commission and with the New York City Commission on Human Rights. When still nothing happened, six women sued the Times under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Together with the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII is the federal law that enables women workers as individuals and as members of a class to seek legal remedies to end discrimination in hiring, promotion, pay, and job-related benefits.

The original plaintiffs were women whose careers were established, who thought they had little to lose or gain personally from the lawsuit. Some younger women had been co-opted by management offers, and then had dropped out as active participants in the caucus.¹⁸ Advised by their feminist lawyers¹⁹ to make their lawsuit a broad-based class action, they added two named

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹They were represented by Harriet Rabb, George Cooper, and Howard Rubin, who worked for the federally funded Columbia University Employee Rights Project.

plaintiffs from business departments (and from lower job grades), and included 560 other women employees, almost all of whom belonged to the Newspaper Guild. The few women in the mechanical departments who were covered by craft unions contractually already earned equal pay. The discrimination they experienced in pay differentials resulted from not being assigned bonus or overtime work, not from the rate of pay.

Four years later, in 1978, the suit was settled out of court. The terms set goals for promoting women to influential editorial and managerial positions, and established an annuities fund worth \$232,000 to correct pension inequities. Management also was required to file quarterly reports with the women's caucus showing compliance in meeting hiring and promotion goals.

At all three newspapers the impact of the women's lawsuit was apparent when I began fieldwork in 1980. First, women working in the middle ranks of the newspaper, as reporters, editors, artists, and the like, had new career opportunities. A woman had been hired to the editorial board, several others became bureau chiefs, and women had been hired for the first time in the art and sports departments. For a time, a woman was even the head of the sports department.

Second, the women's caucus still existed. They had a newsletter, they reviewed the quarterly compliance reports required by the court, and they

monitored the image of women presented in the paper. Without their support, it is unlikely that the reform leaders who fought the dual minimum pay scale would have been elected. At issue was the 1978 contract provision for a dual minimum wage scale. Under this clause -- included in the last-minute Guild settlement after the pressmen's strike ended -- those hired after the contract became effective earned less than those previously hired who worked in the same job title.

Given the just-settled women's affirmative action lawsuit, and the then pending minority employees' class action, the dual minimum wage would have had a disproportionate impact on the new women and minority hires. It thus appeared to reward seniority at the expense of affirmative action. However, as the newly elected local officers -- themselves veterans of the women's affirmative action lawsuit -- realized, its consequences would have proved detrimental to union solidarity, and to older workers as well, because management would have had an incentive to replace them.

When, in May, 1980, the newspaper publishers were reluctant to re-open negotiations on the question of dual minimums, the newly elected Guild officials called a strike at the New York Times, successful after only one day. In the next contract, the dual minimum clause was dropped; those hired while it was in effect were brought up to union scale.

APATHY AND ACTIVISM IN THE 1980s NEWSPAPER WORKPLACE

The ITU on the Defensive

In the past, like other AFL craft unions, the printers were militant in securing their interests, in the specific sense of "protecting their own", or "owning their turf." This meant they defended their jurisdiction, and fought for control over their jobs and work processes, but they did not necessarily act on behalf of working class solidarity. Industrial unions, on the other hand, while of course also guarding their own interests, by definition are bound to the principle of all for one and one for all. Some of the printers who rejected the Newspaper Guild merger did so because they refused to accept the semi-skilled Guild members as their equals. Said one, "I don't want to be in a union with elevator operators who learn their job -- pushing buttons -- on the first go-round."

In their response to women's demands for workplace equality in the 1970s, the ITU demonstrated its commitment to its remaining members by refusing to compromise in light of changed circumstances. Their consistent aim has been to protect the union and its members by preserving jobs. The 1974 automation contract accomplished this goal. Since then they have been successful in enforcing the provisions which exclude newcomers from remaining industry jobs. They argue that in this instance affirmative action laws do not apply.

For example, in 1978 two women sued the union, charging discrimination on the basis of sex. They had been hired by a New York City print shop using cold type, at lower wages than would have been paid to experienced union printers. The ITU refused to let them work. At the first hearing of their case, the women won, but the union filed appeals until the decision was reversed. The final outcome was that in 1980 the NLRB ruled that the union did have a contractual right to exclude workers not on their pre-1974 priority list, even if by definition this meant excluding women.²⁰

Since automation, however, such contests over turf are unusual. Throughout the 1970s, union leaders claimed victory just if management didn't succeed in union-busting, thus accepting dual minimums, grandfather clauses, and the loss of job titles from union jurisdiction. In light of the aggressive management assault on the unions in the wake of the automation contract, which came close to giving management the ability to produce a paper without any unionized workers, these claims were not unreasonable.

Also, even the printers themselves share a "blame-the-victim" mentality. They have become disengaged and apathetic. Certainly, they are far less

²⁰242 NLRB No. 54, 1981; Snider and Lehrer vs. New York Typographical Union No. 6, 79-4126, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, 1980.

politically conscious than they were portrayed thirty years ago (Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956). An older printer faulted younger ITU members for the decline in union spirit and activism. He said:

The membership today has become too placid. They've never known what it's like to have a hard time. They never went through bad years, or a Depression. Back in the days of the Depression you were lucky if you did get a day here or a day there. I subbed for ten years before I got what actually could be considered a steady job.

They never went through really bad times like that. It would be good if they'd show a little more interest. Even our union meetings aren't as well attended as they used to be years ago. The spirit of unionism is lacking in comparison to what it was years ago. They're too complacent. They don't want to give up Sunday once a month to go to a meeting.

They don't show much interest in things that happen in various composing rooms throughout the city -- it's a case of "Well, that's my job, and I go in and do it, and I go home, and that's it." Years ago, probably because things weren't that easily gained, you couldn't become complacent. You had to struggle and fight for what you had.

An ITU shop steward put it this way,

They think they not the union earned their high salaries for them. They don't understand that their fate -- and that of the guaranteed wage -- depends on the courts. If President Reagan packs the courts with anti-labor judges, any rulings made as a result of legal challenges may go against them.

The printers' attitude is understandable. They are relatively well-off, able to retire comfortably on their combined pensions from social security, their employers, and the ITU. At this point in their careers, they are at a dead-end; they are characterized by a sense of futility and resignation. Unless something un-

foreseen challenges the 1974 guaranteed wage agreement, their battles are over.

Reds Vs. Greens

But with the exception of a few activists, the journalists and the computer professionals, unionized or not, are also apathetic. Almost all of my journalist informants had been employed at a newspaper during the months-long 1978 strike. The strike was instrumental in determining their attitude toward the union and their co-workers. Friendships and enmities made then were still powerful during my fieldwork three years later.

Yet, only a handful of strike participants translated their experience into activism. For them and for other labor organizers, the most pressing question is how to ignite the same political consciousness in other workers. To some extent, in the early 1980s, health-and-safety issues provided labor activists with a rallying point, and the New York Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) gave them a forum in which to air strategies.

There debates between the so-called "reds" and "greens" dominated discussions about such critical topics as outreach, organizing, and the role of the trade unions. Although both identify with the American Left, they differ in ideology, style, and tactics. The "reds" believe that political victories come from class conflict and class consciousness; that class struggle

occurs at the point of production; and that solidarity is a working class attribute. Therefore, their political goal is to confront management through strong and militant trade unions, emphasizing economic, "bread-and-butter" issues.

They are opposed by the "greens," shorthand for those whose experience of confrontation and political action comes from the peace, environmental, or ecology movements, and, by extension, other quality-of-life or community-based movements like civil rights, gay rights, and the women's movement. To the "greens" -- many of whom are veterans of the civil rights and student movements of the 1960s, or of the anti-nuclear, feminist, and environmental movements of the 1970s -- the "reds" are anachronistic in their failure to realize that their (Old Left) politics are bankrupt.

The "greens" focus on issues to effect social change, not on class conflict per se. They argue that, like the giant corporations they fight, the trade unions are faceless, bureaucratic, resistant to change, and slow to move on social issues. Furthermore, since the workers are apathetic, concentrating on them means disregarding the near-majority of Americans who are not in the labor force -- homemakers, welfare recipients, students (a source of militancy in the 1960s), the unemployed, and all those who are not workers in the classic blue-collar or proletarian sense.

The "greens" expect issue-oriented grassroots community organizing to re-ignite the kind of mass movements that characterized the Old Left in the 1930s and the New Left in the 1960s (Walker 1979). Within NYCOSH -- a workplace-based and trade union sponsored organization -- the "green" position was modified to mean representing the unorganized, as opposed to the "red" position of working through already existing unions. The "greens" were also more self-consciously feminist, which means, in practice, that they were the ones most likely to call for more women participants at conferences and for more attention to reproductive health problems.

The New Health and Safety Activists

Radiation Dangers: Real and Imagined

In 1980-82 NYCOSH concentrated its efforts on researching and publicizing the potential health hazards of prolonged video display terminal (VDT) use. The most discussed hazard, if not the most serious, was radiation. NYCOSH saw its role as separating fear from reality. Analogous to the printers' nervous jokes about being put out to pasture, terminal operators rarely lose an opportunity to allude to the dangers, real and imagined, of video display terminals. They allude to mysterious "rays" making "the people around here act funny;" they refer to themselves as "mutants;" and, if a problem arises, someone is sure to say something

like, "Don't worry about it, we're all going to die of cancer anyway."

During my fieldwork concern was heightened by the fact that two young copy editors at the New York Times, age 29 and 35, had recently developed cataracts. Rumors tied their condition to their intensive work at video display terminals, particularly after National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) investigators took measurements that showed that the highest concentration of microwave radiation registered in New York City thus far was on the floor of the Times building where the two worked.

The NIOSH investigators attributed this high level to the floor's proximity to the radio station WQXR transmitter also located in the building. Even so, the 1000 microwatts registered on the NIOSH meters still fell well within EPA guidelines of 10,000 per square centimeter allowed for worker exposure (Jonnes 1980; Kaufer 1978). When, understandably, this report failed to allay workers' concerns, and responding also to a threatened lawsuit, Times management ordered an independent evaluation.

At the time there were fifteen models of video display terminals in use there, 437 in all. Reporting his findings, the director of the second study, Otto White Jr. of the private firm Occupational and Environmental Health Analysts, said that 17 terminals (about

4%) were emitting low levels of radio-frequency radiation, low-level, that is, according to federal standards (which may have been too conservative). Its source was probably the transformers in the machine, a condition easily corrected by aluminum foil or other inexpensive shields.

Overall, he concluded, the radiation emitted was not significant (Wilford 1981). Afterwards, management removed and modified the defective terminals, and then installed safety shields on all the terminals in use in the building. Management cited this instance to show their responsiveness to their employees' health-and-safety needs. The Guild, on the other hand, used it to illustrate how management needed to be prodded even to undertake the most rudimentary safety precautions.

Although receiving the most attention, radiation, is not the only health hazard. The pressmen, for example, fought a long battle with management over noise in the pressroom (Stokes 1978). In regard to video display terminals, the most commonly associated ailments are tunnel-wrist syndrome, backache, and stress (identified by these symptoms: alcoholism, irritability, and high blood pressure). Among the contributing factors to stress are: boredom; monotony; the absence of meaningful work; the removal of all work-related decision-making; the pressure of having their productivity monitored; and the specter of unemployment.

Alcoholism, of course, is not new in the composing room. Whitelaw Reid complained of drunken printers in the Tribune composing room a hundred years ago. Printers I interviewed said alcoholism was a byproduct of the late hours they had worked as young men. When they finished the night shift, the only places still open were bars. Others claimed that only alcohol can quench the intense thirst caused by inhaling the thinner and lead fumes of the composing room.

Nonetheless, in the past, even poisonous lead fumes never received the attention now paid routinely to radiation emissions from video display terminals, although their danger was known by the turn of the century. Lead's contribution to weakened lungs and to the high incidence of tuberculosis among printers was the reason that, in 1892, the ITU located their benevolent home and their national office in Denver (Avery 1980).

Origins of NYCOSH

The present more aggressive climate has been fostered by the passage of the 1970 Occupational and Safety Health Act, and by the formation of COSH groups, like NYCOSH,²¹ which lobby OSHA and the federal govern-

²¹Douglas (1978) has a different explanation. She claims that in strong-group/strong-grid environments, outside pollutants are always feared. The defect in this argument is that sometimes pollutants are real; and, furthermore, larger political and economic determinants also shape the response to perceived threats, whether real or imaginary.

ment to set and enforce minimally acceptable levels of harmful emissions. The first COSH group was the Chicago Area Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (CACOSH), founded in 1972 by the Medical Committee for Human Rights and local unions, mostly from the auto, petrochemical, and steel industries (Berman 1978:112).

NYCOSH was founded a few years later, with a completely different set of trade union backers. Among them are the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the ITU, and the Newspaper Guild. Although trade union sponsored, neither the two-person staff nor most of the founding members and initial volunteers were themselves trade union members. Berman (1978:246) describes the relationship between the new activists and the labor movement this way:

Building a new health and safety movement would have been impossible without the commitment of hundreds of new activists, often with well-developed technical skills, who have a set of operating assumptions almost diametrically opposed to establishment views. They blame injuries and occupational diseases primarily on the unwillingness of corporations to spend money to design a safe and healthy workplace, and on the constant drive to speed up production. They believe workers should participate in the design and control of production equipment; that progress can be won only by educating and organizing workers and unions to take strong and informed positions on health and safety; and that workers should have the right to walk off unsafe jobs until conditions are corrected.

Some of the new activists in the health and safety movement are the same people Dreier (1978:70)

calls "radicals in the professions," whose efforts, he writes:

represented an alliance between radical professionals (with particular knowledge and skills at their disposal) and the more powerless and silent sectors of American society. They challenged "professionalism" -- the monopoly of skills by certified members -- as an ideology used to mask privilege and self-interest. Yet the skills themselves...were valued. They did not reject "expertise" per se; they challenged its mystification and misuse. And they protested the institutional arrangements of the professions and the "social control" functions they performed. They took seriously the professional norms that emphasized altruistic service, but saw the institutions themselves as obstacles to their fulfillment.

In the beginning, then, NYCOSH members were a disparate group. Along with officers and rank-and-file members of the sponsoring trade unions, they included health-and-safety specialists employed by unions, academics, and labor lawyers. NYCOSH staff members, who worked for minimum wage if and when they got paid, were college graduates, and not trade union members. Since most of the members of NYCOSH's sponsoring unions work in offices, NYCOSH's involvement in the issue of video display terminal safety was a logical step.

At first, their role was strictly educational. For example, the ITU invited NYCOSH to teach a class on occupational health and safety to ITU shop stewards; by then the problems were stress, eyestrain (Zinsser 1983:40-43), and radiation. Also, NYCOSH monitored serious eye problems reported to the Newspaper Guild, like instances of cataracts or detached retinas. Their goal

was to get workmen's compensation for terminal users; they were gathering documentation to make a case that the injuries were job-related.

For both member unions and for individual members, such projects fulfilled the common goal of disseminating and clarifying technical and legal information. Later on, however, as the organization grew in size and influence, NYCOSH members began to consider the political implications of this response. Questions such as: For whose use was the information generated? and: Who was included in the target audience? were debated by the so-called "reds" and "greens" in committee and general membership meetings.

This shift from an educational to a more overtly political agenda is illustrated by NYCOSH's role in three citywide conferences held in 1980-81. In this period NYCOSH's growth in members and in trade union influence was reflected in their participation in trade union conferences at which VDT health hazards were discussed. The first, "Health Protection for Operators of VDTs/CRTs," was a day-long event which NYCOSH co-sponsored with several trade unions in January, 1980.

For the organization it was a turning point. Previously NYCOSH had been a loosely knit brown-bag lunch group of trade union health specialists and interested academics using borrowed office space. The conference was their first outreach effort, publicized by leaflets

mailed to union headquarters, by flyers distributed in Wall Street and Times Square, and by small notices placed in liberal publications like the Village Voice, the Nation, and the New York Review of Books. The response was overwhelming. More than 500 people attended, and more had to be turned away.

Afterwards, NYCOSH formed the VDT Health Hazards Committee specifically to address questions related to terminal use. They recruited the first members from the conference participants. Like NYCOSH itself, the VDT committee was a mix of occupational health specialists, researchers, and trade unionists. Among the latter were reform members of the Newspaper Guild, who invited NYCOSH to repeat the same presentation at Guild headquarters a few months later.

This, the second citywide conference, was open to all Guild members; about two hundred attended. One consequence was that Guild members became involved in making the educational slide show that was the VDT committee's main project. The slide show incorporated the complaints of workers (mostly committee members) about various video display terminal problems, such as inadequate lighting or improper office furniture design. Most of the slides were of Guild members on the job.

The third citywide conference in which VDT hazards were a focal concern was sponsored by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) in January, 1981.

Entitled "Occupational Safety and Health Education and Training Program for Local Union Leaders," it lasted a week. A NYCOSH representative addressed a plenary session, and the VDT Committee held a workshop. Delegates from several states attended the conference, and NYCOSH representatives had a political as well as educational agenda.

One aim was to get legislation on safety standards (rest breaks and microwave emission inspections) passed in the New York State Assembly and introduced in other states. A second was to set model contract language to be negotiated with employers. A third and hidden goal was to influence internal trade union policy. As in the Guild, health-and-safety questions were factional issues in CWA elections. Getting video display terminals on the main program was a victory for the two shop stewards who had done so. CWA members work with a variety of toxic substances,²² any one of which could have taken precedence over discussions of the risks of indoor office equipment.

The two shop stewards were NYCOSH activists who planned to use the conference as a forum in which to impress out-of-town delegates. Determined not to waste

²²Fact sheets included in the conference handouts covered, along with video display terminals, asbestos, carbon monoxide, lead, polyurethanes, arsenic, polychlorinated biphenyls (pcb's), freon, solvents, and vinyl chloride.

the opportunity, they and the NYCOSH keynote speaker rehearsed various scenarios that might occur. For example, the NYCOSH speaker -- a staff member and not himself a union member -- asked one of the shop stewards to raise the question of contract language from the floor, because he thought it was inappropriate for him as an outsider to do so. Also, when after the talk, the CWA chair tried to conclude the session without taking questions from the floor, the coached shop stewards were able to prevent this maneuver.

NYCOSH Politics

One consequence of the shift to a more overtly political emphasis was that disagreements between trade unionists ("reds") and other activists ("greens") became more pronounced. At times reminiscent of old AFL and CIO organizing battles, in essence the contest was between protecting the rights of the already organized but beleaguered trade unionists or reaching out to the unaffiliated. For a time these conflicts were submerged under the rationalization that NYCOSH was an educational organization, and, as such, had room for a variety of constituencies.

Thus, in the slide show the VDT Committee produced, the opposition between education and organizing was resolved by compromise. For example, among the remedies proposed by the slide show were some possible individual solutions, like adjusting the amount of

available light or refocusing the eyes on a distant point in space after every twenty minutes of terminal work. However, the closing message, spelled out on a VDT by a dissident Guild member whose face was hidden was ORGANIZE!.

One of the precipitating incidents that led to open warfare occurred when the chair of the VDT Health Hazards Committee, an outspoken advocate of the "educational" option, was discovered to have written paid articles for management journals. Committee members then recognized his democratic-sounding statement, "Our job is to put out information for whoever wants it -- then let them decide what to do with it," as a justification for his appropriating information gathered under their auspices for his own purposes. Trade unionists on the committee angrily protested. As a Guild representative explained,

If the members are concerned about radiation, that's the issue we organize around. We're not handing it over to management to co-opt.

The question of how active a role NYCOSH would play in organizing the unorganized was ultimately resolved in the fight over the adoption of a constitution. Here, too, despite fundamental agreement on the basic goals of improving workplace health and safety, and on giving the labor movement a stronger voice, the "reds" and "greens" had competing agendas. In this context, using worker concern over radiation and health

hazards as an organizing tool was the "green" position, counter to the "red" emphasis on trade union bargaining positions and contract language.

Within the organization, these discussions -- in which usually but not always the trade unionists were the so-called "reds" and the new activists the "greens" -- provoked heated conflicts between the two sides. In the series of meetings devoted to question of drawing up a constitution, having a board of directors, and giving trade union members weighted voting privileges, the rift between them became apparent. The "greens" valued spontaneity, equality of categories of members, and democratic voting, by which they meant that any member present at a meeting should be able to vote.

The "reds," on the other hand, wanted written rules, so that decisions made at one meeting could not be rescinded the next (which had been happening). They also wanted written rules for clarification. To the extent that the organization ran by preset rules, they had access to decision-making. Otherwise, they felt shut out by differences in class, education, and intellectual style. They were intimidated by those who were at ease and had more experience in speaking persuasively before groups. As a CWA member remarked sarcastically, during an acrimonious exchange in which he felt undermined, "I'm just a craftsman, after all, not a professional."

The trade unionists had another motive for wanting a more formal structure to meetings and decision-making. Informal decision-making favored those who had time to spend in the NYCOSH office -- students and professionals who could come and go from their jobs more easily than workers who had to punch time cards and sometimes to work compulsory overtime. In the contest between those who wanted structure and those who distrusted rules, the formalists won, having on their side two compelling arguments: (1) NYCOSH was supported by the Allied Trades Council (an umbrella of trade unions) and needed credibility among trade unionists, and (2) without agreed-on mechanisms for granting membership and voting rights, the organization was vulnerable to a takeover by hostile fringe radical groups.

However, as soon as the proposed constitution was adopted, an insider takeover took place, with the newly elected "red" chair and treasurer firing the "green" office manager, who also was the only woman regularly in the office. She was a strong proponent of using NYCOSH resources to organize unorganized office workers. As she said,

They don't realize how much work there is to do day-to-day to keep the office running. Office work is like housework, invisible, women's work. Those guys just don't understand or appreciate it. They'll never be interested in clerical workers.

The adoption of a constitution which discriminated in favor of institutional trade union members

marked a new era of NYCOSH history. Although the goal of organizing the unorganized was still occasionally mentioned, devoting organizational resources to this end was no longer a viable possibility. Instead, NYCOSH organizers scheduled more workshops on questions of contract language and workmen's compensation -- the critical nuts and bolts of trade unionism -- but lacking the vision that had attracted the new activists to the organization. Most drifted away to other endeavors.

Nonetheless, the record of NYCOSH's tangible gains in a short period in regard to video display terminals remains impressive. In 1980, the time of the first citywide conference on VDT health hazards, relatively few people recognized the problem. Yet within two years, the issue became a priority on the bargaining table of a number of unions, led by the CWA and the Newspaper Guild.²³

Union recognition of the problem, and the proposed solutions, were due, at least in part, due to NYCOSH efforts. If nothing else, activists in different locals in both unions used NYCOSH meetings and fund-

²³As negotiation points, the Guild suggested newspapers have function rooms devoted to video display terminal use, in which conditions could be set, rather than the then more common multipurpose rooms where light conditions caused glare and eyestrain. They also wanted employers to furnish adjustable chairs, tables, and keyboards, and to pay for regular eye examinations and eyeglasses.

raisers -- such as the annual Valentine's Day party -- as common ground in which to get to know each other, and to build alliances for joint offensives. NYCOSH members gathered the information that was used in negotiations, and they became the recognized authority on the subject.

NYCOSH also contributed to public recognition of video display terminal hazards. The slide show was shown widely to labor groups and college students, and a pamphlet they wrote on the subject was distributed to a large audience. The largest audience NYCOSH reached was through an episode of a popular television series, the Lou Grant show, dealing with the changeover to cold type in the fictional Los Angeles cityroom that was the program's setting. Woven into the plot was information requested from the NYCOSH VDT Health Hazards Committee about irritability, eyestrain, and wrist soreness resulting from improper terminal use. At the conclusion of the episode, management installed lead shields at all the video display terminals, the course of action NYCOSH recommended to prevent microwave emissions.

In 1986, members of the ITU voted overwhelmingly to merge with the CWA. Some of the groundwork for this successful merger was laid by their co-operative endeavors in NYCOSH. In fact, the then CWA president Morton Bahr had been a featured speaker at the 1981 CWA health and safety conference which NYCOSH helped or-

ganize. As union president, he favored further diversifying the CWA, from one representing mainly telephone industry workers to a union "brought up on technology and ...able to meet the information age."²⁴

Conclusions

The notion that deskilling and the accompanying proletarianization of the United States labor force will lead of itself to a resurgence in trade union organizing is grounded in the misperception that the new wave of "true" automation is similar to past forms of technological innovation, like the nineteenth century linotype machine or the mechanized assembly line ("Detroit" automation) of the 1930s. Then, with a flick of the switch, workers could stop production entirely. Now, however, workers can only disengage themselves individually, an action which does not affect anyone else or any other part of the production system.

In the newspaper industry, the shift from printers to computer professionals as the workers who "control" the means of production also represents a shift from a tightly knit, multi-stranded occupational subculture to one that is loosely woven and unidimensional. Their social isolation has political consequences. Since social action is predicated on soli-

²⁴Quoted in the New York Times, November 27, 1986.

clarity, this transformation means that activism will not be an organic outgrowth of working side by side.

Yet, contrary to pessimistic predictions (Alt 1974; Braverman 1974), the newspaper workplace in the 1980s remains an important site of collective action. Trade union activists in the Newspaper Guild fought successful battles on issues of affirmative action and health-and-safety, demonstrating once again that "class" and "community" struggles do not animate mutually exclusive spheres, with one occurring at the "point of production" -- the workplace, and the other in the "community," however defined.

The reform movement in the Newspaper Guild grew from bonds established during the pressmen's strike; their own strike two years later was based on the community created then, not on organic worker solidarity arising from daily proximity. Other seeming anomalies include the movement for eliminating video display terminal health hazards, started by "radicals in the professions" not the labor movement; and the battle for workplace pay equality, fought by the women's caucus, based on their common background as women and as veterans of the feminist movement, not on their shared experiences at work.

As recently as a decade ago, the printers and the journalists -- the two occupations most affected by computer use in newspaper production -- formed more

cohesive subcultures, with distinctive patterns of socialization and occupational autonomy. However, since the introduction of computers, both the newsroom and the composing room have become more subject to routinization and isolation. Workers have far fewer opportunities for social contacts and camaraderie on the job. Thus, the personal ties of mutual respect, trust, and obligation, like the bonds of solidarity which used to typify informal work groups, have eroded steadily.

With them, a prerequisite once thought critical for workplace-based collective action has been lost. In fact, the homogeneous labor which meets the requirements of the truly automated workplace replicates in miniature -- on a smaller and more fragmented scale, and so even more tenaciously -- some of the original causes cited for the repeated failure of socialist movements to take root in the past. Geographic (or lateral) job mobility, cultural and ethnic heterogeneity, apparent upward mobility, and an emphasis on individual achievement describe the environment in which more and more Americans work. In such settings, "communal" issues like feminism or health-and-safety may well provide the core unifying focus necessary for any political action.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

The Fragmentation of the Past

Most of my informants are quicker to see the discontinuities in their experience compared to that of past generations than to acknowledge the kinship that does exist. Although some trade union leaders do draw parallels to the past in their speeches and public statements, for the most part they leave the task of making connections between past and present to scholars, who have done so in a fragmented manner. For example, where Lipset and his colleagues found "union democracy" (Lipset, Trow, and Coleman 1956; Baker 1957) feminist scholars point to the deliberate exclusion of women printers, whereby the organized union printers imposed the lasting dichotomy of skilled vs. unskilled labor on the relationship between men and women workers (Baron 1982; Cockburn 1983; Phillips and Taylor 1980).

While emphasizing the role played by the nineteenth century trade unions and the campaign for a family wage in excluding women from the ranks of "skilled" workers, some of them are unaware of the technological innovations that expedited this process (Dubois 1978; Humphries 1980). Conversely, labor historians, re-examining the development of the linotype machine in order to study the role of technology in appropriating

craft skills, have seen the development of a narrow, exclusionary labor elite, but they seem quite unaware that there were any women workers in the labor force affected by these developments (Friedman 1979; Kelber and Schlesinger 1967). Yet gender, as well as class, is a historical process that creates social relationships in regard to production and resource distribution.

Technology helps shape these processes, and is itself a part of them. This notion of gender as a relationship structured in the workplace -- as well as in the family -- emerges clearly from the restructuring of the newspaper industry engendered by the introduction of new production technology in the 1880s and 1970s. In the nineteenth century printers' struggles against publishers and against non-union printers (a category which includes the first linotype operators and almost all women printers) the two decisive issues were: (1) control of the composing room and (2) the right of working printers to a family wage. Each was resolved in ways that favored the organized printers, shaping the definition of class and gender for future generations.

In the past decade, computerized automation has had a dual impact on the definition of "women's work" within the newspaper industry, creating some jobs while eliminating others. As a result of affirmative action initiatives, in the mid-1970s, women were hired for the first time in significant numbers in mid-level mana-

gerial jobs, some in the new jobs requiring technical expertise, but others in the supervisory jobs now being eroded by expanded computer use.

However, since many of the new jobs being created are clerical, based on the traditionally female skill of typing, women still are being hired in greater numbers than ever before. The fact that these jobs are not well paid or organized reinforces the false notion that women play a marginal role in the paid labor market, despite the fact that the work they perform is not peripheral either to class and gender definition, or to the structure of occupations.

Subcultures as Political Units

Taken together, the Guild and the ITU provide a lens through which to view two critical periods in American history, the 1890s and the 1930s. Both followed severe economic depressions, when the emergence of a labor or socialist political party seemed close to reality. The 1890s were the peak of American Federation of Labor (AFL) organizing drives. It was then that the ITU became part of the federation, an extension of the process by which a confederation of loosely linked printers' locals became an integrated trade union, exercising political power on the national level.

The 1930s, like the 1890s a decade of social and political unrest, was the time both the Newspaper Guild and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) were

founded. First an association of professional reporters, within a few years the Guild joined the CIO, incorporating as members all previously non-unionized newspaper industry service and clerical workers. To those interested in the absence of a sustained socialist movement in the United States, the lack of continuity between the present and these two earlier periods of labor solidarity needs a reason, one that is usually expressed in terms of class and class consciousness (Davis 1985; Edwards 1982). However, these explanations are incomplete. As I argued in Chapter III, workplace or occupational subcultures also play a vital role.

Occupational subcultures are a non-exclusive unit of solidarity, but the more exclusive the unit -- that is, the fewer cross-cutting ties -- the more likely the subculture is to form a political unit as well. The tightly knit occupational subculture of the nineteenth century printers made their effective political organization possible, both in relation to their own labor-management struggles and in constituting a pro-labor force in state and national politics.

The printers retained their occupational community until the 1950s, but by the 1970s it was dissipating, primarily for two reasons. The printers were residentially more dispersed than they ever had been, and, like other industrial workers, they were deriving more satisfaction from consumerism than from their job

or related leisure activities. Still, compared to the journalists and computer professionals, they then formed and even now retain a more cohesive and integrated occupational community.

The Contraction of Social Horizons

Comparison of all three subcultures shows a recurrent pattern of diminishing social and temporal horizons, between and within occupations. My informants describe consistent differences in job recruitment, mobility, and trade union identification, which taken together demonstrate a diminished social field. Social bonds which were reinforced through kinship, ethnicity, neighborhoods, and trade unions now have unraveled to separate single-stranded relationships.

In the workplace, the attenuation of social networks -- in depth, breadth, and duration -- typifies both relationships at work and the integration through personal ties of the workplace with a wider community. Of the three, printers occupy the broadest and also most cohesive social space, containing friends, families, and generations. They meet at work, and also in their neighborhoods and in communal centers like bars, bowling alleys, and union halls.

The journalists operate in a more limited social arena. Social relationships are likely to grow out of work relationships, not the other way around. According to several older informants, in the past, the newsroom

was their second home, and their colleagues a substitute family, but this analogy no longer holds, except among the activists. Today the newspaper is a corporation, the newsroom impersonal, and being a reporter is a job, not a calling.

The computer professionals are linked primarily through work-related networks. Coming from diverse backgrounds, they tend to have little but work in common. At the workplace, projects are individual, not cooperative, and office associations relatively short-lived. Workers have well delineated areas of specialization, and are assigned minutely divided tasks, so that even people working side by side do not get to know each other well.

Programmers usually do not belong to trade unions. When they do, like those at New York City newspapers, they are members of industrial unions, like the Newspaper Guild. In these umbrella-type organizations, even the trade union sympathizers among my informants feel at a disadvantage, their interests subordinate to larger groups of other "professional," clerical, and service workers, with whom they do not identify. Thus, even trade union participation does not necessarily overcome their social isolation.

The Shortening of Time Perspectives

Among the newspaper workers, the printers are the most deeply rooted in the past. Conscious of being the last practitioners of a centuries-old craft, they adhere as closely as possible under changed circumstances to the nineteenth century craft trade union principles of militancy and benevolence. For most, both craft and trade union allegiance are family legacies. Even their personal work histories show the most continuity; those I interviewed had worked an average of twenty years in the same job, and more than thirty years in the trade.

By comparison, the time horizon of computer professionals is quite short, and future-oriented. Like the technology itself, work experience quickly becomes obsolete. Programmers expect to change jobs frequently, earning more each time; otherwise, they risk career immobility. Journalists fall between these two extremes. Those who have worked for the same newspaper for a long time share the rootedness of the printers; they identify with the goals of their paper and take pride in its history.

Working at a New York City newspaper is the pinnacle of their career, and often the fulfillment of their highest ambition. Like the printers, they are protected in their seniority by their union, and, like them also, they intend to stay where they are. Younger journalists tend not to have such unconditional loyal-

ties. Brought up on Watergate, they find their daily routine does not match their expectations.

Their assignments do not measure up in glamour or political impact to their muckraking ideals. Often they perceive the newspapers for which they work as bastions of an establishment they do not wish to represent. Furthermore, they are well aware of the many veteran reporters who lost their jobs through staff cutbacks or newspaper closings. Wary of the same fate, they try to remain emotionally detached on the job.

Newspaper workers' time perspectives also have contracted in regard to the work itself. Deadlines come closer together. Before computerization, the newsroom and composing room had the same daily work rhythm, with the pace of work building steadily to the crescendo of deadlines, followed by a lull in which workers relaxed, snacked, and gossiped. The new production processes have destroyed this rhythm; its absence is one of the things the printers comment on most frequently when they describe the transformation of their work.

Now, in their isolation from the rest of the newspaper, rumor has replaced gossip. They work in a permanent lull, without enough work to go around, while the journalists, like the programmers, work under constant deadline pressure, since, in contrast to the linotype machine, the computer always can store copy for eventual use. Additionally, absence from the ter-

minal lasting more than twenty minutes means the worker is literally disconnected ("logged off" or "timed out"). In essence, the newspaper's work rhythm no longer is set by edition deadlines, but by the computer's internal clock.

To some extent, the excitement of deadline has shifted to programming. A Harris system programmer said,

The part of the job I enjoy is the pressure and tension just before deadline. That's the time the system works up to capacity and overloads are most likely, while at the same time breakdowns or malfunctions are the most costly.

However, the effect is not the same. Although the excitement has shifted, along with the responsibility for production, from the composing room to the computer service area, the programmers nonetheless do not share the same sense of contributing to a newspaper. Their jobs is to keep the computer systems running at peak times of production, but the product involved could be almost any service or commodity.

Furthermore, unlike the printers whose work day used to be punctuated by deadlines, but otherwise were not accountable for their time on the job, programmers must record their expenditure of time on timesheets divided into fifteen-minute segments. Although they circumvent these efforts at management control by filing false reports, they still are forced to think of their

tasks piecemeal, rather than as part of an orchestrated whole.

Reintegrating the Future

In such a transient environment -- in which accountability has replaced loyalty, professionalism has replaced craft solidarity, and short-term commitments have replaced lifetime jobs -- it is not surprising that workplace coalitions for change are also transitory, and situational. Thus, although there has been considerable continuity between the nineteenth and twentieth century newspaper workplace in the issues of technology, class, and gender definition that animated both, changes in underlying social relationships at work make their political resolution different this time around.

As shown in Chapters II and IV, the problems that arose at the time of each union's formation have continued relevance for present-day trade union politics. As was evident in the discussion about their proposed merger, for the printers and the ITU, the question of skill dilution remains critical. For the editorial workers and the Newspaper Guild, the clash between the ethics of professionalism and the tenets and practices of trade unionism still creates internal divisions.

The solutions, however, are different. Instead of trade union organizing as the unifying force behind workplace political action, in the 1980s, in part due

to changes in occupational subcultures, newspaper workers acting through alliances formed outside their inherent relationship to one another as workers organized most effectively around women's affirmative action and health-and-safety issues. In these instances, the women's caucus and the health-and-safety coalition provided the catalyst to which the trade unions reacted.

In other words, the ongoing transition from the craftsmen's residual culture to the technocrats' emergent one reinforces a political activism based on community (or communal) association not worker solidarity. These developments are relevant to the continual debates about the lack of a socialist movement in the United States. Some trade unionists speculate that one consequence of the deskilling and displacement of American workers and their resulting proletarianization will be heightened class consciousness, thus repoliticising the American labor movement.

My analysis of the impact of computerized automation on occupational subcultures and workplace political organization does not support this conclusion. Rather I suggest that reduced social interaction within the automated newspaper workplace lessens primary group formation there, leaving workers fewer cultural resources on which to build collective action. This finding complements Alt's (1976) analysis of the

diminished role of leisure in building primary group ties outside work.

My informants' disregard for this aspect of culture makes them poor political fortune-tellers, and sometimes misleads them into false directions for their organizing efforts. For their part, some academic observers (Howard 1986; Berman 1978) overrate the potential strength of the trade unions. Berman (1978:116), for example, though providing evidence to the contrary, nonetheless writes,

In the United States, the struggle for safer work has been carried out primarily through the unions. And it may be that the struggle for better working conditions, with its emphasis on worker rights at the point of production, will help rekindle the U.S. labor movement.

In two sentences, he misses two critical points: (1) the unions can't and never could effect change without broad-based support; and (2) old strategies of workplace organizing, no matter how compelling the issues, will not re-ignite class consciousness or revive the labor movement. To believe otherwise is wishful thinking.

Often the trade unionists themselves exaggerate their ability to organize using methods which were effective in the 1890s and the 1930s, when people were, at least in the case of the printers and other craft workers, connected through an occupational community, and through their collective use of leisure time (Alt 1976). In the case of the industry-style unions organ-

ized by the CIO, assembly-line workers able to shut down production by the flick of a single switch (Lynd and Lynd 1973). This circumstance made possible the famous sit-down strikes in the Detroit auto factories and the Chicago stockyards.¹

The weakness of these analyses, it seems to me, is the false assumption that arenas of political activity can be neatly separated into "economic or class" and "cultural or communal" categories, with the one taking place in the workplace, and the other outside it, in a "community", defined by ethnic, residential, or simply common interest (Thompson 1978:176). Although seemingly mutually exclusive, my fieldwork suggests a different, more complementary relationship, in which the unions are conduits for resolving "community" or "communal" issues articulated elsewhere.

¹Seen in the films With Babies and Banners and Rank and File.

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