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THE PROCESS OF CONTROL WITHIN A TRADE UNION : A STUDY OF INTERNAL POWER IN THE A.U.E.W.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the nature of power and control in trade unions. Two theoretical themes are developed; the first concerns the concept of power and related variables such as authority and control, the second concerns the concept of trade union government in terms of democracy, oligarchy and polyarchy. It is suggested that trade union government may most appropriately be described by the term 'polyarchy'. A model is proposed which aids the analysis of polyarchic trade union government. This model treats the acquisition and maintenance of power and control as competitive processes mediated by the structural and subjective conditions of the competitive arena. Two case studies are presented in which these processes are seen at work in the engineering section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. The first examines a conflict between the Manchester district committee and the Executive Council, the second examines a conflict between the Manchester district committee and a workshop organization in the district. The model and case studies together comprise a statement about power and control in the A.U.E.W. The framework of the thesis suggests several ways in which the theoretical and empirical analysis may be developed towards a comprehensive theory of trade union government.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years the study of power and related concepts such as control and influence has experienced a renaissance, both within general sociological analysis and also within the sociological analysis of organizations. Yet it is still possible to claim that power is a neglected aspect of organizational theory (Hofstede and Boddewyn, 1977: 3). An apparent paradox exists in that the increased attention which the concept of power has received seems to have resulted, not in that development of organization theory which might have been expected, but in a rather uncomfortable juxtoposition of existing theory with some additional considerations of organizational power. The further the concept of power has been refined the less amenable has it become to assimilation into organization theory. I would suggest that an important reason for this tentative approach to power in organization theory lies in what Abell (1977) has described as "a failure to situate the concepts in models which reflect actual social process" (1977: 3). He continues:

> "It is relatively easy to detail fine conceptual distinctions, but unless we can project these into models of social process which generate reasonably general expectations of social phenomena they are only of marginal interest to the sociologist". (1977: 3)

This study attempts to meet this criteria with a detailed examination of the nature of power and control within the engineering section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.[1]

A brief outline of the union

The current A.U.E.W. has developed out of a series of amalgamations,

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[1] The case studies are based on data derived from when the union was the A.E.U.

the first phase of which culminated in the formation of the A.S.E. in 1851. These amalgamations between local craft associations set the pattern for the district organization of the early A.S.E. and created certain tensions between district autonomy and centralised direction which have persisted to the present day. The A.S.E. was a union of skilled craftsmen and, as Hinton (1973) has suggested, the anti-bureaucratic character of the craft ethic engendered a resistance to control or supervision, not only by the employer but even by the union hierarchy.

Silverman (1970) has argued that organizations are shaped according to the predominant values of the society in which they are rooted, and whether or not one accepts this argument as being generally applicable to all organizations, it is evident that the founders of the nineteenth century craft associations modelled their constitutions on the emerging political ideology of pluralism and representative democracy. Wary of the possibility of creating self perpetuating oligarchies they built into these constitutions considerable checks and balances on the exercise of power by the leadership. Turner (1950) has noted that in the remodelling of the A.S.E. in 1892 (an important model for other craft associations) so far did this concern extend that they adopted both a system of elected full-time officials in addition to an elected full-time Executive Council.

More checks and balances were built into the constitution in 1921 when a further amalgamation created the A.E.U. As the dominant party to this merger the A.S.E's constitution was carried forward for the new union but in addition a National Committee was established to form union policy at an annual meeting.

In 1926 the union was opened to all males in the engineering industry regardless of skill, and in 1943 women were admitted for the first time.

The basic structure and procedures have remained the same since 1921; the 1967 merger with the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers (A.U.F.W.) to form the Amalgamated Union of Engineering and Foundry Workers (A.E.F.) and the 1970 merger with the Construction Engineering Union (C.E.U.) and the Draughtsmen and Allied Technicians Association (D.A.T.A.) to form the A.U.E.W. resulted in a sectionalised union, each section retaining its previous constitution. The constitution of the engineering section of the A.U.E.W. thus derives from the constitution of the earlier craft associations, though now only about a quarter of the members belong to the skilled sections of the union.

According to the A.E.U. evidence to the Donovan Commission in 1967, the union had over one million members in 2,692 branches organized into 267 districts. These districts are in turn organized into 26 Divisions each of which sends two members to the annual National Committee meeting. The Executive Council is elected from seven Executive Council regions, and in addition there are other full time officers elected from a constituency which corresponds to their area of responsibility. There is a separate, directly elected, appeal court of lay members, which is responsible for interpretation of the rules.

At district level the elected district committees are given considerable scope under union rules to pass resolutions on trade questions which, with agreement of the Executive Council, become binding on members in the district. In addition, these committees authorise the appointment of shop stewards and supervise their activities. Great powers have been ascribed to the district committees by the Donovan Commission (1968), the National Board for Prices and Incomes (1967), Hugh Clegg (1970), and even within the A.U.E.W. Richter quotes a National Officer of the union as saying:

> "We can't order the Districts to do anything; that is the trouble. So we just have to be satisifed with what we can get out of them." (1973: 77)

There is a widespread belief that the district committees are autonomous bodies which can implement policies over workshop organizations in their district without restraint from the Executive Council or from the workshop organizations involved, a belief which contrasts strongly with the implications of the rule book, according to which all district committee activities are subject to the approval of the Executive Council. This study will show that there are many additional reasons why this belief may be misplaced.

Trade Unions and Organization Theory

Hyman and Fryer (1975) have pointed out that though the Webbs' definition of a trade union as "a continuous association of wage earners" (1956: 1) places trade unions within the field of organization theory very few theoretical insights into the dynamics of trade unions have been evident in the literature. The main reason for this is that organization theory had concentrated on work organizations to the virtual exclusion of all other types. Where trade unions have been considered they are regarded as a special type, the voluntary organization, not amenable to the same sort of analysis as other organizations. On voluntary organizations in general, Mayntz (1964) and Hall (1972) have argued that the problems of voluntary associations lie outside the scope of organization theory as it stands.

Similarly, in attempting to apply one aspect of organization theory (the Anderson-Warkov hypothesis) to trade unions Raphael (1967) was forced to conclude that

> "differences reported here from the Anderson Warkov predictions about the size of the administrative apparatus may be attributed to the fact that in essential structural features, labour unions probably are best described as voluntary associations." (1967: 775)

Attempts to incorporate trade unions within general organizational analysis have been equally unsuccessful. The most notable attempts are those of Etzioni (1961) and Blau and Scott (1963). Etzioni focuses on compliance in organizations, relating the manner in which lower participants respond to the authority system of the organization to the nature of their involvement in the organization. He derives a matrix indicating relationships between three kinds of power (coercive, remunerative and calculative) and three kinds of involvement (alienative, calculative or moral). The relationship between kind of power and kind of involvement is said to be congruent in the three cases:- coercive/alienative, remunerative/calculative and normative/moral.

Labour unions, says Etzioni, may hold both remunerative and normative sources of power, these sources being congruent with calculative and moral involvement. However, he points out that the compliance structures of unions constitute a very heterogenous category. Purely normative unions, he suggests, are now rare though may have been more common in 'early days'. Calculative, or utilitarian, unions may exercise control over job allocation, operate a closed shop, have a system of fines and offer services (benefits) to members. Between calculative and normative unions there will be a continuum rather than a discrete change of emphasis.

Burns (1967) has criticised Etzioni for leaving too much unexplained and Perrow (1972) has suggested that the typology is tautologous, but perhaps more importantly, it is doubtful whether a typology which permits an organization to fall into two thirds of the possible categories is very helpful. If trade unions are placed in the remunerative/calculative category along with the firms with whom they deal it is difficult to discover the basis on which their activities may be differentiated or on which predictions may be made about their behaviour.

Etzioni's main thesis, it is true, concerns congruence rather than typology alone, but the statements of congruent pairs does little to advance our understanding of trade unions.

For Blau and Scott the characteristic by which organizations may be categorised is their prime beneficiary, or the answer to the question 'cui bono?' They suggest four categories of organization; the mutual benefit association in which the prime beneficiaries are the members, the business concern which benefits the owners, the service organizations which benefit the client group, and commonweal organizations which benefit the public. Again, the problem is raised that trade unions may correspond to either the mutual-benefit type or the service organization type, and prior to an examination of the internal processes of a trade union it would not be possible to determine to which class of organization it belongs. Perhaps recognising some of these problems Blau and Scott make little further reference to this typology in the rest of their book.

A common failing of both these approaches is that they are posited within a framework which emphasises the hierarchical structuring of authority and control. Etzioni, in particular, focuses on control from above, whereas it is clear that, at the very least:

> "The trade union structure is not the comparatively simple hierarchy of most organizations: it involves a two-way process of control". (Hyman and Fryer, 1975: 157)

Two points are worth noting at this stage. The first is that where trade unions are considered at all they are put together with organizations such as political parties or pressure groups in the category 'voluntary associations', because their similarities (voluntary membership, non-profit goals, democratic procedures) seem to overshadow their differences. Secondly, trade unions are seen as an homogeneous class of organization, possessing characteristics sufficiently similar to warrant grouping all trade unions together. While this treatment

may serve certain purposes for organization theory it does little to advance our comprehension of trade unions since it is clear that they do not all conform to the same pattern of internal organization. In many respects the organization theorists' approach to trade unions is analogous to the neoclassical economists' approach to the firm. In both cases the organization is reified such that it acts, has goals, and interacts with its environment, quite independently of any internal process or variations in member orientations.

A more successful attempt to apply organization theory to trade unions has been made by Child et al (1973). They suggest that there is an important similarity between trade unions and other organizations, not because trade unions are not necessarily voluntary organizations (though this may be true), but because they embody a substantial work element in their administrative activities. Child et al separate out the administrative and representative aspects of a trade union's organization, and argue:

> "While administrative and representative structures may both lend themselves to measurement in terms of Weberian bureaucratic concepts, we suggest later in this paper that their rationales are likely to remain qualitatively distinct". (1973: 73)

In this way there is an attempt to combine the contributions which organization theory can made with a consideration of the problems of trade union goals and democratic processes. In particular it is recognised that:

> "it is unlikely to be the case that organizations classified as unions are similar in respect of every characteristic". (1973: 74)

In short, the approach of Child et al represents an advance over other organizational theorists who have failed to appreciate, or have not considered worthy of attention, the extensive debate into the nature of trade union government.[1]

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[1] For the early post-war debate see Tagliacozzo (1956).

The Union Democracy Debate

In 'Industrial Democracy' the Webbs (1920) began a tradition of pessimism towards trade union democracy which has persisted almost unchallenged to the present day. They predicted:

> "So long as the interests of all the members are fairly identical, this majority rule, where efficient representative machinery has been developed, is the most feasible contrivance for uniting administrative efficiency with popular control. But whenever the association contains several distinct classes of workers, having different degrees of skill, divergent standards of expenditure, and varying needs and opportunities, experience shows that any scheme of equalised finance and centralised administration produced, even with the best democratic machinery, neither efficiency nor the consciousness of popular control, and hence is always in a condition of unstable equilibrium. The several minorities keenly alive to separate requirements and opportunities are always feeling themselves thwarted in pushing their own interests, and deprived of any effective control over the condition of their own lives". (1920: 837)

They also predicted the development of oligarchic practices in trade unions, a view shared by Michels (1958) and generalised by him to all voluntary associations. More recently this tradition has been continued by Lipset et al (1956), Lester (1966), Fox (1971) and Flanders (1970), and even regarded by writers such as Allen (1971: 51) as inevitable. The problem is usually posed as being one of incompatibility between efficient administration and member representation in union government. Hemingway(1978) summarises the conventional viewpoint neatly:

> "Put simply, one chooses stable leadership and efficient organization at the risk of losing freedom to disagree, or one chooses the latter at the risk of fragmentation and disorganization." (1978: 2)

Yet there are those who would argue more optimistically. Though defining democracy in rather different ways, Edelstein (1967), Martin (1968) and Hyman (1971b) have shown that there are important constraints on oligarchic practice in trade unions, and therefore that trade union

oligarchy is not inevitable.

Though the debate has a certain longevity it is still possible to agree with Ramaswamy when he argues:

> "The theorising on union democracy is rich in variety, but strikingly poor in explanatory potential". (1977: 467)

An important reason for this is that the analysis has been restricted to the idea of pressure group or constitutional democracy; that is, the extent to which interests can be represented or make their voices heard in a trade union 'government'. This framework retains the notion of a decision-making leadership which must be responsive to factions (Martin) can be voted out (Edelstein) or has an institutionalised opposition (Lipset et al). One aim of my thesis is to show that this framework is not always the most suitable for an analysis of trade union government. The dichotomy between leaders and followers limits the range of governmental types to democracy (members control over leaders) or oligarchy (leaders control over members). The concept of government which I shall adopt is that of polyarchy, in which leaders are distributed amongst the various collectivities which make up the union organization. Government proceeds by a process of competitions between these collectivity leaderships for control over areas of decision making or over specific decisions.

In some ways the attention to structure in existing theories is related to the regulatory or rule-making systems approach to trade unions and industrial relations. As Lipset et al say of their study:

> "The historical analysis explains how the system, in this case two-party democracy, came into existence, while the sociological analysis accounts for the ways in which the structural factors operate to maintain it". (1956: 451)

Much less attention has been paid to the processes of trade union democracy. Hemingway (1978) has demonstrated the value of a processual analysis of trade union government, though he retains a concept of government which embodies the leaders versus members of dichotomy.

In common with Hemingway, I shall argue that questions of democracy and oligarchy are not solely, or even primarily, questions of constitution, but are essentially political questions of the distribution of power, authority and control. Indeed, constitutions may come to reflect this distribution rather than be the determinant of the distribution, as Hemingway describes in his discussion of the National Union of Seamen. Equally, I shall argue that though these distributions are relatively stable they are not immutable; different collectivities within the organization at levels other than that of leadership can raise or lower their power vis-a-vis other collectivities. The thesis is particularly concerned with the sources of, opportunities for, and constraints on the use of legitimate power, since if trade unions do have essential characteristics which mark them off from other organizations they lie in the representative nature of their rules (Gouldner, 1954) and the expectations of a democratic ideology which members bring to the union. Hemingway quotes a union member as saying:

> "To use threats against its members!
> Had it been any other kind of organization
> perhaps it wouldn't have been so bad."
> (1978: 110)

These arguments are developed over eleven chapters, falling within three parts.

Outline of the thesis

Part I focuses on two themes of theoretical and empirical development. The first theme is that of power, authority and control, and the second that of democracy, oligarchy and polyarchy as forms of trade union government.

Chapter One takes a critical look at the analysis of power in organizations and suggests that this analysis may be conveniently separated into problems of the definition, the measurement, and the explanation of power relationships. Weber's definition of power is accepted as a starting point for analysis. Authority is defined as a

particular type of power, the distinction between authority and other types of power hinging upon the interpretations placed upon the relationships by the recipient. A crucial theme thus introduced is the role of participants' oreintations and perceptions in the power process. Control is defined as the outcome of a power relationship and it is emphasised that the terms power and control are not synonymous.[1]

The relative strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches to the measurement of power are reviewed, along with the various explanations of power such as those of French and Raven (1959), Blau (1967), and Hickson et al (1971). The explanation of power based on exchange and strategic contingencies is extremely useful, but suffers from the relatively statis view taken of the structural conditions which give rise to opportunities to 'control' these strategic contingencies. The second important theme introduced in this chapter is that social structure and actors' perception combine to produce changing power relations, one outcome of which may be those structural conditions which some organization theorists are tempted to regard as the determinant of relative power.

Chapter Two considers the debate surrounding trade union democracy. The optimistic and pessimistic traditions are examined in greater detail and it is suggested that what have traditionally been viewed as incompatible or competing aims, efficiency and rperesentation, are in some ways not only compatible but mutually beneficial. Of greatest importance in this respect are the orientations or expectations of the union that members bring to their union involvement. Particularly important is the existence within the union of various hierarchical collectivities, to which members may exhibit quite different orientations according to the

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[1] Those writing within the framework developed by Tannenbaum and his associates have suggested that the terms power and control may be regarded as synonymous.

relative ability of each collectivity to satisfy member interests. It is shown that leaders exist within each of these collectivities and that what has been described as intra-union strife is a form of competition between collectivity leaderships for control over the passive memberships. This form of government in which there is neither democracy nor oligarchy is best described as polyarchy, a concept which has been relatively unexplored[1] in the discussions of trade union government.

Chapter Four goes on to elaborate on the nature of polyarchy as a form of trade union government. The idea of competing collectivities is re-emphasised and great attention is paid to the sources of power which may be mobilised. Here, the concept of legitimate authority plays an important role, and several sources of such authority are identified. A collectivity may obtain the support of the union membership because it can secure material gains. Such support is dependent upon continuing to secure such gains and thus dependent on recognition from employers or the state.

Having considered the nature of polyarchy as a form of government Chapter Five considers the ways in which the engineering section of the A.U.E.W. conforms to the polyarchic type. The fit is found to be very close, but it is emphasised that for historical reasons the A.U.E.W. is probably the most polyarchic of the major U.K. trade unions. In the A.U.E.W. we find the notion of interdependent groups pursuing interests, sometimes convergent and sometimes divergent, within an overall framework of rules, an appealing description of internal union life.

Chapter Six concludes Part I of the thesis with the development of a model for the analysis of power and control which embodies three stages; conceptualisation, structure, and process. The third and most important step of the model is concerned with the elaboration of power as a social process.

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1 With the notable exceptions of Van de Vall (1970) and Banks (1974)

Part Two locates the theoretical discussion of power and trade union government in the context of the power relationships of the Manchester district committee of the A.E.U.

Chapter Seven outlines the research approach to the study. Three general orientations to the research are discussed. Firstly, that behaviour is to be explained not only in terms of the structural characteristics of a relationship but also the actors' orientations towards and perceptions of the relationship; secondly, that these perceptions and orientations are conditioned both by current and past experiences; and thirdly, that the analysis of decision-making associated with overt divergences of policy preferences will reveal the relative power of the parties to polyarchic competitions. The research is presented in the form of case studies, of the type Eldridge refers to as representative; that is, they demonstrate the use of the model and the application of theoretically developed concepts to an empirical case that may be said to illustrate the viability and robustness of the generalised form.

The model and case studies must therefore be viewed together as comprising a statement about the nature of decision-making in a trade union.

Chapter Eight describes and analyses the structural characteristics of the district committee and of its relationships with other union collectivities. The role of information and communication channels is discussed, and it is shown that the formal communication channels between the district committee and the workshops are poor. In terms of the structural aspects of the model this leads to the hypothesis that the paucity of information flows inhibits the ability of the committee to 'control' activities in the district's plants.

Chapters Nine and Ten present two case studies of overt conflict between the district committee and the Executive Council (Chapter Nine) and between the district committee and a workshop organization (Chapter Ten). As case studies of the 'representative' type, the fit between the

model and the evidence of the case studies is a close one. Nevertheless, there are points of divergence between the generality of the model and the specific case studies.

These divergencies are discussed in Part Three. Chapter Eleven reviews the theoretical and empirical inputs to the model and re-emphasises some of the key themes. One of the implications of the study is that district committees are less powerful than is widely believed. Similarly, though the branches are not generally regarded as important by many scholars (and trade unionists), they serve an important function in the A.U.E.W. as an information channel between members in the workshop and the union hierarchy beyond the shop stewards organization.

The role of elected full-time officials is examined in the context of organizational bureaucracy and the proposals for amalgamation with the Electrical Electronic Telecommunication and Plumbing Union (E.E.T.P.U.)

Chapter Twelve arises out of an awareness that there are several ways in which the theory can be developed. These are by a comparative analysis embracing other district committees or other trade unions, or by a more rigorous treatment of orientations and perceptions, or by an elaboration of the structural aspects of the model, or by a consideration of the 'costs' involved in mobilising various forms of power within organizations generally. Taken together or apart these options offer fruitful avenues for future research.

PART ONE : TOWARDS A MODEL OF POLYARCHIC TRADE UNION GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER TWO

THE ANALYSIS OF POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

Since organized or communal life invariably involves some structure of authority and compliance it is easy to see why these and related concepts such as power, influence and domination have occupied a central position in man's theorising about his society throughout history. That so central a notion should still be problematic can be ascribed paradoxically to the amount of scrutiny which it has received. As the social sciences have splintered into discrete disciplines with subtle differences in their canons of logic, then so too has the analysis of power been pursued from a variety of intellectual standpoints. Hobbes (1946) argued that a system of authority is of such paramount importance for the continued existence of an ordered society, that where individual conscience conflicts with such authority the individual conscience must be sacrificed. From the standpoint of the individual, studies in social psychology[1] have indicated how a belief in the correctness of authority per se may lead to the abdication of individual responsibility as suggested by Hobbes. Rule following, it is argued, is itself such a powerful norm that behaviour may be oriented to rules (written or unwritten) even where their basis in logic is obscure or questionable. Similarly, individual conscience or will may be sacrificed to a higher authority because of a commitment to some ideal or ideology embodied in that authority. Thus the notions of patriotism, religion or revolution may be invoked to justify acts contrary to the individual's own predispositions.

Though the analysis of personal compliance is of importance in the overall context of the study of power, from the point of view of societal or organizational analysis we are more concerned with the relatively stable

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[1] One of the best examples being Stanley Milgram's "Obedience to Authority" (1974).

patterns of power and influence which characterise networks of social relationships.[2] Studies in this area have tended to fall within the disciplines of political science and sociology and, as several writers have noted, this has produced two traditions in the study of power. The political science tradition derives from Dahl (1961) while the sociological tradition derives from Hunter (1953). As Clegg suggests, the controversy arises from a lack of agreement between the two disciplines as to "what counts as correct procedure for producing what counts as factual knowledge". (1975: 19) He continues:

> "What we would appear to have here is such a lack of agreement among power study practitioners of what power is, and how it ought to be studied, and how such studies ought to be interpreted". (Clegg 1975: 19)

Though Clegg perhaps overstates the degree of divergence between the disciplines his statement does suggest that the analysis of power is logically separable into three closely related aspects. The first is the definition of power, the second is the identification and measurement of power, and the third is the explanation (the bases or sources) of power. Empirically, these three aspects are necessarily related (identification presupposes definition, for example) but some writers have preferred to concentrate on one or two aspects to the neglect of the other(s) and have thus made their greatest contributions in only a limited area.

Though the study of power in organizations is a more limited enquiry than that of power in society it nevertheless employs the same concepts and strategies. Perhaps more importantly, just as the nature of personal compliance cannot be ignored, it is not possible to ignore the power structure in the society in which the organization is located. Not only will this affect the expectations (orientations) that members bring to

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[2] Though, as Polsby (1959) argues, the existence of such a stable network of relationships and events should not always be assumed.

the organization but through these affect the structure of the organization itself. Abell has termed this the nested contingency of power in organizations; that is, the ways in which power within an organization is related "to the wider cultural ideologies of the society in which the organization is situated". (1975: 27)

As Crozier (1972) notes, organizations exist at a level of integration somewhere between primary groups and the total social system. Thus the analysis of organizations may be expected to draw heavily on work done in both areas and perhaps contribute to a synthesis of apparently disparate findings.

The definition of power

Martin has observed that:

> "Power is one of the most central and yet problematic concepts in sociological theory ..... There is little agreement upon basic definitions: individual theorists proposing their own more or less idiosyncratic terminology, and surprisingly little consideration of the implication of alternative uses". (1971: 240)

However, it should be possible to distinguish the essential features of the concept so that it may be used with a minimum of ambiguity, and in particular to distinguish power from the closely related concepts of influence, authority and control.

Much of the modern thinking about power can be traced back to Weber's familiar proposition that "power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests" (1968: 53). The recurring features of those definitions which derive from Weber's are firstly, that power is a property of a relationship, not of an individual or group, and secondly, that the recipient in a power relationship acts against his will. In his formulation Weber is careful to distinguish between a definition of power and an explanation of power, an analytical device followed here.

The view that power is the property of a relationship rather than of an individual or group may be contrasted with that of Dahrendorf who suggests that power is "a contingent property, a property of individuals, rather than a property of social structures" (1959: 263). However, Dahrendorf's view is misleading since it directs attention away from the possibility that in the absence of a recipient there can be no power, or that outside of a given social relationship an actor may cease to exercise power. Rather than thinking in terms of power as a property it is more useful to follow the line pioneered by Dahl (1957) and to think of power in terms of a triadic relationship; that A has power over B with respect to C. A definition in these terms indicates that power is specific to a relationship and need not be generalisable to all relationships. A will only have power over B with reference to a specific area of interaction C. That power is a non-generalisable property of a social relationship is one of the tenets of a pluralist view of political life. In this view power will not reside in one or few powerful individuals or groups but will be dispersed among a plurality of groups according to the number and diversity of power bases within the political system. The 'elitist' view of power, on the other hand, suggests that power is generalisable. A 'powerful' individual or group in one sphere (for example, the economic) will have power in other spheres (for example, the political).[3] However, these arguments very quickly involve problems of identification which we may leave to the following section. For the moment we are more concerned with distinguishing power from some of its closely related concepts.

Following Dahl, Abell defines power and influence in terms of the ability of an actor to get his way (obtain his objectives) when opposed by others with competing objectives (1975: 11 and 14). The difference between power and influence lies in the perceptions of the recipient in

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[3] As in C. Wright Mills, "The Power Elite", (1957).

the relationship. Where B can be prevailed upon to change his objectives by the actions of A, (for example, by persuasion) than Abell terms this 'influence'. However, if B retains his initial objectives but is unable to achieve them, yet A achieves his objectives in conflict with B, then this is referred to as power.

Such a distinction follows Bierstedt (1950), who similarly argues that influence is persuasive while power is coercive (not necessarily implying force, only that the recipient acts against his will).

Authority may be viewed as a particular type of power where the recipient perceives the exercise of power as being in some way legitimated by the social structure in which the power relationship is exercised. Again, much of the discussion of authority stems from the work of Weber:

> "The essence of authority is a relationship between two or more actors in which the commands of certain actors are treated as binding by the others". (1954: 238)

Such a situation may arise because subordinates and superiors share a set of beliefs or values which define the right of the superiors to have their commands obeyed. Authority therefore involves the acceptance of the power situation; or alternatively, a suspension of judgment on the part of the recipients. The distinction between authority and other forms of power proposed by this study thus hinges on the interpretations placed on the relationship by the recipient or, as Clegg, (1977) puts it, theorising confronts the problem of being under power, or being under control.

Weber distinguished three types of authority: charismatic, traditional and legal-rational. In the context of organizational analysis the most important of these is legal-rational authority. Authority is here derived from the rules which govern the hierarchical arrangement of offices and is therefore, attached to the office and not to its incumbent. Superiors exercise authority by virtue of having acquired a particular

office and this authority is accepted by subordinates as legitimated by the impersonal rules governing the organization. The relationships which may be covered by the authority will be limited by the rules defining the sphere of jurisdiction of the office. However, it may be observed that different incumbents of offices may exercise differing degrees of authority according to their personal characteristics. Thus, while the formal rules govern the scope of the authority of the office, there may be informal processes whereby authority is limited by the view which the subordinate holds of the incumbent, particularly if there is a divergence between status and skill.

Not all writers[4] agree, however, that Parsons' translation of herrschaft as 'authority' is correct. They argue that herrschaft is better translated as domination, and that Weber distinguished between the relationships that exist within a rule-governed hierarchical organization (domination) and the more nebulous, uninstitutionalised pressures that norms or ideology exert (authority). Domination is more akin to other types of power than is authority since domination does not necessarily involve the acceptance by the subordinate of the values of the superior.

Though Clegg follows Banton (1972) in arguing that all sociological theorising on power must be grounded in Weber's work, this should not be taken to mean a preoccupation with the difficulties of translating German into English.

Parsons' translation of macht as 'power' allows Weber's definition of power to embrace a variety of social relationships, including authority. Authority in these terms is a type of power distinguishable from other types by an acceptance of the legitimacy of the commands (not necessarily an agreement with them). As such the analysis of authority takes us some way towards an 'explanation' of power.

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[4] See, for example, S. Clegg (1975) and John Scott, (1973).

The concepts power, influence and authority can be related to the concept of control (or compliance or obedience). Power in an organization will normally be used to secure control; that is, control is the end and power the means. Tannenbaum (1968) has skirted the problem of distinguishing between power, influence, authority and control by regarding them as synonymous.

> "It (control) is now commonly used in a broader sense synonymously with the notions of influence and power ..... our definition conforms essentially to what many authors mean by control, power or influence", and
>
> "Control refers) to any process in which a person or group of persons or organization of persons determines, that is, intentionally affects, the behaviour of another person, group or organization". (Tannenbaum, 1968: 5)

This approach has been followed by several other writers (for example, Smith and Ari (1963), Kahn (1964), and Lammers (1967)).

However, power and control should not be regarded as the same thing. Power may enable control to be exercised but they should not be regarded as synonymous. The distinction lies in separating means from ends, and properties of a relationship from action. Power (however derived) and influence are the means, and control (or compliance) is the end. Power is the property of a relationship between two actors and control the feature of the resultant action.

Abell carries the distinction a shade further by differentiating between control and compliance. Compliant behaviour is defined as where B behaves in accordance with A's objectives, for whatever reason. The term control is reserved for compliance which results from A's exercise of power over B.

Briefly then, I have followed Dahl's reformulation of Weber's definition of power, the essential features of which are:

a) Power is a feature of a relationship, not of an individual or group
b) the recipient acts against his will; that is, a conflict of interests is involved

c) power embraces authority, which is a power relationship in some way legitimated by the recipient in the relationship.

Influence is persuasive and thus does not fall within our definition of power. Compliance has been defined as the resultant action of the recipient in a relationship in which power and influence are the means to that end. Control has been defined (following Abell) as that compliance produced by power (as distinct from influence).

The identification and measurement of power

The pluralist tradition has emphasised what has become known as the 'issue approach' to identification and measurement. Using this approach, key issues involving a conflict of interests are analysed in depth and their outcomes used as an indicator of the relative power of the parties to the conflict. Abell argues:

> "It is difficult to see how power and influence could be empirically studied where there is no conflict between competing objectives". (1975: 14)

Several writers have criticised what they see as the excessive behaviouralism implicit in this approach. Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1963, 1970) argued that concentration on actual decision-making overlooks those cases where issues are prevented from reaching the decision-making arena. Accordingly, the definition of power should in some way incorporate the ability to prevent issues entering the decision-making process. Power involves examining both decision-making and non-decision making; a non-decision being "a decision that results in suppression or thwarting of the latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of a decision-maker" (Bachrach and Baratz 1970: 44).

In common with the pluralist perspective Bachrach and Baratz focus on those issues which are observable cases of conflict of interests, but they would identify far more relationships as being power relationships than just those over which overt decision-making takes place.

Referring to the pluralist view of power as 'one dimensional' and that of Bachrach and Baratz as 'two dimensional', Lukes (1974) proposes a third perspective on power which he terms 'three dimensional'. In this perspective Lukes considers not only those issues which are prevented from becoming the subject of decision-making but also issues which are never articulated or even recognised by the recipient in the power relationship. Such a situation may arise where wants and desires are shaped by those who exercise power, by such means as the control of information, mass media and processes of socialisation. In this situation the recipients in the power relationship are blinded as to their real interests.

Lukes' view does not actually change the definition of power, only the identification of situations where it may be analysed. Power is still, in Lukes' terms, the ability of A to cause B to act in accordance with A's wishes with respect to action C. The essential difference between the three views is the classification of situations which may be termed "power situations". For the pluralists, power is identified where there is decision-making over some conflict of interests. For Bachrach and Baratz power situations include not only the above but also where grievances are prevented from reaching the decision-making arena. For Lukes they include both the above, and in addition cases where B is not aware that he has acted in accordance with A's wishes and contrary to his own real interests with respect to action C. Lukes' view of power is thus more inclusive in its identification than the views considered so far.

The problem, as Lukes notes, is to identify the relevant counter-factual, the evidence that had A not (successfully) exercised power over B, B would have done something other than he actually did. Where there is overt conflict of interests the counter-factual is easily identified. Where there is not, the counter-factual must be identified by the observer and as Lukes says, "sometimes, however, it is extraordinarily difficult to justify the relevant counter-factual" (1974: 46). The few examples

suggested by Lukes rely heavily on ex post facto explanation. Observed changes in the behaviour of the recipients when the exercise of power was relaxed may be adduced as evidence that the relevant counter-factual was present in the pre-relaxation period, but this does not enable an observer to identify in advance that a counter-factual is present, or to predict the direction of behavioural change should a hypothesised power situation be relaxed. The observer is obliged to formulate a version of the recipients' real interests which is contrary to the view that they themselves hold. This is, as Lukes notes, essentially a value laden interpretation of the situation and as such there may be various intepretations according to the values which the observer(s) bring to the situation. Lukes' formulation runs counter to the general orientation to power and authority of this study which stresses the actor's own definitions of the situations. As Martin (1977) suggests, there is some degree of arrogance in the assumption that the observer is better placed to define the actor's real interests than the actor himself (Martin, 1977: 40).

Within organizations, however, such three dimensional power may result from the nested contingency of the organization's power structure within that of the society as a whole. Weber (1930) noted how wider cultural values affected orientations to work and work organizations, an observation which has been strengthened by recent studies.[5] Empirically, however, such power is difficult to identify and even more difficult to measure. Batstone et al (1977) attempt to come to terms with the problem by adopting a more restricted view of ideology. Rather than defining ideology in terms of dominant or hegemonic cultural values, they suggest that within organizations a more limited categorisation of ideologies is capable of helping to explain differences in the distribution of power. Referring to shop

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[5] For example, Goldthorpe et al, The Affluent Worker, (1968).

stewards Batstone et al distinguish between those that hold and promote a "trade union principles" ideology and those that do not, and show how this difference contributes to differing patterns of 'leadership', or shop steward control over members.

This method represents a useful approximation to the idea of three-dimensional power, though Lukes' concern was with a more pervasive ideological bias than that considered by Batstone et al, a bias expressed by Hyman and Brough (1975: 211) when they argue:

> "We have so far suggested that because the influence of those in positions of economic and social power extends to the processes and institutions of socialisation and communication, the dominant interpretation of social reality is normally the only coherent world-view to be extensively accepted".

In treading the fine line between theoretical inclusiveness and operational simplification it may have to be sufficient that such concerns, while not actively considered, are not ignored either.

Abell, certainly, sacrifices some theoretical sophistication for operationalism in applying the issues approach to organizations. Organizations are seen as decision-making systems within which participants bargain over outcomes. This bargaining takes place within and between 'bargaining zones' defined in terms of

a) a finite set of actors

b) a set of decisions (issues)

c) each actor has preferred outcomes

d) each decision has a clearly defined outcome

e) each actor attaches a clearly defined importance (subjective saliency) to each decision.

Data is thus required on the initial preferred outcomes of participants, their modified preferred outcomes and the outcomes of the decision-making. In these terms the influence of A over B is seen as the ability of A to modify B's initial preferred outcomes in a bargaining situation

where all other influences are held constant. The bargaining power of A is seen as the ability to obtain his preferred outcomes when facing competing preferred outcomes. Thus two phases of decision-making are identified; the influence phase where attempts are made to change initial preferred outcomes, and the bargaining phase where modified preferred outcomes are bargained to produce the collective outcome.

Measurement is achieved by combining the outcomes with the indices of subjective saliency. The more important the issue to the participants the greater the power involved in achieving a preferred outcome.

With the notion of subjective saliency Abell (1975) modifies the issues approach to meet Bachrach and Baratz's criticism that

> "the model provides no objective criteria for distinguishing between 'important' and 'unimportant' issues arising in the political arena" (1970: 378)

but, as noted earlier, fails to answer their question

> "can a sound concept of power be predicated on the assumption that power is totally embodied and fully reflected in 'concrete decisions' or in activity bearing upon their making?" (1970: 378)

The 'issue approach' may be compared with the 'reputational approach' favoured by the sociological tradition. In this approach, respondents are asked to estimate the degree of influence which particular individuals or groups have on decisions in particular spheres, such as within a community or an organization. Using this approach power structures tend to be defined as elitist rather than pluralist since groups or individuals are perceived as possessing power which can be generalised across decisions. The method is described by Tannenbaum:

> "The work described in the following articles relies for measures of control largely on the averaged judgments by organization members in response to questionnaire items dealing with the amount of influence or control exercised by various groups in their organization". (1968: 24)

Though Tannenbaum's methodology is firmly within the 'reputational' tradition, the notion of control which is employed is derived from the work of Dahl (Tannenbaum, 1968: 7). Tannenbaum's approach is more akin to the pluralist view than the elitist since it is central to his theory that there is a variable total amount of control in an organization. Control may be exercised in a non-hierarchical manner without impairing the effectiveness of the organization. A higher total amount of control (no matter how distributed) will, according to Tannenbaum, lead to greater organizational effectiveness. The greatest effectiveness is achieved where high total control is combined with a distribution in favour of the rank and file.

As a technique for demonstrating both the amount and distribution of control in an organization Tannenbaum has developed the concept of the control graph. The horizontal axis of the graph represents the hierarchical ranking of offices or levels in an organization. On the vertical axis is plotted the amount of control exercised at each level. While the area beneath the curve indicates the total amount of control being exercised within the organization, the shape of the curve indicates how that control is distributed between the hierarchical levels.

Tannenbaum suggests four characteristic shapes which a control curve may adopt, corresponding to four 'types' of distribution:

a) a curve which rises with hierarchy corresponds to an 'autocratic' distribution of control (a positive association between hierarchy and control)

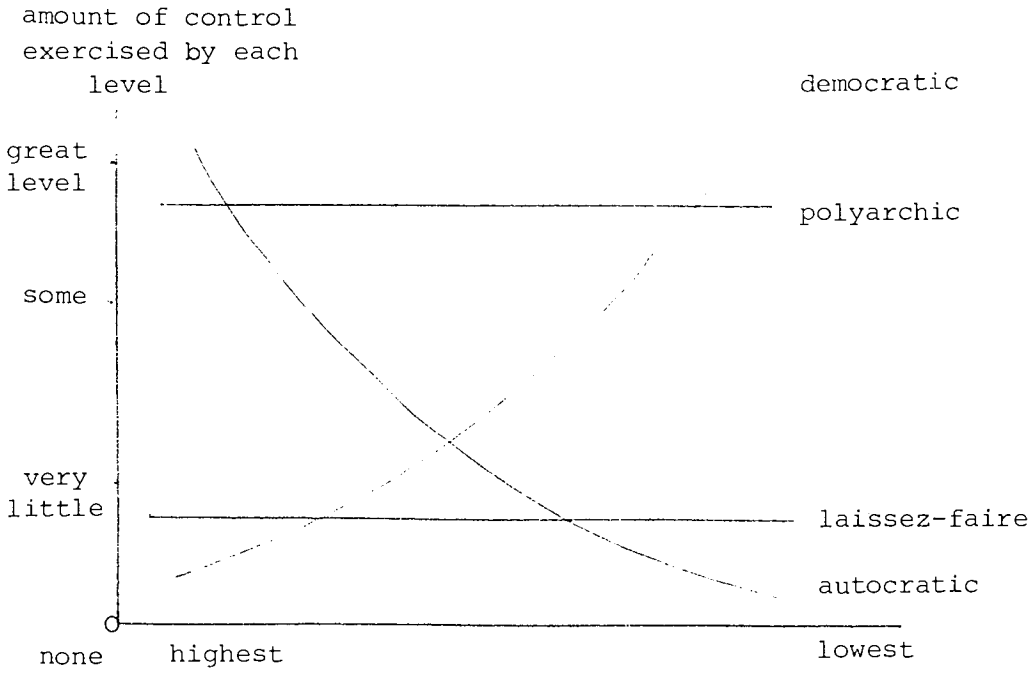
b) a curve which declines with hierarchy corresponds to a 'democratic' distribution of control (a negative association between hierarchy and control)

c) a high flat curve indicating a high degree of control at all levels is termed a 'polyarchic' distribution

d) a low flat curve indicating little control at any level is termed a 'laissez-faire' distribution.

The curves are summarised in figure 1

Figure 1 - Tannenbaum's four control graphs



Tannenbaum himself recognises that one of the major weaknesses of the reputational method for deriving control graphs is "the reliance placed on the judgments of organization members for the measures of control" (1968: 88) For example, in one of his studies, trade union officers judged the distribution of control to be more positively sloped (that is, in favour of the rank and file) than did the union's members. This suggests, says Tannenbaum, some systematic bias in the judgments and

> "To the extent that errors of measurement are not random, we are probably moving from a measure of organizational control to a measure of perceived organizational control". (1968: 24)

This is the sense in which Bowen employs the control graph technique in his study of social control in a steel plant. Though not explicitly noting that this represents a departure from Tannenbaum's original use of the graph Bowen says:

> "Nevertheless the development of the control graph technique holds considerable promise. This method of representing perceptions of influence permits an assessment of the perceived level of total control and its distribution in an organization". (my emphasis) (1976: 73)

It is clear that empirically there is a great deal of difference between measuring actual control distributions and measuring perceived control distributions. There are important relationships between perceptions of control (as a base for power) and actual control, which are obscured by any implication of automatic correspondence between the two. The reputational approach relies necessarily on perceptions of control and provided that this is recognised and accepted, the resultant graph can be as useful a device as Bowen suggests.

The issues approach, for its part, claims to overcome this subjectivity by focussing on the outcomes of actual decision-making but, as we have seen, in so doing it may ignore whole sets of power relationships in which perceptions play a key role.

Poole (1975) has criticised both approaches for their failure to examine the bases of power: "Nevertheless" he writes, "neither of these measurement systems takes the analysis beyond mere description" (1975: 33).

Though this may be true it would not seem to be a valid criticism, since neither professes to go beyond description and the proponents of each system recognise that a full analysis of power must go further. Tannenbaum, for example, examines the bases of power in separate articles from those on measurement, and Abell argues:

> "I prefer than to start by asking a question with a slightly different emphasis - how one could detect, in the ongoing social processes of an organization that a given individual or group is powerful or influential. Then, and only then, I will go on to ask why it should be that he/it is powerful". (1975: 13)

The explanation of power

One of the most influential categorisations of the bases of power was made by French and Raven (1959). They identified five bases:

a) reward

b) legitimation

c) referent

d) expert

e) coercion

a) Reward as a basis for power may be as in the wage contract but also may include psychological rewards. A 'moral' orientation towards the organization may result in personal satisfaction, a positive sanction perhaps as great as monetary reward. Tannenbaum et al suggest that accession to influence out of a sense of commitment to a larger purpose served by the organization should be added as a sixth base of power, but in so far as the result of such commitment is pychological reward we may group this with French and Raven's first category.

b) Legitimation is based on the acceptance of cultural values and the social structure. As was noted in the discussion of authority, the common values do not necessarily relate to the content of the command, but only to the acceptance that the command be obeyed. As Fox says:

> "In so far as he can be brought to share the collectivity's values he will be able to legitimize its procedural norms and thus accept the leadership and direction of its officers". (1971: 107)

c) Referent power exists, for example, in the attempt to gain access to a high prestige group.

d) Expert power exists where those with particular skills or knowledge can exchange advice in return for power.

e) Coercion involves the use of negative sanctions or force to achieve compliance.

French and Raven's fives bases are five ways in which positive or negative sanctions may be offered, and viewed by the recipient as a basis for power. At the same time there will be strategies for avoiding dependence and thus avoiding sanctions, in particular by going without the resource or service offered, or looking elsewhere for it. Power will be limited by the extent to which resources or services are offered elsewhere, and the extent to which the recipient may be able to take advantage of this.

From this starting point has developed the exchange/dependency perspective on organizational power. Blau (1961) extended the notion of power derived from exchange to consider the exchange processes underlying the relationship. According to Blau, by supplying services in demand to others a person establishes power over them. Power in this sense is the price that the expert, for example, derives in return for his expertise and his investment in the exchange relationship. Exchange price will depend upon the elasticities of demand and supply for the resource in question, so that the degree of power will depend upon how badly the resource is required and how many sources are able and willing to supply it.

Social relationships are thus characterised by ties of dependence, usually mutual dependence. In organizational terms this involves seeing the organization as set of interdependent sub-units. Imbalances in this interdependency set up a network of power relations, and attention is thus directed to the source of sub-unit dependence or independence. Strategic contingency theory, as developed by Hickson et al (1971), suggests that the source of independence is found primarily in a sub-group's ability to cope with uncertainty,[1] whether this uncertainty originates in the organization's environment or from within. The organization is perceived as

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[1] Following the lead given by the behavioural theories of the firm, the main task of an organization's activity is held to be to reduce the degree of uncertainty in which it is working.

a system of plural and countervailing powers, locating contingency theory in the political science power tradition, including its definition and methodology.

Clegg (1975, 1977) has criticised not only the reification of the sub-unit in the theory but also the vague use of the notion of uncertainty. He argues that in the work organization the sub-unit cannot be viewed as a unitary collective since within each sub-unit there will exist power relations which have to be explained. Similarly, he argues that it is not clear whether uncertainty should be regarded as a feature of the environment or of the members' knowledge. According to the theory, 'solving' uncertainty confers power in that the sub-unit becomes central to the operations of the organization. Power is derived from the current position in the organizational process, whereas, Clegg argues, current position should be viewed as the result of an existing power structure which exhibits areas of uncertainty, capable of being controlled. According to Clegg, the power structure is prior to any manoeuverings into positions of centrality (less dependence), and is to be located in the system of 'rules' governing organizational relationships:

> "Hickson et al manage to ignore prior questions of 'rules of the game' which effectively structure the types of issues (and hence outcomes) that arise for power to be manifested. They do this because they dwell in the tradition of an exchange theory allied to a behavioural concept of power, in a functionalist systems framework". (Clegg, 1975: 53)

In short, Clegg's criticism relates to the 'one-dimensionality' of the strategic contingencies approach, and the superficial aspects of power as manifested in the outcomes of particular exchanges.

However, as French and Raven indicated, explanation of power based upon exchange and interdependency does not exhaust the sources of explanation. Though monetary reward may fit into our exchange approach, other positive sanctions fit less easily. In the case of psychological reward it is difficult to determine between whom the exchange takes place, unless it is argued (within the three-dimensional framework) that those who

possess power first create the conditions in which the recipient will take a moral orientation. Those who exercise power thus confer psychological rewards in exchange for compliance, through the medium of a moral 'directive'.[1] The creation of a positive orientation towards authority per se creates a climate in which commands are perceived as legitimate regardless of their content, in that there is psychological reward for rule-following.

In addition to compliance grounded in exchange or legitimation, compliance may be achieved by the exercise of negative sanctions, including coercion or force. In considering the exercise of negative sanctions, the degree of dependence (or strategies for avoidance) plays a similar role to that in exchange theory. The higher the degree of dependence the more difficult it will be to avoid negative sanctions and the greater will be the compliance. Power is here related not directly to the exchange, but to the strength of the sanctions available. This strength may be derived in turn from the rules governing the exchange relationship, rules perhaps determined by the more powerful partner. Thus one of the advantages conveyed by power in exchange may be the ability to determine the rules of future exchanges including the sanctions available in the event of non-compliance.

The sources of power may be seen to rest in a nexus of positive and negative sanctions, authority and interdependence, or as Martin puts it,

> "The major elements in any explanation of power relations are actors' goals and the distribution of resources required to achieve them". (1977: 50)

Power Dynamics

In summary, power has been defined, following Weber (1968), as "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position

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[1] R. Hyman (1972) notes how the dominant values in society generally tend to underwrite the legitimacy of those in positions of control. Hyman and Fryer (1975) suggest that since in exchange theory the rules themselves are the result of power relations the distinction between power and authority is unimportant.

to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests". It may be identified and measured either by an assessment of issues and outcomes, or by respondents' evaluations of powerful individuals or groups, bearing in mind firstly, that the more important the issue(s) the greater the degree of power revealed by both methods, and secondly, the possibility of overlooking significant power relations that are not the subject of decision-making or are not apparent to respondents. The bases of this probability are sanctions, legitimacy and dependency.

However, all of the views of power so far considered have been essentially static in that little attention is given to those processes whereby power is accumulated or diminished in a relationship. Though we are concerned with relatively stable patterns of power and influence, this should not be taken to imply that the relative power position of two groups is always static. Clegg suggests that

> "The assumption of 'resources' based explanation of 'power' ought also entail an exposition of how some people come to have access to these 'resources' while some others do not. The prior possession of resources in anything other than equal amounts is something which a theory of 'power' has to explain". (1977: 25)

Within the tradition of exchange (and particularly strategic contingencies theory) power is located in the structural characteristics of the relationship. Centrality confers relative independence upon a group or individual and thus confers power. We may speak of a strategically powerful position, one in which the potential for exercising power is high. This is a "possible power" conferred by the holding of valued skills, resources or rewards.

However, before possible power is translated into the exercise of power (action) there must be a realisation on the part of the group that its power capacity is higher vis-a-vis other groups. Wrong (1968) suggests that such realisation may come from "the achievement of solidarity, common goals, social organization and leadership" (1960: 680). Additionally,

Fox has pointed out that:

> "The differing nature of aspirations means differing intensities of the will to organize and to seize the opportunities available". (1971: 603)

Perceptions of power capacity form an important link between bases of power and attempts to exercise power. Power testing is the process whereby groups assess whether their estimate of their relative power is accurate, and it is this process of power testing that is analysed in the decision-making approach. The outcomes of the testing process may reinforce or modify the initial power realisation and may lead to further action, such as an attempt to change the structural characteristics of the relationship. A successful outcome of power testing may reinforce the perceptions of independence whereas an unsuccessful outcome may result in either an acceptance of a lower power capacity or an attempt to improve the structural context. Social structure and perceptions are thus combined to produce changing power relationships.[1] The process whereby these outcomes are produced within an organization is sometimes referred to as the 'negotiation of order', Strauss et al (1971) refer to the "importance of negotiation - the processes of give and take, of diplomacy, of bargaining - which characterises organizatio life" (1971: 104).

Though the structural dimensions (power capacity) largely determine the effectiveness of sanctions, the realisation of power capacity may be determined by the outcome of previous attempts to apply sanctions. In addition, a realisation of lower power capacity may result in compliance and hence make an application of sanctions unnecessary a feature of power relations sometimes known as the 'law of anticipated reactions'. As Poole puts it:

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[1] For an analysis of power generation in a work group context see Marchington (1975).

> "That is to say, if it is anticipated that, in a trial of strength, the outcome will be unfavourable for a particular party, then an issue is likely to be conceded without a major power conflict taking place". (1975: 37)

Control relationships are thus conditioned by perceptions of power and influence, which may have been determined by previous power outcomes. The importance of perceptions in the model emphasises the usefulness of the control graph technique as a way of measuring and illustrating perceived distributions of power and influence.

CHAPTER THREE

TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY

Introduction

The problem of democratic organization in representative institutions, particularly trade unions, has been a central theme in sociological analysis since the publication at the turn of the century of the Webbs' "Industrial Democracy" and Michels' "Political Parties."

The Webbs noted how, in the growing trade unions of the late nineteenth century, primitive democracy, whereby all members could meet to decide rules and policy, was inevitably replaced by representative democracy. Their analysis of this trend was fairly pessimistic in that its outcome was seen as a widening gap between the membership and the virtually irremoveable leaders. They wrote:

> "In passing from a local to a national organization the Trade Union unwittingly left behind the ideal of primitive democracy. The setting apart of one man to do the clerical work destroyed the possibility of equal and identical service by all the members, and laid the foundation of a separate governing class. The practice of requiring members to act in rotation was silently abandoned. Once chosen for his post, the general secretary could rely with confidence, unless he proved himself obviously unfit or grossly incompetent, on being annually re-elected. Spending all day at office work, he soon acquired a professional expertness quite out of reach of his fellow-members at the bench or the forge". (S. and B. Webb, 1920: 15)

However, the Webbs noted that democracy as an article of faith was still prevalent. Its form was that of representative democracy, "the typically modern form of democracy, the elected representative assembly, appointing and controlling an executive committee under whose direction the permanent official staff performs its work" (1920: 37).

Michels drew on the Webbs' analysis for his broader study of voluntary associations, "Political Parties."[1] Representation and delegation, he argued,

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[1] In this work considerable attention was given to trade unions. In it Michels suggested that: "in the trade union movement the authoritative character of leaders and their tendency to rule democratic organizations on oligarchic lines, are even more pronounced than in the political

are illusory democracy. The permanent representative will always be tantamount to the exercise of domination by the representatives over the represented. According to Michels, the influence of committees, the formalities of bureaucracy, the stability of leadership and its greed for power, would combine with the apathy of the masses, "delighted to find persons who will take the trouble to look after its (the majority's) affairs" (1958: 53) to produce an inexorable tendency towards oligarchy and away from democracy. His proposition was summed up in the now familiar form:

> "It is organization which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of the mandatories over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization, saysoligarchy". (1958: 401)

Michels' conclusions were perhaps, overly pessimistic; confirming evidence was accepted while contrary arguments were rejected. For example, while accepting the Webbs' most pessimistic conclusions on trade union democracy, he ignored their suggestion that union democracy could be sustained by institutional arrangements such as existed in the contemporary coal and cotton unions. He quotes with approval Heinrich Hebner's argument that:

> "The great trade unions cannot long maintain their existence if they persist in entrusting the management of their affairs to persons drawn from the rank and file, who have risen to command stage by stage solely in consequence of practical aptitudes acquired in the service of their organization". (Michels, 1958: 29)

But, as Hyman now notes:

> "Most leaders of British unions achieve office only after many years as lay activists; and those at least who have been accustomed to democratic control are likely to have been socialised to define their role in a manner which precludes the extremes of oligarchic practice". (1971: 31)

The importance of the Webbs/Michels tradition is threefold. The first is that attention is directed to the structural limitations placed upon the tendency towards oligarchy. The second concerns the extent to

which these limitations may inhibit the efficient administration of trade union. Thirdly, both works were concerned with the circular relationship between oligarchy and apathy. Lack of participation can lead to an increase in oligarchic practices which may in turn reduce the opportunities or willingness to participate.

Organizational constraints on oligarchy

Of the institutional arrangements for the promotion of democracy within trade unions, the election of full-time officials and the existence of a delegate conference have often been put forward as the most important. However, a number of writers have questioned the extent to which these formal safeguards are effective in practice.[1] The proportion of members voting in union elections is remarkably small and it is rare for union leaders to be voted out of office even where chief officers act contrary to policy determined by union delegate meetings.

Allen (1954) describes how union conferences tend to be unwieldly events, the timetable perhaps overburdened with motions, the number of delegates too large to allow an effective exchange of views. Manipulation of the agenda and standing orders gives an advantage to the platform over the floor and, in addition, such meetings may be susceptible to oratory. Even after a resolution is carried the infrequency of conferences means that delegates can have little close supervision over the implementation of the resolution. Executive officers, on the other hand, are not only in close contact with the problems throughout the year, but may also have generous leeway in interpreting the conference resolutions.

In view of these serious limitations on the formal procedures for ensuring democracy Allen was led to conclude that the "only one effective

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1 For example, Goldstein (1952), and Allen (1954)

and continuously operative method of making it (democracy) work" was the possibility that disaffected members could leave the union, thus ensuring that the "leadership must walk in step with the rank and file" (1954: 28 and 64).

Both Clegg (1970) and Martin (1968) have noted the very low explanatory power of this variable, there being a very low association between union membership figures and other indices of member dissatisfaction.[1] As Clegg remarks:

> "There have been few sizeable changes in union membership which can be attributed to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the conduct of union business". (1970: 94)

Allen's pessimistic assessment of the possibilities for democracy was echoed by a work which came out almost simultaneously in the United States; Lipset, Trow and Coleman's "Union Democracy" (1956). In a companion paper to that book Lipset reiterated Michels arguments on increasing bureaucratisation of trade unions and concluded:

> "The obvious conclusions of this analysis are that the functional requirements for democracy cannot be met most of the time in most unions". (1960: 237)[2]

The authors identified the International Typographical Union (ITU) as a union in which these functional requirements could be met. Their concept of democracy was "the institutionalisation of opposition" (1956: 13). In the ITU this was provided by the existence of two recognised rival groups which competed openly at elections for office; the minority group having a reasonable chance of gaining a majority of offices and becoming the administration.

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[1] Martin here draws attention to the increase in USDAW membership between 1949 and 1950, in spite of a defeat for executive policy at the 1950 annual conference.

[2] Though it is worth noting that another of the authors, Coleman, refers to the "compulsive pressures of democracy in unionism" Coleman, 1960: 207).

Again, both Clegg and Martin have noted that this definition is too narrow and the number of unions too few. Using Lipset et al's categories unions would be classified into the ITU and the rest, the ITU being the "one democratic trade union in the world" (Clegg, 1970: 95).

The feature of democracy which Clegg and Martin consider to be important is not that the opposition is institutionalised but that organised opposition exists, though as Clegg notes, "by itself organised opposition is not a guarantee of democracy" (1970: 95).

Martin (1968) argues that:

> "Union democracy exists when union Executives are unable to prevent opposition factions distributing propaganda and mobilising electoral support".

and he proposes a framework for analysing union democracy which "focusses on the constraints upon union leaders to tolerate factions". Factions are defined as "comparatively unstructured conflict groups whose membership fluctuates according to the issues in dispute" (Martin, 1968: 207, 208 and 218).

The constraints are classified into twelve categories:

1. The political culture, if emphasising democractice values, will act directly and indirectly by moulding membership expectations of the role behaviour of leaders.
2. Government attitudes and behaviour, if encouraging union leaderships to co-operate with government, may create a division between leadership and rank and file, making factional conflicts more likely.
3. The membership distribution between occupations and industries influences the formation of factions by providing bases for solidarity and cleavage.
4. The industrial environment, such as owner concentration or co-operation, and product homogeneity, influences the centralisation of collective bargaining and thus democratic potential.
5. The economic environment, or the degree of prosperity, influences the willingness of the Executive to tolerate opposition.

6. Technology, by providing differing types of work settings, influences the ability of workers to form groups around which factions may form; the faster the rate of technological change the more likely is the Executive to get out of touch with the rank and file and the more likely will factions form.
7. The source of bargaining power, national or plant, will determine the distribution of power between the Executive and sub-structural groups.
8. Membership characteristics, such as education and skill, will determine the ability to mobilise support for factions.
9. Membership beliefs, particularly with regard to the legitimacy of Executive actions, influences the degree to which the Executive can root out opposition.
10. Opposition expertise and resources, particularly the number of politically experienced rank and file members act in much the same way as education and skill.
11. Leadership attitudes act as an independent constraint, commitment to democratic procedure providing a greater tolerance of faction.
12. The union structure is the mechanism through which all the other constraints operate, and factors such as the degree of substructural autonomy, the position of full-time officials, and the electoral system, may either facilitate or impeded the expression of disagreement.

Having considered these constraints Martin concludes that union democracy, defined as the survival of faction, is positively associated with:

1. democratic political culture;
2. government indifference;
3. occupational homogeneity, industrial heterogeneity;
4. a low level of ownership concentration and co-operation;
5. decentralised collective bargaining;
6. craft technology;
7. rapid technological change;

8. workshop bargaining power;

9. a highly educated membership;

10. a high level of membership participation;

11. membership commitment to local autonomy;

12. an experienced opposition;

13. executive commitment to democratic procedure;

14. a decentralised union structure.

Though the twelve constraints may be associated with the survival of factions, Martin does not clearly distinguish between those features which are constraints on the Executive to tolerate faction and those features which merely encourage the growth of faction (tolerated or not). The existence of craft technology, rapid technological change, or membership homogeneity may be features which promote the growth of factions as Martin suggests, but it is not clear how they act as constraints inhibiting the removal of factions. Martin seems to imply that since any move on the part of the Executive that increases opposition to its government will increase the likelihood of factions, this represents a move towards greater democracy. For example, he suggests that the more out of line are the Executive and rank and file with regard to technological change, the greater the likelihood of factions (and hence democracy).

> "The faster the rate of technological change the greater the likelihood of conflict between the executive and the membership (or within either group) and the greater the potential for democracy". (Martin, 1968: 211)

Such conclusions are the outcome of an attempt to equate democracy with the survival of factions, in isolation from other sources of democracy. Edelstein et al (1967, 1970, 1971, 1975) pointed out that the concept of factions as an indicator of democracy is deficient in that they may exist for years without success. They maintain that the effectiveness of opposition is manifested in the closeness of votes[1] or in the frequency

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[1] An operational measure of closeness being the number of votes for the runner up per hundred received by the winner.

of defeats of incumbents, and that these in turn are a result of particular formal union structures. For example, "narrower status gaps between high offices tend to result in closer elections" and "elections tend to be contested more closely where the major formal regional units are less unequal in their voting strengths" (1967: 24, 25). This elaborate theory suggests also that democracy is most likely when the formal political structure facilitates the emergence of a small number of powerful candidates rather than a large number of weak ones. As with Martin's theory the major weakness of Edelstein's approach lies in the identification of democracy with a single feature, in this case, election voting. An alternative view of democracy may be the extent to which the leadership pursues its policies in accord with the wishes of the majority, or is responsive and sensitive to the needs of the membership. If membership expectations are fulfilled the leadership may secure large election victories, and factions may not evolve, but neither eventuality need imply that the union is undemocratic.

The debate between Martin and Edelstein seems to be a remarkably sterile one. One may agree with Martin that the existence, or possible existence, of factions provides the Executive with the awareness of the need to remain sensitive to the wishes of the membership.[1] Government, he suggests, proceeds by a process of loose coalitions and soundings of opinion rather than by the either/or dichotomy of electional closeness. Equally, one may takeEdelstein's point that factions may exist for years without success and may, therefore, make little contribution to democracy.

It would seem that trade union democracy is a multi-dimensional concept, a question of degree rather than of kind.[2] The closeness of elections, the

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1 A point made much earlier by Hoxie (1923: 46) and again by Clegg and Adams (1957: 15).

2 The multi-dimensional interpretation of the concept has led to 'list-making' of democratic criteria, as, for example, in Cook (1963), Seidman, London, Karsh, Tagliocozo (1958) and Fletcher (1970).

tolerance of factions, the existence of formal and informal channels whereby members' wishes are conveyed to decision-makers, and perhaps the possibility of members "voting with their feet" as the ultimate constraint,[1] may all be considered factors contributing to the degree of democracy in a union. Any constraint on the ability of trade union leaders to impose their will on a reluctant membership may beinterpreted as a factor promoting union democracy. Clegg even sees the "willingness of workgroups to follow their unofficial leaders in defiance of their unions, by striking for what the unions will not demand, or against what the unions will accept" (1970: 107) as a significant restraint on the development of autocratic leadership.[2]

Representation and Administration - Competing Rationalities?

As Hyman and Fryer have observed:

> "One theme pervades the voluminious literature on this topic (internal union government): the conflict between the goals of efficient and effective organization on the one hand, and workshop control of union policy and its implementation on the other". (1975: 185)

Al already indicated, it was the Webbs who drew attention to the possibility of such a conflict in trade unions and Michels who popularised the general conclusion that administrative pressures would erode internal democratic practices. Not only would administrative needs take precedence over democratic ideals but so too would other organizational needs such as security, stability, financial solvency, and cohesion. Gramsci commented:

> "The workers feel that the complex of 'their' organization , the trade union, has become such an enormous operation that it now obeys laws internal to its structure and its complicated functions, but foreign to the masses". (1968: 35)

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1 The possibility of groups of workers breaking away from existing trade unions is discussed by Lerner (1961).

2 In a similar vein, Hemingway (1978) distinguishes between control through opposition (as in Lipset et al, Edelstein et al, and Martin) and control through satisfaction (as in Hoxie).

The suggestion that organizational needs or goals displace other goals highlights both the difficulty of specifying organizational goals and the danger of reifying the organization above and beyond the needs or goals of the individual members or sub-groups. The Webbs defined a trade union as "a continuous association of wage earners for the purpose of improving the conditions of their working lives" (1956: 1), and in the most general sense few would dispute such a definition of trade union aims. Within this broad definition, however, there is considerable scope for interpretation of "improving the conditions of their working lives". Some would interpret this in the narrow sense of achieving economic improvements for their members, while others would argue that this goal includes broader social and economic change, achieved through participating in the political process. The former approach is often referred to as the 'business unionism' approach, after Hoxie (1923).

In the UK, Allen has expressed the view that:

> "Trade Union organization is not based on theoretical concepts prior to it, that is on some concept of democracy, but on the end it serves. In other words the end of trade union activity is to protect and improve the general living standards of its members and not to provide workers with an exercise in self-government". (1954: 15).[1]

For the proponents of business unionism the criterion of internal operating efficiency has generally had priority over formal safeguards for union democracy. Seidman et al quote John L Lewis, the American United Mine Workers' leader, at the union's 1936 convention:

> "It is a question of whether you desire your organization to be the most effective instrumentality within the realm of possibility for a labour organization or whether you prefer to sacrifice the efficiency of your organization in some respects for a little more academic freedom in the selection of some local representatives in a number of districts". (Seidman et al 1958: 211)

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1 Hyman (1975) suggests that Allen has since changed this view.

Child et al (1973) refer to the problem of simultaneously achieving t two sets of goals, efficient and effective administration on the one hand, and representation on the other, as a conflict between two rationalities, the administrative and the representative. The former tends to produce a hierarchical ordering in which authority is channelled from the top downwards, whereas the latter involves a division of power and control such that authority lies at or near the base of the hierarchy. The notion of administrative rationality serves to clarify the distinction between efficiency (which, as economy of operation, is part of that rationality) and effectiveness, which may be a characteristic of the union in terms of its goal achievement, or a characteristic of either rationalities.

The dichotomy between the two rationalities is presented diagrammatically in Fig 2.

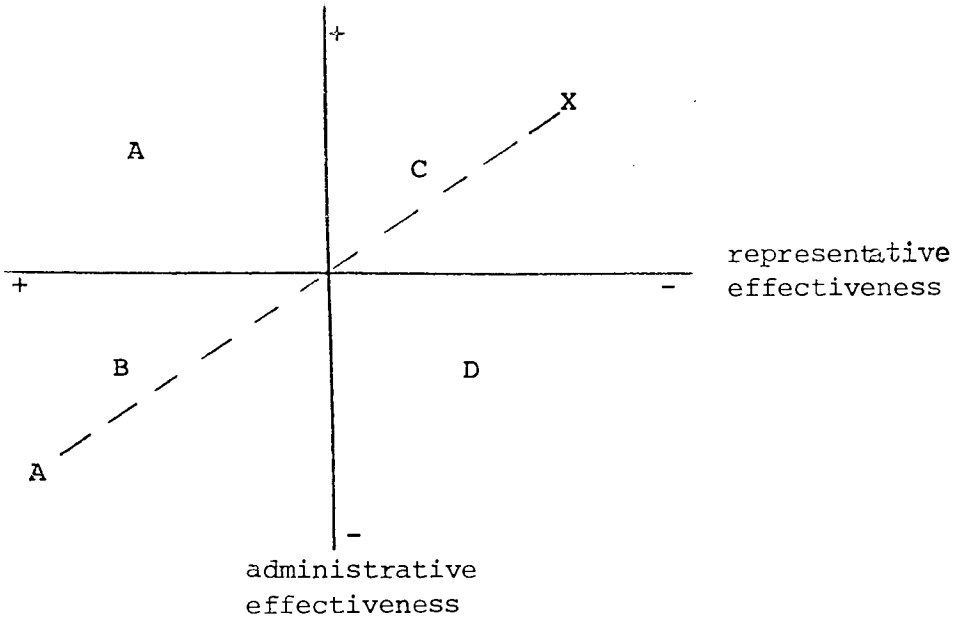

Fig 2 The framework of union effectiveness (1973: 80)

The historical change from primitive democracy to representative democracy in trade unions may be represented by a shift from quadrant A to quadrant B. The attempt to counteract the loss of administrative effectiveness by the appointment of full-time professional staff would be represented by a shift from B to C. Increasing size and complexity may produce a shift from C to D.

Though the authors recognise that "it would be an exaggeration to conclude that the two rationales of representation and administration, are in conflict at all points" (1973: 78), it may be questioned whether they are in conflict at all. For example, Hughes (1967) argues that union democracy does not appear to be at the expense of efficiency. This is because for administration to be effective in a trade union, a high degree of member participation is required and this in turn is fostered in part by democratic procedures. As Child et al note:

> "unions often rely upon a task force of unpaid helpers among its 'stalwarts' who may only appear if there is some minimal level of representative effectiveness. Thus to an important degree the administrative efficiency os a union may depend upon the effectiveness of its representative systems". (1973: 79)

Allen makes a similar point:

> "In trade union organizations efficiency cannot be achieved without drawing ordinary lay members into active government offices" (1954: 67).

Partly, Allen suggests, because unions do not have sufficient funds to use, only full-time officials.

More fundamentally it may be argued that administrative control is enhanced by the extent to which the rank and file identify with the policies pursued, and that this is most likely where there exists a well developed representative system and a commitment to democratic ideals.

Participation and Orientations

An important aspect of democracy thus hinges on the nature of participation in, and orientations to, union activities. Much debate has centred on the extent to which participation is a necessary requirement for trade union democracy, and it is important to retain a distinction between these two concepts. As Tannenbaum and Khan suggest:

> "Participation is often equated with democratic operation. As we use these terms, however, democracy and participation refer to distinct phenomena. Democracy and democratic processes refer to a type of control structure, that is, the way in which control id distributed and exercised in an organization. Participation, on the other hand, refers simply to the formal (and

> informal) entry of members into organizational roles, and the expenditure of individual energies in the playing of these roles". (1958: 50)

One of the problems inherent in defining the goals of trade unions is that union members may have quite different views on what the aims of trade unions should be. Several studies (Tannenbaum and Khan (1958), Sayles and Strauss (1967), and Moran (1974)) have shown that those who participate more actively in a union's affairs have a wider view of trade union goals than has the passive membership. Goldthorpe et al (1968) indicated how workers orientations to trade unionism may be primarily instrumental; that is, workers take a "business union" view of their union and see its central task as providing economic services. The union leadership would be judged by its success in securing these economic gains and, as long as such success was adequate, not much member participation could be expected. Hoxie noted that a union which was defined by its members in primarily instrumental terms was more likely to develop an autocratic government but failure to 'deliver the goods' might result in a 'democratic uprising of the rank and file' (1923: 46). Where orientations to the union are instrumental it may be misleading to equate rank and file participation with democracy.[1]

It is clear that part of the problem concerns the variety of forms of democracy itself. In particular it is important to distinguish between 'passive' democracy, which is characteristic of democracy dominated by electoral systems, and 'active' democracy in which high levels of direct participation in decision-making takes place. The tradition of the Webbs has emphasised the importance of active or primitive democracy, as a more 'vital' form of democracy[2] and indeed Hyman (1975: 83) argues that passive democracy

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[1] An equation implied by Goldstein, (1952).

[2] A point noted by Carew (1976).

is not democracy at all.[1] At the other end of the spectrum Bealey asks:

> "How undemocratic is it to decide freely to be led by an oligarchy?" (1977: 394)

There is a whole range of factors influencing members' orientations (an affectual concept) to the union, and similarly a range of factors influencing participation (a behavioural concept) in the union. Clearly there will be important areas of overlap where orientations are influenced by the opportunities to participate and participation is influenced by orientations. Participation is only one aspect of democracy, and its importance will vary with the degree of emphasis the membership places on participation. As Seidman et al (1958) have noted, the form which participation takes can vary. It can include attendance at meetings, voting in elections, servicing on committees or taking part in informal activities. They do suggest, however, that:

> "For the members to control the union or even exercise influence within it they must participate in its affairs to a significant extent". (1958: 185)[2]

Hughes (1967) has analysed the opportunities for participation in terms of key attributes of the union structure (such as size, constitution, type of government) and of the membership (such as geographical distribution, turnover, demographic factors) and suggests that participation can be improved by institutional developments affecting the role of committees, branches, shop stewards and communications.

Orientations to the union presents an altogether more difficult area of analysis, and attempts to consider this problem have generally involved consideration of 'types' of member. Seidman et al (1958) distinguish seven types of rank and file member ranging from the ideological trade unionist (involved in class struggle) through the good union man, the loyal but

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1 In "The Workers Union", Hyman (1971) argues that the distinction between passive democracy and benevolent dictatorship may be tenuous.

2 Referred to by Hemingway as control through participation.

critical member, the crisis activist, the dually oriented member, and the card carrier, to the unwilling unionist. The sources of such orientations are numerous, but may be divided between those internal and those external to the union, so that as circumstances and experiences of membership change, so members may shift from one orientation to another. An important source of internal orientations, the congruence between expectations and leadership policy, has been suggested by Child et al (1973). They distinguish four types of union member based upon the juxtoposition of the degree of active involvement in the union with the degree of congruence between expectations and policy. The typology is represented diagrammatically in figure 3.

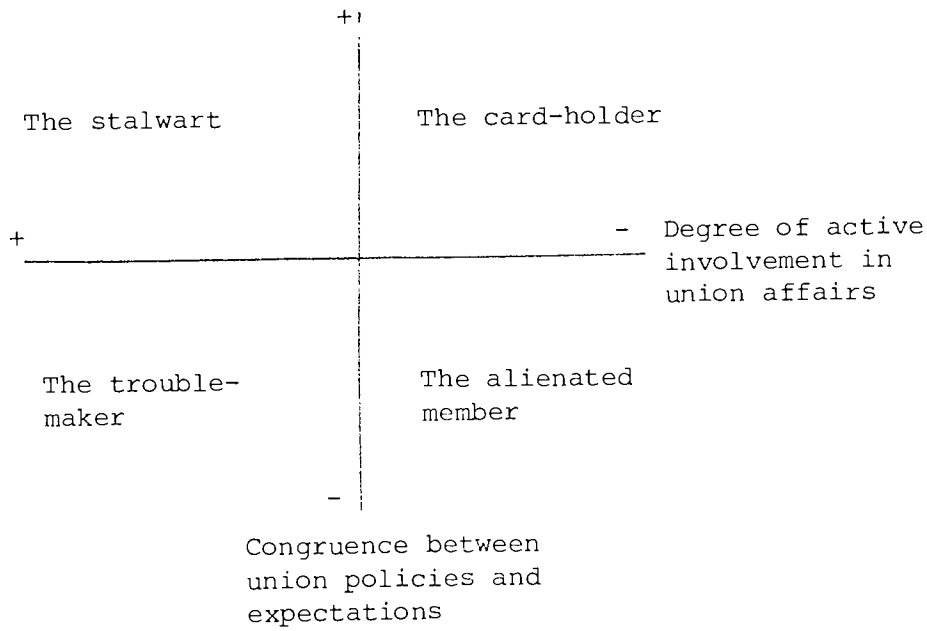

Fig 3 A typology of membership attachment (1973: 76)

The member with an instrumental orientation to the union would be classified as a card-holder until his expectations failed to be realised. As Hoxie's 'democratic uprising of the rank and file' took place the member would become, from the union leadership standpoint at least, a trouble-maker. In these terms, an undemocratic union would be one which contained a majority, or significant minority, of alienated members, and unless constrained by social, or other pressures, these members might 'vote with their feet .

An alternative intepretation of the alienated member, however, hinges on the distinctions between the trade union and trade unionism, and between national and local leadership. Though alienated from the leadership and policies of his union, the member may nevertheless remain in the union because of a positive orientation to the goals of trade unionism or collective action. More importantly, though alienated from the union leadership, the member might be positively oriented towards more immediate expressions of collective action such as the workshop or plant organization. Fox has characterised unions as "a number of collectivities structured into a hierarchy culminating in the national level of the union (1971: 110). Where decision-making is diffused among a number of different levels in the union hierarchy then so too must be an effective representative system. Decisions made at the plant level by shop stewards committees (or by full-time officers) would suggest a different system of representation from that required by centralised decision-making and hence the meanings which members attached to the formal representative structure (for example, the delegate conference) would also be different. Evidence from the United States suggests greater rank and file involvement in those local unions with important decision-making powers, and in the UK, Goldthorpe et al provide evidence of active membership participation in decision-making at shop floor level.

Trade union members may thus have different orientations to different collectivities (for example, the work group, the plant or local organization) and it is these orientations which will influence, and be influenced by, the degree of participation.

Conclusions

Enough has been said to indicate that the 'iron law of oligarchy' is subject to considerable constraints in trade unions. This should not be taken to mean that pressures towards oligarchy do not exist, but rather that it is possible to take a more optimistic view of union organizations than that proposed by Michels. The constraints on oligarchy are numerous and the

and the attempt to account for democracy primarily in terms of one constraint or another is likely to be fruitless. As Cook puts it:

> "The experience of these four unions (in her study) and the evaluation of those of their practices which are indisputably democratic lead directly to the conclusion that democracy is not to be measured by any single element. It does not exist because a union practices majority rule or uses the secret ballot or relies on rank and file participation in the executive board. Rather, it is a complex cluster of practices and values which have to be seen in their totality". (1963: 4)

In particular we may question whether it is necessary that the rank and file participate for a union to be democratic. Low participation may merely indicate a high level of satisfaction among instrumentally oriented members. More importantly, it is the level and type of participation which is relevant. Low participation in national union activities may be offset by a high level of participation in those collectivities which are seen to affect the members' interests directly. As Fox suggests:

> "Thus the collectivity may mean very different things according to the goal being pursued and the level at which action is appropriate. It may change as the collectivity at one level considers that effectiveness for the group concerned would be best served by upward - or downward - reference to a different level. The relevance and importance of these different levels of collective organization tends to fluctuate according to which goals are most immediately pressing and which level is perceived as most effective for their satisfaction". (1971: 111)

That satisfaction of these interests may conflict with the interests of other, perhaps hierarchically superior, collectivities has been well documented in discussions of shop steward or work group militancy. Banks (1974) has argued that such action may be interpreted as a form of primitive democracy:

> "the fact that shop stewards are in immediate practical touch with the rank and file members means that their conduct of such strikes (unofficial) is the expression of an essentially democratic need and not the rejection of it". (1974: 100)

Within such a view of trade union organization, activists are distributed throughout the union hierarchy. The simple dichotomy between leadership and rank and file is no longer tenable since a leadership of sorts occurs within each collectivity. Rather than oligarchic or democratic, this form of government may more aptly be referred to as polyarchic.

It is the relationships between the collectivities of which the polyarchy is comprised that become the focus of interest. What is commonly referred to as union democracy could be described as goal formation and implementation which are generally controlled by lower level collectivities, oligarchy would be where these tended to be controlled by higher level collectivities. In this sense we may agree with Hyman and Fryer when they argue:

> "Structural pressures inhibiting democracy are not irresistible; they can be counterbalanced, for example, by a union constitution which facilitates rank and file control, a tradition of union democracy, or the existence of rival factions each ready to mobilise opposition to autocratic activities on the part of the other". (1975: 188)

Union government is thus seen as the balancing of interests either among collectivities or between factions, and the concept of union democracy must be modified by an analysis of those processes of power and control central to the internal relations of a polyarchic trade union government.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATURE OF TRADE UNION POLYARCHY

Introduction

The Webbs (1920) described how the growth of trade union membership resulted in a necessary change of administrative methods from that of the small group to that of bureaucracy, accompanied by an equally necessary change in democratic procedures from primitive democracy to representative democracy. Not only the Webbs but also Michels (1958) and others interpreted these trends as signalling the decline of trade union democracy and the growth in its place of trade union oligarchy. I have argued that the pessimism of this interpretation was misplaced in that the checks and balances introduced to limit the powers of the executive bodies and full-time officers have resulted over time, not in oligarchy, but in what has been termed polyarchy.

In the polyarchic form of trade union government control over decision-making is distributed among leaders of collectivities throughout the hierarchy so that lower level collectivities possess some degree of autonomy in decision-making. In addition, the checks and balances limit the extent to which higher level collectiveness can take decisions without regard to the lower participants.

Thus polyarchy has two distinct, though related aspects. The first is that each element in the polyarchic government may have some sphere in which it is autonomous; that is, can take decisions without regard to the other elements. The second aspect is that each element can exercise some restraint over other elements where there is perceived to be a divergence of interests. Such a divergence of interests may, of course, concern the boundaries of the areas of decision-making which are to be regarded as autonomous,[1] and the shared definition of these autonomous areas may be

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[1] Abell (1977) would refer to these as conflicts over allocational norms.

changed over time. In this sense the various trade union collectivities may be regarded as 'competing' with each other for control over certain areas of decision-making, or over certain decisions; an idea which is implicit in the concept of checks and balances.[1] As Van De Vall points out, such polyarchic competitions generally take place within the framework of the rules of the organization:

> "Empirical sociologists ..... demonstrated that Michels two poles of 'democracy' (with total participation) and oligarchy (with absolute power of leaders) constitute only a normative polarity ..... most democratic organizations belong to an intermediate form. In this empirical 'polyarchy', neither the members nor the leaders alone are decisive, but leaders and active members, by means of the democratic rules, keep each other in a balance of power". (1970: 153)

Negotiated and Arbitrated Outcomes

These competitions can take two forms and produce two types of outcome. In the first form of competition the collectivities settle their differences between them, without any recourse to other agencies outside the negotiations. Decision-making is confined within the competitive arena and the outcome will be determined by each competitor's sources of authority (such as that conveyed by the union rule book) or other forms of power.[2] The outcome produced by this form of competition can be referred to as a 'negotiated' outcome. Often, however, competition takes the form of an appeal for support directed to agencies external to the dispute, and in this form the recipients of those appeals decide the outcome of the competition. Support in this instance may be in the form of rank and file voting in elections, or compliance with one competitor's appeal as opposed to the appeal of the other. In contrast with the negotiated outcome this latter form of competition may be said to produce an 'arbitrated' outcome. With reference to organizations generally, Pettigrew says of arbitrated

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1 In a similar vein, Hemingway (1978) develops a conflict model of trade union government, though retaining the more traditional view of government and leaders and followers.

2 As elaborated in Chapter Two, authority is viewed here as a particular type of power in which the recipient perceives the exercise of power as being in some way legitimated by the social structure in which the power relationship is exercised.

outcomes:

> "The assumption is that, in a competitive demand - generating process, the decisional outcome will not necessarily be a product of the greater worthiness or weight of the issues ranged to uphold one or other demand in dispute, but may result from the nature of the linkages that opposing parties have with the individuals for whose support they are competing". (1973: 230)

And with specific reference to trade unions, Fox argues:

> "A group who cannot accept the official leadership as legitimate may transfer legitimacy, permanently or temporarily, to an unofficial leader". (1971: 115)

Where this occurs the competition between official and unofficial leaders is 'arbitrated' by the work group. The decision to transfer legitimacy is the manifestation of arbitration in favour of the unofficial leadership. As Fox states, this arbitration may be only temporary, and legitimacy may be regained by the official leadership. Thus the question of legitimacy raised by Fox is an important one. In the most general sense, disputes over allocational norms are disputes over legitimacy: which collectivity shall have the authority to make decisions in any particular area. More particularly, arbitrated outcomes may rest on the strength of each competitor's claim to legitimacy, as interpreted by the recipients of those claims (or appeals for support).

Sources of legitimacy

In the discussion of negotiated outcomes it was suggested that legitimacy could be derived from a source such as the union rule book. To this can be added the legitimacy derived from the principles of elected leadership and of trade union solidarity. To the extent that these sources do not rest on appeals outside the negotiating arena they can be termed 'internal sources of legitimacy'. In contrast, where outcomes are arbitrated, then it will be the arbitors who will grant legitimacy to one or other of the competitors. Appeals outside the negotiating area are to 'external sources of legitimacy'. These external sources are taken into

consideration by the arbitors in deciding to grant support. The state and the employers or employers' organizations can be regarded as external sources of legitimacy, and, having defined polyarchy in terms of the relationship between active participants, so too can the union's passive membership.

Legitimacy conferred by one external source is often dependent upon legitimacy being conferred by another. For example, the passive membership in the workshop may confer greater legitimacy on a collectivity that has been granted recognition (legitimacy) by the employers than on one that has not, particularly if the membership's orientation to the collectivity is primarily instrumental. This we may refer to as 'contingent legitimacy' since its conferrment is conditional upon the other external source continguing to grant legitimacy. Legitimacy that is conferred in the absence of, or prior to, legitimation from another source would thus be termed 'non-contingent legitimacy'.

There is an inherent circularity in the relationship between contingent and non-contingent legitimacy, as is demonstrated by Bain (1972) in his discussion of white collar unionism. He notes that the growth of union membership among white collar workers is fastest where the employer recognises the union, particularly if for negotiating purposes, largely because "unions are usually accepted on instrumental rather than ideological grounds" (Bain, 1972: 259). But equally, Bain recognises, legitimation of the union by the employer may be dependent on the union securing support from a large enough proportion of the work force. However, Bain argues that recognition by the employer is the independent variable, in that rapid growth of union membership often follows recognition, whereas recognition less clearly follows rapid membership growth. In this instance the employer grants non-contingent legitimacy by recognition, whereas the subsequent support from the workforce takes the form of contingent legitimacy.

Each of the three external sources of legitimacy (the state, the employers and the passive membership) is capable of conferring or denying both contingent and non-contingent legitimacy in varying degrees. In addition to these three, trade unions often have an appeals procedure, or even an appeals court, which does not fit easily into either the internal or the external category of legitimacy. To the extent that individual union members or collectivities may appeal against the ruling of any collectivity, these appeals procedures may be said to constitute an external source of legitimacy, arbitrating outcomes. However, their role is usually confined to interpretation of the union rules and the legitimacy they confer is, or would normally be, non-contingent, in that it does not depend on whether or not the competitors have any other source of legitimacy, except from the union rules. Their arbitral role is limited to specific cases rather than generalised legitimacy, and in so far as they are open to individual members as well as collectivities their role extends beyond that of polyarchic competitions. For these reasons, appeal procedures are not treated here as a separate source of external legitimacy.

External legitimacy and the state[1]

The nested contingency of power in organizations stems in part from the existence of legitimate authorities outside the organization. Of these, the most pervasive is the authority of the state. Trade union members are also members of the national (or international) political community, the government of which, for various reasons, is recognised as legitimate. The state not only recognises the right of trade unions to exist but actively seeks to incorporate them into the processes of national decision-making.[2] The acceptance of trade unions by one legitimate

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[1] The role of the state is here confined to its legislative, not employment, functions. The state as employer is treated in general with all other employers in the following section.

[2] Through numerous councils, boards, tribunals and courts.

authority (the state) may be important in their securing legitimacy from their memberships, since if the state were to withdraw their acceptance of trade unions, or were to oppose them, many members would be faced with the possibility of conflicting loyalties. Membership legitimation is in this instance contingent upon legitimation from the state.

However, the state may seek to incorporate the trade unions into decision-making precisely because of the trade unions' representative role. In this context it is not important whether the motive for incorporation is to encourage the participation of an important pressure group (and help legitimise state actions), or to pacify a potential source of opposition.[1] What is important is that continued legitimation by the state is dependent upon continued membership support for the trade union leaderships. If the state considers that these leaderships no longer have the support of their members then the leaderships' participation in government would no longer be useful or necessary. State legitimation is thus contingent upon membership support.

The Webbs (1920: 780) noted that legal enactment could be as important a means of securing trade union aims as collective bargaining, and indeed they argued that it was a superior means which could eventually replace collective bargaining. In so far as trade union leaderships accept this argument they will value close enough working relationships with government to produce favourable legislation on such issues as minimum wages, health and safety, and employment security. The instrumentally oriented worker, adopting the same criteria, is more likely to support a leadership that has such a relationship with government and is in a position to encourage such legislation than to support a leadership that has not. Thus contingent or non-contingent state legitimation will provide the basis for contingent legitimation from the memberships. In the same way as the instrumentally

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[1] For example, Hyman notes, "The relatively pacific role of modern unions is also often attributed to the legitimacy they have achieved within contemporary society". (1972: 78)

oriented member will support a collectivity that can secure gains from employers in collective bargaining, so too will such a member support a collectivity that can secure legislative gains from the state.

In a competitive polyarchy a national trade union leadership may use the legitimacy granted to it by the state in its appeal for support from the passive membership. The reverse, however, is less likely. Though the passive membership can act as arbitor of internal competitions through voting and compliance, the state is less likely to be an arbitor, even though its support for one or other of the collectivities may be decisive. The leadership involved in a polyarchic competition is more likely to seek the support of the state so that it can achieve the support of the membership rather than seek membership support in order to influence the state (though in the more general case the latter is equally as likely). This is because the mechanisms for resolving the internal dispute lie more with the passive membership than with the state.

External legitimacy and the employers

The importance of employer recognition in the creation of contingent legitimacy from instrumentally oriented members has been noted, particularly as elaborated by Bain with reference to white collar workers. However, the implications of employer recognition go further in that the employer has greater scope than the state for recognising and legitimising employee collectivities other than that of the national leadership. Clegg (1976) suggests that the main influence on the hierarchical level of collective bargaining is the structure of management and employers' organizations.[1] Through their formal organizations and their willingness to bargain at different levels the employers determine which collectivity they will bargain with, and hence which element can use this position as a claim for

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[1] "The level of bargaining accounts for the extent of decentralisation in union government, including the power and independence of workplace organizations". (1976: 118)

the support of the instrumentally oriented member. As Goodman and Whittingham note:

> "Whether as a positive policy or as the unconsidered concommitant of decisions on other topics, management may enhance the scope, power and authority of shop stewards". (1969: 15)

and

> "Thus there is a nearly continuous struggle for power and influence not only between stewards and management but often between stewards and their unions externally". (1969: 17)

If the employers legitimate shop stewards organizations for bargaining purposes, contingent legitimacy will be conferred upon these organizations by the membership in the workshop or plant. Because the employers can withdraw the legitimacy, the shop stewards may become concerned with safeguarding their relationship with the management. They may compromise on how far they can go in opposing management without damaging the relationship or, as Fox suggests, modify the notion of opposition altogether:

> "Where collectivities are perceived by their leaders and members as depending heavily for their existence on the grace and favour of management, or where, though not weak, they see their best interests in co-operating with management, ideologies of opposition, challenge and hostility may be played down in favour of ideologies which promote the validity and desirability of collaboration". (1971: 125)

It may, of course, be such collaboration that brings a shop stewards organization into conflict with other elements in the trade union polyarchy, but as long as the members in the workshop share the same perceptions as the stewards organization, contingent legitimacy is more likely to be conferred on the stewards. Fox and Flanders (1969) have noted that anything which strengthens a union in its dealing with management is likely to enhance its authority over its own rank and file members, and in the same way it can be argued that anything which strengthens one element in the polyarchy in its dealing with management enhances its authority, not only over the rank and file, but also over other polyarchic elements.

The employers may grant non-contingent legitimacy to different trade union collectivities for a number of reasons[1] but, as was noted earlier, are more likely to grant contingent legitimacy because of the unions representative role. Thus both the state and the employers grant contingent legitimacy based on the unions representative role and this legitimacy may be used by a collectivity to gain support from the instrumentally oriented member. Again, as with the state, the employer is unlikely to be appealed to directly to arbitrate in an internal union dispute, though the employers legitimation of a collectivity may be decisive.

External legitimacy and the passive membership

The analysis of membership types carried out by writers such as Seidman et al (1958) and Child et al (1973) is conceptually more thorough than the dichotomy between active and passive suggested here. I have argued, for example, that the passive member may exercise an arbitral role through voting behaviour, though it could be argued that even this limited participation would make the 'passive' categorisation inappropriate. The distinction between active member and passive member being pursued here follows from the earlier distinction between active democracy (which involves high levels of direct participation in decision-making) and passive democracy (characteristic of democracy dominated by electoral systems). Employing the concept of polyarchy, rather than democracy, the active members are those who participate directly in decision-making in each of the collectivities which make up the polyarchy. Most of these collectivities, such as the national executives, delegate conferences, district councils or committees and shop stewards organizations, will be

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[1] For example, Goodman and Whittingham (1969) ascribe the historical preference of employers for industry - wide bargaining to the advantages of uniform claims, simultaneous stoppages, and eliminating unfair competition.

composed entirely of activists, so defined. Other collectivities, such as the branch and the workshop, will be composed of both active and passive members, as, of course, will be each trade union taken as a single collectivity.

It is the passive members who would take part in the "democratic uprising of the rank and file" if the union "failed to deliver the goods" (Hosie, 1923: 46). It is in this sense that the passive membership are the arbitors of legitimacy since it is their behaviour which indicates support for one or other collectivity.[1] The mechanisms whereby legitimation becomes manifest depend upon the behavioural options open to the membership. Clearly, electoral behaviour will be limited by the frequency of elections and their relevance to the competition being arbitrated. The role of electoral behaviour will be most pronounced in factional competitions for specific union posts,[2] but occasionally the electoral issues may centre around the legitimacy of different hierarchical collectivities.[3]

Other than through electoral behaviour the membership may register their support through compliance with one collectivity's demands as opposed to those of another,[4] or, in the extreme case, the membership may transfer legitimacy from one union to another.[5]

Legitimate authority and power in a polyarchy

As indicated earlier the idea of legitimate authority being employed

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1 Tannenbaum and Khan (1958) suggest that the inactive,membership possess 'ratification power' and though inactive can therefore exercise control over decision-takers because of what they might or might not do.

2 As is demonstrated by Edelstein and Warner's (1975) electoral model of union democracy.

3 As, for example, in 1967 when Hugh Scanlon fought and won the election for AEU President on a platform of reducing executive control and giving more autonomy to local and regional collectivities. Scanlon (1967).

4 As Fox (1971: 115) elaborates in his discussion of Jack Dash, unofficial dockers leader in the late 1960s.

5 In the Ford strike of 1969, GMWU members transferred to the TGWU and the AEF. At Pilkingtons in 1970, some of the GMWU membership transferred legitimacy to the short-lived breakaway union, the Glass and General Workers Union. See Lane and Roberts (1971).

here follows from French and Raven's (1959) conceptualisation of legitimation as one of several bases of social power. In the same way as I have distinguished between internal and external sources of legitimacy in a trade union it is possible to distinguish between internal and external sources of power.[1]

In a competition between two hierarchical collectivities in a trade union polyarchy, each collectivity can draw upon both internal and external sources of power, including legitimacy. The sources available are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 - Sources of power in a polyarchy

Internal Sources		External Sources	
Sources of Legitimacy	Other Sources	Sources of Legitimacy	Other Sources
Rulebook	Sanctions (positive and negative)	State	State (rarely)
Electoral principle		Employers	Employers (closed shop)
Solidarity principle	Exchange/ Interdependence	Passive membership Appeals procedure	Sanctions of higher collectivity

The internal sources of power consist of legitimacy (described above as emanating from the rule book, the electoral principle and the solidarity principle) and other internal sources such as sanctions (positive and negative) and ties of exchange and interdependence. External sources of power consist of external legitimacy (contingent and non-contingent conferred by the state, the employers, the passive membership and the appeals procedure) and other external sources such as sanctions applicable by a higher level collectivity, employer sanctions through the closed shop,

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[1] The sources of power are elaborated in Chapter Two.

and state sanctions.[1] This latter point is emphasised by Fox:

> "The ability of collectivities to draw upon external sources of support for their control introduces a new factor into the relationships between leaders and their members. The former now have a degree of control in excess of that granted them by the latter ..... When a collectivity is fully recognised, has a closed shop, and participates in joint agreements which successfully regulate terms and conditions of employment, it is in a very strong position in relation to the individual member". (1971: 16)

Conclusions

Voting, compliance and retention of membership are the three ways in which the passive membership register their legitimacy for one or other of the competing collectivities in a polyarchic government. Though the employers and the state may confer contingent and non-contingent legitimacy on a collectivity and thus influence which collectivity receives the support of the instrumentally oriented member, it is the passive membership that exercises the final arbitration of outcomes. Although the concept of polyarchy emphasises the relationship between collectivities, and the checks and balances of trade union government, these relationships do not exist in isolation from the union membership or from other institutions.

In the competitions implied by the concept of polyarchy, internal and external sources of power, particularly legitimacy, are called upon by the collectivities to gain control over specific decisions or over areas of decision-making. Unless these competitions prove to be schismatic they take place within the framework of rules of the organization, a principle sometimes emphasised in trade unions by the existence of an appeals procedure or an appeals court, to referee the competition and to interpret these rules.

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1 Though state sanctions are not common in the U.K.

CHAPTER FIVE

POLYARCHY IN THE ENGINEERING SECTION OF THE A.U.E.W.

Introduction

As has been shown, much of the discussion of the internal organization of trade unions is concerned with the nature and degree of democracy. But it is not democracy but polyarchy which seems the most appropriate of Tannenbaum's four structures of control. Indeed, Banks (1974) refers to trade unions collectively as polyarchies, that is, organizations in which there is a balance of power between the leaders and a minority of active participants:

> "The awareness that a trade union is a polyarchy is a recognition that shop stewards who are active in this sense are active, and conscious of participating, in a process of balancing interests one against another". (1974: 102)

According to Banks, the existence of active participants at lower levels than that of leadership reduces or even eliminates the tendency to oligarchy, but equally, he argues, the lack of participation of the remainder of the rank and file reduces the degree of representative democracy. Thus polyarchy, rather than oligarchy, democracy or laissez-faire, is the appropriate term by which to describe trade union government.

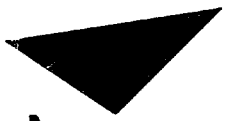
Though Banks' view is acceptable at a fairly general level, it should be borne in mind that trade unions differ considerably in their forms of government and thus in the scope which they allow to active participants to exercise some control over union activities.

The extent to which a union's structure allows scope for decentralisation in decision-making can usually, though not always, be explained by reference to the form of government adopted by the union during its formative years, a point made by Carew:

> "Union structure tends to be a product of the forces that operated on the organization at the time of its foundation" and "Even within the official union movement of today there are living reminders of different concepts of trade union organization". (1976: 111 and 131)

In particular, we may distinguish between the 'New Model' unions of the mid-nineteenth century, of which the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) was the most notable, and the general unions formed in the 'New Unionism' phase towards the end of the nineteenth century. These 'new unions' were constructed around their professional leaders and thus from the outset adopted a centralised form of government. The 'New Model' unions, on the other hand, were formed by the amalgamation of local or regional societies and thus the balance between local autonomy and centralised policy making has always been a precarious one. The roots of polyarchy in the A.U.E.W. lie in the complex system of checks and balances set up to limit the power of the central authority. The initial attempt to devise a form of organization that would give effective centralised leadership while allowing for a high degree of self-government in the localities has evolved into a form of government where "central authority has been dispersed to a point at which it sometimes seems to disappear" (Turner, 1962: 225).

The organization of the engineering section of the A.U.E.W. is shown in Figures 4 and 5. These diagrams, though indicating the formal lines of control in both policy-making and policy implementation do not by themselves indicate the degree of polyarchy characteristic of the union. They show, for example, how the National Committee is indirectly elected via the branches and district and divisional committees, but not the rules which govern the relationship between the National Committee and the Executive Council. They show the dominant role of elections in the appointment of committees, councils and full-time officers, but not how often or closely these elections are contested and might thus operate as a check on the exercise of power.



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In order to consider these issues fully it is necessary to consider in turn each of the key elements in the organization, always bearing in mind that such isolation is necessarily artificial since each element can only be fully understood in the context of all other elements.

Since it was with the local or regional organizations that the initial impetus of the union lay, I shall begin by considering the evolution of the role of the district in the organization.

The district

With the formation of the ASEin 1851 the predominant role of district bargaining in the 'Old Mechanics'[1] was reflected in the creation of district committees to offset the central leadership of a London based Executive Council. During the latter half of the nineteenth century the district was the locus of power in the organization:

> "The development of direct demands on the employers for increases in wages and the growth of local employers' associations increased the importance of district committees. It was the district committee men, meeting after a long days work in the factor, who were responsible for choosing the right moment for wage demands, formulating the policy and negotiating with the employers. On their ability and energy depended to a large extent the advances made by the membership. The Executive sitting in London surveyed the wage developments throughout the country but except in cases when assistance was requested did little to sponsor wage movements. The increased influence of district committees led to uniformity of wages in each district by itself but the varying strengths of these committees and the uneven cost of living throughout the country led to marked variations in the district rates established". (J. B. Jefferys, 1945: 99)

From the end of the nineteenth century the role of the district in collective bargaining began to decline as both national and workshop bargaining increased in importance. In 1892 the great disparity between the district rates finally impelled the union "to accept the necessity for

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[1] The Machine Makers Friendly Society, one of the most important of the societies in the amalgamation.

some permanent central policy-making and executive body" (Turner, 1950: 183). Two proposals were put forward at the Leeds Delegate meeting of 1892, one for a full-time elected committee, the other for an elected full-time staff of officials. Though, as Turner (1950) suggests, these proposals were probably intended as alternatives, both were adopted. The old London based Executive Council (composed exclusively since 1857 of working representatives of London branches) was replaced by an Executive Council consisting of full-time officials elected by eight electoral divisions.[1] At the district level, six full-time organising district delegates were to be elected to act as organisers, negotiators and intermediaries between the Executive Council and district committees.

The district committees were given the powers to appoint shop stewards and though Cole (1973) makes the point quite strongly that these early stewards only acted as agents of the district committee, Jefferys notes that they very quickly developed a semi-independent role for themselves. Cole maintains that before the First World War:

> "it was for the Union district as a whole, rather than for its representatives in any particular works, to deal with grievances when they arose, and the function of the works representatives was limited to the reporting of any difficulty arising, in order that the District Committee and officials might have the necessary data on which to take action". (1973: 10)

However, Jefferys writes that in the districts recognising piecework there was some confusion as to whether district committees or the newly forming shop committees were responsible for the control of prices.

The formation of the full-time Executive Council in 1851, and the growth in the number of shop stewards in the latter half of the nineteenth

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[1] At the delegate meeting of 1912 it was decided to reduce the size of the Executive Council to seven members. The Executive Council opposed this move but after a short struggle (during which the Council locked themselves in the union's offices) a new Executive Council was elected.

century signalled the decline of the district's role, though this decline was both gradual and occasionally resisted. After the lock-out of 1897, the "Provisions for the Avoidance of Disputes"[1] laid down a disputes procedure which culminated in a national meeting between the Executive Board of the Employers Federation and the central authority of the trade union concerned. The Executive Council of the ASE decided to exclude local officials from the national negotiations arising from the procedure, a move which, Jefferys observes, was "a severe blow to the local spirit and practice of the Society" (1945: 151).

The 1898 "Terms of Settlement" envisaged that collective agreements as was normal practice at that time, would continue to be negotiated mainly on a district basis. Phelps Brown (1959: 281) has pointed out that this meant that though wages and hours were negotiated district by district, a dispute in any part of the country was liable to be taken to a national conference.

The existence of a national disputes procedure operating in parallel with local wage bargaining highlighted the organizational strains created by the divergence between the principles of centralised authority and local autonomy. In 1906 and 1907 the Manchester and Erith district committees were suspended for refusing to accept Executive Council recommendations following from national conferences. In 1908 the refusal of men on the North-East coast to accept Executive Council policy led to the resignation of the General Secretary. In 1910 J. T. Brownlie[2] wrote in the Monthly Journal of the ASE: "The most unpopular body within our borders is the Executive Council" (Jefferys, 1945: 169).

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1 The lock-out ended in a substantial defeat for the union, which was impelled to accept the employers' terms. The 'Terms of Settlement' which the employers laid down embodied a procedural agreement termed the 'Provisions for the Avoidance of Disputes'.

2 Chairman of the ASE from 1913-1920, President of the AEU 1920-1930.

The Society weathered this internal dissension and by the beginning of the First World War the only change in the organization was the provision of full-time secretaries in the largest districts. As many writers[1] have noted, the First World War accelerated the growth of both industry-wide and workshop bargaining. A Committee of Production was appointed by the government to determine wage awards in the engineering industry, and rather than persist with the lengthy routine of individual district applications agreement was reached in 1917 to suspend these and to replace them with general wage claims every four months.[2]

According to Boraston et al:

> "By the time of the armistice the engineering industry was negotiating industry-wide agreements on pay and hours of work which led to the atrophy of separate district agreements on these issues, although the constitutional power of the districts remained as before". (1975: 11)

However, as Table Two shows, this does not mean that after 1918 minimum wages were the same in all districts. This did not occur until 1968 (as a result of the 1965 Package Agreement).

That the period after the war did not see a reversion to district bargaining has been ascribed by Goodman and Whittingham (1969) to the advantages that national bargaining gave to the unions and employers. The unions, they argue, were able to conserve their resources, conduct negotiations by the most experienced officials, and more easily defend a national standard rather than district rates during periods of unemployment. For the employers national negotiations meant that relative competitive positions would remain unchanged, while no one employer would be strike-bound when his competitors could continue to produce.

Although Marsh (1965) agrees that the greatest shift from district to national bargaining occured in this period between the wars he notes

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1 For example, Marsh (1965), Phelps-Brown (1959), Jefferys (1945)

2 The process whereby this transition occured is elaborated in Hyman (1971: 18).

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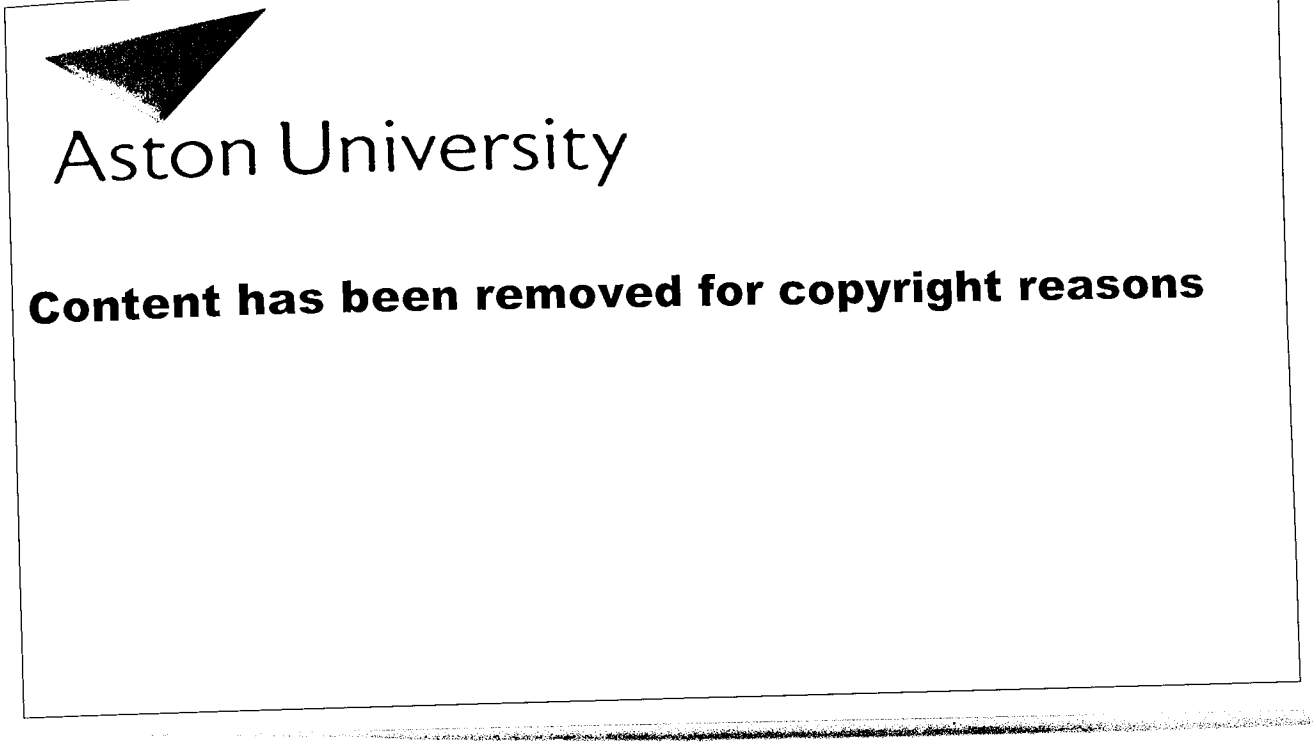
Table 2 - continued



that it was the First War that "broke fresh ground in establishing new national agreements" (1965: 146). So great was the change in emphasis during the war period "that when the Whitley Committee considered its suggestions for securing a permanent improvement in the relations between employers and workmen it assumed without discussion that organization for negotiations and consultation would be industry-wide" (E. H. Phelps-Brown, 1959: 362).

The decline of the district should not be overstated. What has been described is a change from a position of pre-eminence in the union to one where it plays an important, but diminished, part in a polyarchic government. The traditions of local autonomy and the constitutional provisions (which may be described as a legacy of this autonomy) combine to give the district considerable scope in which to exercise control, though the precise nature of this control depends, as will be seen, on a configuration of other key variables.

District committee representatives are elected annually by the branches on the basis of one representative for every two branches up to a maximum of thirty branch representatives where the district has more than seventy branches. The representatives are elected at branch meetings in June and December, half being elected for twelve months from June to the following May and the other half for the twelve months from December to the following November. In addition, shop stewards are directly represented on the committee on the basis of one representative for every 5,000 members in the district. The shop stewards representatives are elected for one year periods at the December quarterly meeting of shop stewards. Since, almost by definition, district committees are composed of union activists, most of the representatives that come from the branches are also shop stewards, a point noted by the Donovan Commission in its criticisms of the district committees:

> "These powers (of the district committee to obstruct reform) come from two sources: the tradition of regulating work practices on a district basis; and the constitution of the district committee which tends to make it a coalition of representatives of the most powerful groups of stewards in the district". (1968: 42)

The Prices and Incomes Board similarly considered that tradition played an important part in defining the current role of district committees:

> "The powers of these district committees derive from the nineteenth century when wages and conditions were settled separately in each district. They are ill-suited to a time in which negotiations are generally by industry, by company, or by plant". (1967: 28)

and Clegg concurs:

> "The district committees may also use their powers to obstruct agreement between national union officers and individual companies ..... Nevertheless district powers have not been curtailed". (1970: 115)

As we shall see, such criticisms seriously overstate the powers of the district committees, and in focussing on the roles played by tradition and constitution obscure the mechanisms which define the powers of any particular committee. In the formal sense at least, some of

these powers derive from the Rules of the union and in particular from Rule 13 which governs the activities of district committees (A.E.U., 1970: 22-29).

Under the Rules the district committees are the bodies which have the responsibility for authorising the appointment of shop stewards, defining their role, and supervising their activities. Similarly, they have the power to "deal with and regulate rates of wages, hours of labour, terms of overtime, piecework and general conditions affecting the interests of the trades in their respective districts" (1970: 25).

According to Roberts (1956) the Executive Council has limited powers of supervision over the work of a district committee. However, all of the powers given to committees by the rules are subject to the proviso "with the approval of the Executive Council". Roberts sees as emphasising district committee authority the clause in Rule 15 which states that the Executive Council shall not complete an agreement with an employer without submitting the terms first to the district(s) affected, any dispute being referred to the National Committee. Though built into the rules as a check on the powers of the central authority this clause is rarely, if ever, used.

The district committee can take a ballot of their members on the advisability of a district strike and can declare such a strike if it has been supported by a three to two majority of the members voting. The committee can also approve shop or factory strikes within their district and where such approval has been given can conduct a ballot of their members on the advisability of levying a special strike fund.[1]

Thus under rule the district committees are given powers over three important areas of union activity: the appointment and control of shop

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[1] For a good example of the district strike fund in operation see Arnison (1970).

stewards, the conduct of negotiations on trade questions, and the initial sanctioning of strikes.

We can compare these powers with those of the districts in the two important descendants of the New Unionism, the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) and the General and Municipal Workers Union (GMWU). In the TGWU district committees can be established in suitable areas but their powers are conferred upon them by the Executive Council and these powers are much fewer than those of the AUEW district committees Boraston et al (1975: 42). Usually such committees in the TGWU meet once a quarter compared with the AUEW's fortnightly meetings. Recently the number of district committees in the TGWU has been increased in order to provide greater decentralisation (Gretton, 1971), but this has occured mainly in manufacturing industries. The TGWU regional trade group committees are more closely akin to the AUEW district committees in terms of functions, but, these regional committees are subject to the national trade group and hence the structure gives greater authority to these national trade groups.

What is called the district in the GMWU is rather different from the districts of the AUEW or the TGWU. The district in the GMWU is a wider geographic region, of which there are only ten (compared with nearly three hundred 'districts' in the engineering section of the AUEW).

The final authority within the GMWU district is the district council, but in terms of union government this is not a very important body, meeting only twice yearly to give formal approval to what is decided elsewhere. There is, in addition, a district committee, but its functions are mainly routine. It meets monthly and may sanction a strike of up to 300 members but larger disputes must be submitted to headquarters in London. The key figure in the district organization is the district secretary who, according to Clegg (1954) wields great power within a district. Each district secretary is a member of the General Council and

may be on the National Executive and, suggests Clegg, is always likely to succeed in any dispute with a district committee or council. The General Council and Executive Committee are composed of both lay members and full-time officials; a principle which creates "a close-knit, centralised organization, which clearly has the effect of placing controlling power in the hands of full-time officials" (Roberts, 1956: 156).

Thus we can observe that compared with earlier phases in the AUEW's history the district committee role has diminished, but it is nevertheless still a very important one, particularly so when compared with the role of the district organization in other trade unions.

The Executive Council

It was to the Executive Council that early powers of the district first shifted and much of the concern over the central authority versus local autonomy issue can be reduced to a conflict between the Executive Council and district committees. The rules now embody the principle that the activities of all members (including district committees) are subject to the approval of the Executive Council, and in support of this principle sanctions are available under Rule 22. The role of the Council is intended to be primarily administrative rather than policy-making, however. Each of the seven members is elected for first a three year, and then a five year period and sits on the Executive Council full-time. The Council meets each week and this, together with its small size and full-time nature allows ample scope for surveying activities in the union. Though standing at the apex of the organizational system its power is subject to a number of checks. Apart from the possibility of individual members losing in an election, its decisions may be challenged in the Final Appeal Court. In addition, it is required under rule to follow the policy laid down for it by the annual National Committee meeting, though there is considerable latitude for interpretation of policy and little that can be done by the National Committee if its policy is not pursued. The extent to which the

Executive Council follows National Committee policy depends in part upon the extent to which it wants to, as may be seen by the sharp difference between the administrations of Lord Carron and Hugh Scanlon. Lord Carron's repeated defiance of the National Committee became known as Carron's Law, whereas Hugh Scanlon took up an explicit position that National Committee policy would be followed. Thus we can see that Roberts' suggestion that "the executive council is not infrequently prevented from pursuing a wise policy by the powerful national committee" (1956: 156) is rather too strong. However, he may be correct in arguing that in those unions that have no national conferences the Executive Council "may behave more ruthlessly than they would otherwise have" (1956: 158). Allen also notes that in those unions that have delegated their policy-making function to their Executive Councils, "these are the most authoritarian of executive councils" since "a policy-forming executive is free from the restraint which a delegate assembly, conscious of its power, can impose" (Allen, 1954: 172, 173). The Executive Councils of the steel unions, for example, carry a degree of authority possessed by few other unions,[1] and, as I have suggested, the structures of both the large general unions create a degree of centralisation far greater than in the AUEW. Half the seats on the National Executive of the GMWU, for example, are held by full-time Regional Secretaries who, according to Hyman (1975: 72) share the domination of policy with the General Secretary.

The National Committee

The delegate conference of the engineering section consists of the annual meeting[2] of the National Committee which was set up in 1921 at the formation of the AEU as a solution to the problem of centralising

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1 As noted by Allen (1954) and Flanders (1968)

2 Though the conference generally meets once a year the National Committee can 'call itself into being', in the form of additional or recall conferences.

policy-making. As the previous discussion indicated, its relationships with the Executive Council (to whom its resolutions stand as instructions) have not always been unambiguous, the two bodies diverging considerably during the Presidency of Lord Carron.

Each of the twenty-six Divisional Committees elects two representatives to the National Committee, and from 1949 to 1967 an additional seven union delegates were elected by the annual women's conference.

The Divisional Committee members are elected from the district committees which are in turn elected from the branches and shop stewards quarterly meetings. Representation on the National Committee is thus indirect, a point referred to by Lord Carron in his address to the National Committee in 1961. On the basis of indirect election, Carron suggested, the National Committee delegates had the positive approval of only four per cent of the membership. "How far", he asked, "is the representative able to commit his electorate and be secure in the knowledge of full support and full approval by that electorate?"[1]

In his speech to the National Committee in 1953 the President, Jack Tanner, criticised delegates for voting according to the mandate of their Divisional Committee, "not always because they really believed it (a resolution) sensible and practicable".[2]

Tatlow (1953: 258) has suggested that the system of indirect elections helps a minority rise to power. "The national committee" she argues, "exercises power rather than responsibility". Speeches, she goes on, "are spattered with slogans of earlier struggles", the delegates speaking, "with an eye to their constituency".

Not only is its 'representativeness' questionable but so also is its role as a deliberative assembly. In common with the delegate conferences of other unions it is subject to the criticisms made by Allen (1954)

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1 National Committee Report (1961).

that it may be swayed by oratory, or at the other extreme, delegates may be mandated by their Divisional Committees. Deliberation is further limited by the volume of resolutions it is required to consider. For example in 1968, 575 resolutions were forwarded to the committee of which only 65 were adopted.

Richter (1973) has argued that the functional role of the National Committee is now minimal. Its authority in collective bargaining has diminished with the shift to workshop or plant bargaining, and even in national bargaining the Committee plays no role in negotiations once these are in progress. However, as Edelstein and Warner (1975) have noted, under the Presidency of Hugh Scanlon the National Committee has passed resolutions on wage bargaining which have been accepted as union policy.

In many ways it is better placed than the delegate conferences of other unions to act as a deliberative and policy-making body. Its small size (52 members) compares favourably for deliberative purposes with the much larger assemblies of other unions (the Union of Post Office Workers has over 1,000 delegates at its conference) and as previous noted, "all decisions of the national committee shall be final and binding on the executive council" (AEU, 1970: 30-31).

Its role is limited by the infrequency of its meeting compared with the continuous policy implementation of the Executive Council and full-time officers. However, the Committee can hold 'recall' conferences, to vote on policy issues (such as wage negotiations). A further important function for the National Committee is that every five years, after policy business has been dealt with, the Committee sits as a Rules Revision Committee. At this meeting all full-time officers except the President and General Secretary are excluded, though the Executive Council is permitted to submit suggestions for the revision of rules. As with the policy-making role, the National Committee can call a Rules Revision meeting at any time to consider suggestions by the Executive Council for rule changes.

Given the importance of the rule book in internal legitimation, and what Fletcher (undated) has referred to as a "legalistic" attitude to the rules in most trade unions, this rule-making capacity represents an important feature of the National Committee's role in the polyarchy.

The Final Appeal Court

As the National Committee is likened to a legislature and the Executive Council to an administration so the analogy of the separation of powers is completed by a consideration of the Final Appeal Court as a judiciary. This consists of eleven members elected from the branches divided into eleven electoral divisions and it meets annually. Its role is seen primarily as a check on the powers of the Executive Council since appeals are lodged against Executive Council decisions. However, this interpretation is misleading since the Executive Council is involved in Final Appeal Court deliberations partly because it is itself part of the judicial machinery. A complaint by a member against a district committee or a full-time official goes to the Executive Council for resolution. If both parties agree to the Executive's ruling no further action is necessary. If either party should disagree (not necessarily the original complainant) then the Executive's decision may be challenged in the Final Appeal Court. Hence, though ultimately a check on Executive authority, actual cases considered may be occasioned by disputes in other parts of the union.

The Full-time Officers

Though the seven members of the Executive Council are elected to serve full-time, in this section we are more concerned with the role of the other full-time officers, particularly at the local level. The AUEW engineering section has approximately 160 full-time officials (the number of full-time district secretaries and assistant divisional organisers varies). In addition to the President and General Secretary there are two assistant general secretaries, seven national organisers, seven regional

officers, twenty-six divisional organisers, twenty-six assistant divisional organisers and approximately eighty district secretaries. All are elected for initially three years and subsequently five year terms of office, the constituency of the President, the General Secretary, his assistant, and the national organisers being the entire membership, the constituencies of the remainder corresponding to their geographical responsibilities.

Under rule, all the full-time officers, with the exception of the President and District Secretaries, are held to be responsible to the Executive Council. Their responsibilities are organising and administrative, but this freedom to act is limited by their formal responsibilities to the Executive Council and district committees, and by the informal sanction of electoral loss of office. Edelstein and Warner (1975) suggest that in the AUEW election results are sufficiently close to indicate that the electoral sanction is a real one. As Hyman and Fryer (1975) point out, full-time officials work with district committees composed of shop stewards whose support they need to achieve re-election. A similar point is made by Goodman and Whittingham (1969) who suggest that full-time officials also require the support of stewards in large plants.

Not only must the officials consider the electoral consequences of their actions but also whether their actions will be ratified by the relevant committee or council. For example, the role of Divisional Organisers is limited by their relationship with the district committees:

> "Organisers shall, when requested by any district committee in their division, conduct negotiations with employers in the district in which they are located. They shall report to the district secretary on arriving and leaving the town in which they are located. They must act in conjunction with the secretary or other member appointed by the respective committee with whom they are for the time being connected, and shall not, under any circumstances, conclude on their own authority any arrangement that will alter or affect any of the recognised conditions of the district committee within the area in which they may be acting. They shall act at the request of any district committee, or attend, without payment, any district

> meeting, when deemed necessary, but under no circumstances shall they enter into any negotiations in any district without the consent of the committee of such district". (AEU, 1970: 43)

Similarly, the work of the District Secretary is subject to ratification by his committee.

These provisions contrast sharply with the powers of full-time officers in other unions. In the GMWU for example, it is highly unlikely that the district committee would try to change the decision of a district officer, but the AUEW national officials are indirectly subject to the policies of the elected national committee and local officials can rarely settle with an employer without reference back to the district committee. Whereas officials in the AUEW are subject to keenly fought elections, officials in the GMWU are not subject to periodic re-election. As Lane and Roberts (1971) describe the GMWU:

> "What emerges from all this is that there is a distinctly professional aroma about the GMWU - that is to say effectively it regards its members as clients rather than as participants. The 'members' pay their dues and in return are provided with certain services - provided they do as they are told. A very distinct line is drawn between the union and its members - the union becomes the organization, its corps of full-time officials. The members become passive duespayers who may be allowed a vote now and again (but they can only vote for people approved of by the 'union') and to send delegates to a conference which effectively has very little power. The union is in other words very much in the charge of its officials, officials over whom the lay membership has little control since they are not subject to periodic re-election". (1971: 55)

Shop Stewards

The well documented growth of plant and workshop bargaining and the parallel growth in the role and numbers of shop stewards have given rise to an important element in the polyarchic nature of government in the AUEW. In 1960 the union had 23,500 shop stewards, 26,600 in 1965 and 34,000 in 1973 (Edelstein and Warner, 1975: 294). Though represented on the district committee directly through the shop stewards quarterly meeting and indirectly through branch elections, the integration of shop

stewards into union government is far from complete. There is thus a tendency for stewards to work outside the formal structure of the union through shop stewards committees both within and between plants.

Edelstein and Warner suggest that:

> "There is no doubt that a good deal of the Engineers' internal life has centred on the shop steward problem, just as it has also centred on the relationship between district autonomy and attempts to co-ordinate national bargaining". (1975: 295)

The Executive Council periodically reminds shop stewards of their responsibilities through the issue of branch or district circulars. A branch circular of July 1952, for example, calls attention to an increasing number of unofficial disputes called "by shop stewards acting on their own initiative without authority or even consulting the district committee under whose jurisdiction they are".[1]

In 1961 the Manchester Guardian reported:

> "Leaders of the AEU took further steps to discipline unruly shop stewards. After the threat last week to expel members who persisted in the unofficial strike at the British Light Steel Pressings factory at Acton, a letter was sent yesterday to the AEU District Secretary in North London ordering him to provide the names of shop stewards leading the dispute. The men - about ten are thought to be involved - will probably be summoned to union headquarters for disciplinary action. British Light Steel Pressings has been a trouble spot, standing out even in the troublesome North London district of the AEU, in which the national leadership has had difficulty in keeping local officials under control. During the present strike shop stewards are said to have prevented a national officer from addressing the strikers".[2]

The existence of unofficial shop stewards movements such as the Engineering and Allied Trades National Council of Shop Stewards has created further difficulties for the Executive Council. Though this body was defunct by the mid-1960s the evidence of newspaper reports, Executive Council

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1 AEU Monthly Journal, July 1952, p 203.

2 Manchester Guardian, 20 September 1961.

circulars, and articles in the Monthly Journal, suggests that the problem of controlling shop stewards did not die with it. As Turner argues, such unofficial shop stewards organi ations provide "a kind of immanent alternative leadership of engineering workers" (1950: 187).

Shop stewards have undoubtedly acquired much of their powers as a result of the growth of plant bargaining in the engineering industry. Unlike the committees, councils, and officers discussed so far, the steward derives little authority from the union rule book. Plant bargaining, however, confers an authority which can be used to influence union decisions, both informally through shop steward pressure groups and formally through representation on committees and councils. In addition, they may derive power from their ability to influence electoral outcomes, but ultimately their authority is derived from the work groups which they represent, particularly the willingness of work groups to follow their direction.

The branch

Equally as well documented as the rise of the shop steward is the decline of the branch. In the AUEW, branches are geographically based and form the basis of organization. As with other unions, attendances are very low even though under rule each member is required to attend the branch to pay his subscriptions and to vote in elections. In practice subscriptions are collected either by stewards or by a check-off agreement with the employer, and even when subscriptions are paid at the branch the member may attend briefly for this one purpose. Similarly, a change to postal balloting would remove one of the few remaining motives for branch attendance. As Jim Conway remarked when General Secretary:

> "We all know that in the main branch life is dead. Our voting returns for elections confirm this fact. The seat of activity is in the factory".[1]

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[1] AEU Monthly Journal, June 1966.

Similarly, George Woodcock once remarked:

> "Branches have ceased to be an important part of trade union structure. Trade union activity takes place at the place of work in the shop. If I were an active trade unionist again, you would not find me anywhere near a branch because there is not enough done to justify attendance". (Cyriax and Oakeshott, 1960: 69)

Polyarchy

As the discussion of the key elements in the union has shown, power is fairly equally distributed between the shop stewards, the district committees, the Executive Council, the National Committee, and, to a lesser extent, the full-time officers. The branch performs a mainly administrative function, the Divisional Committees forward resolutions to the National Committee and the role of the Final Appeal Court is that of arbitration.

The structure, with its complex system of checks and balances, has aroused a great deal of criticism. Turner argues:

> "The system by which the membership separately elect both full-time officials and full-time representatives is claimed to ensure popular control: it does not, however, clearly define the responsibility of the officers to the committee. This dualism is repeated down the AEU structure, moreover. Its area committees have elected secretaries, who, down to certain levels, are full-time. Alongside these are elected organisers. At this level, whatever the formal position, authority and responsibility appears on occasions to be doubly confused". (1950: 183)

Fay maintains that the AUEW is more like the laissez-faire control structure than the polyarchic:

> "It (the AEF, writing in 1970) is riddled with the excesses of democracy ..... It is a tortuous system designed to produce maximum rank and file control, which gives no-one control". (1972: 62)

This would appear to overstate considerably the degree of rank and file control intended in the system, though Lord Carron, when questioned by Lord Tangley during the Donovan Commission hearings agreed when asked:

> "I may be wrong but it seems to me that in your union the power flows from the bottom up, in the sense that the branches have the real power and the powers of the district derive from the branches, the powers of the division derive from the district and the powers of the national organization derive from below, and most of the officers are subject to election by the required form at various levels. This seems to suggest that in fact the real seat of power is in the branch, and persuasion flows downwards from the top: is that right?" (AEU, 1968: 987)

Again, this greatly overstates the powers of the branch and understates that of the executive.

The power and control relations between the various parts of the union may much more sensibly be understood with reference to Tannenbaum's concept of polyarchic control. The essence of Tannenbaum's concept of control (which he defines synonymously with power)[1], is that effective control requires that some be exercised by all participants so that the total amount within an organization is expanded. Granting to rank and file members the opportunity to participate directly or indirectly in decision-making increases the willingness to implement decisions and thus the amount of control at all levels. This is not the same thing as 'democracy' which carries the implication that rank and file control is achieved at the expense of the leadership's control, nor autocracy where leadership control is acquired at the expense of rank and file control. Though all unions may be polyarchies, as Banks suggests, not all embody the principle to the same degree. Fay argues, for example:

> "The GMWU offers an intriguing contrast to the AEF since its leadership is constitutionally powerful, but its rank and file seems to lack independence, guts even". (1970: 67)

In terms of Tannenbaum's control graph technique we may illustrate polyarchy in the AUEW as in figure 6.

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1 Though, as I have argued earlier, the concepts should not be regarded as synonymous.

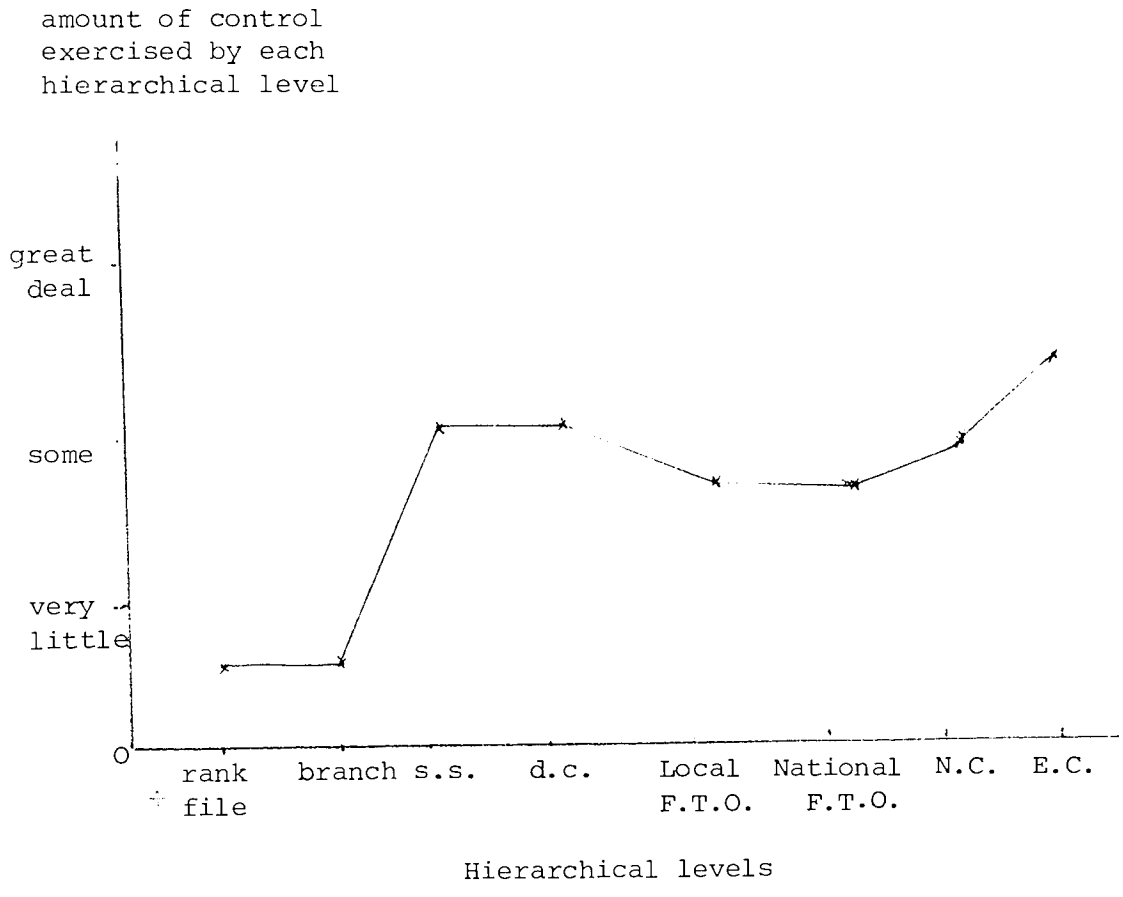

Figure 6: Polyarchy in the A.E.U.W.

The rank and file in this context refers to the non-active union members[1] and, though these may exercise occasional electoral control, the individual, non-activist member has little say in union decision-making. As suggested earlier, polyarchic control is distributed between the leadership and the activists.

We may accept Fox's characterisation of trade unions as "a number of collectivities structured into a hierarchy culminating in the national level of the union" in which "groups with differing goals seek to use an organization of power and resources and symbols in the service of their own interests" (1971: 110 and 114). The willingness of the parties to co-operate depends upon the extent to which co-operation advances these self-interests and enables each to achieve their desired objectives. The various 'power centres' are interdependent in any union but in the AUEW the groups enjoy a relatively high degree of functional autonomy in their interrelationship. Their interactions take the form of

[1] It should be recognised that the term is often used to refer

continuous bargaining and the result is an inevitably imperfectly integrated system of control. The continued growth and survival of the union itself relies on a minimum set of common standards within which such bargaining takes place.

The analysis of control thus resolves around the notions of autonomy and interdependence, an approach explored by Boraston et al (1975) in their study of district committees in the AUEW engineering section.

They argued that large plants would develop workshop organizations capable of accumulating resources such as experience, expertise, time and facilities and hence become independent of the district organization. Several examples are quoted to illustrate the limitations thus imposed on the district committee's authority in the workshops.

The notion of interdependent groups pursuing interests, sometimes convergent, sometimes divergent, within an overall framework of rules, seems particularly appropriate to the AUEW where, in one form or another, such questions have tended to dominate internal political life. Tannenbaum's concept of polyarchic control implies that legitimacy derived from participation in decision-making enables total control to be expanded, and thus control is not a zero-sum concept. Where legitimacy breaks down, however, bargaining between interest groups takes place and the successful outcomes of such bargaining for one group will normally be at the expense of another.

CHAPTER SIX

A MODEL FOR POWER AND CONTROL ANALYSIS IN THE A.U.E.W.

Introduction

Discussion in the previous chapters have centred around two strands of theoretical and empirical development. The first was the strand of power, authority and control, focussing on the problems of definition, identification and measurement. The second was the strand of democracy, oligarchy and polyarchy as forms of trade union government. The purpose of this chapter is to draw together these two strands into a formal model of control in the polyarchic A.U.E.W.

The view of power and control presented here synthesises the approaches of the sociological and political science traditions. Following Tannenbaum and his colleagues I have argued that power and control are not necessarily zero-sum concepts, but that through participation and legitimation the total control in an organization can be raised. However, if legitimation breaks down, divergences of interest may be expressed in the form of overt conflict in which sources of power other than legitimate authority are mobilised.

The theoretical propositions which have been established for power and control in a trade union are presented in the form of a general model of variables. This model is supplemented by a complementary 'cycle of activity' model which indicates how these variables operate within the framework of the A.U.E.W.

A general model of variables

The general variables model in figure 7 merely restates the propositions about power and control in a more easily assimilable form, together with some indication of the directions in which the key influences are believed to operate.

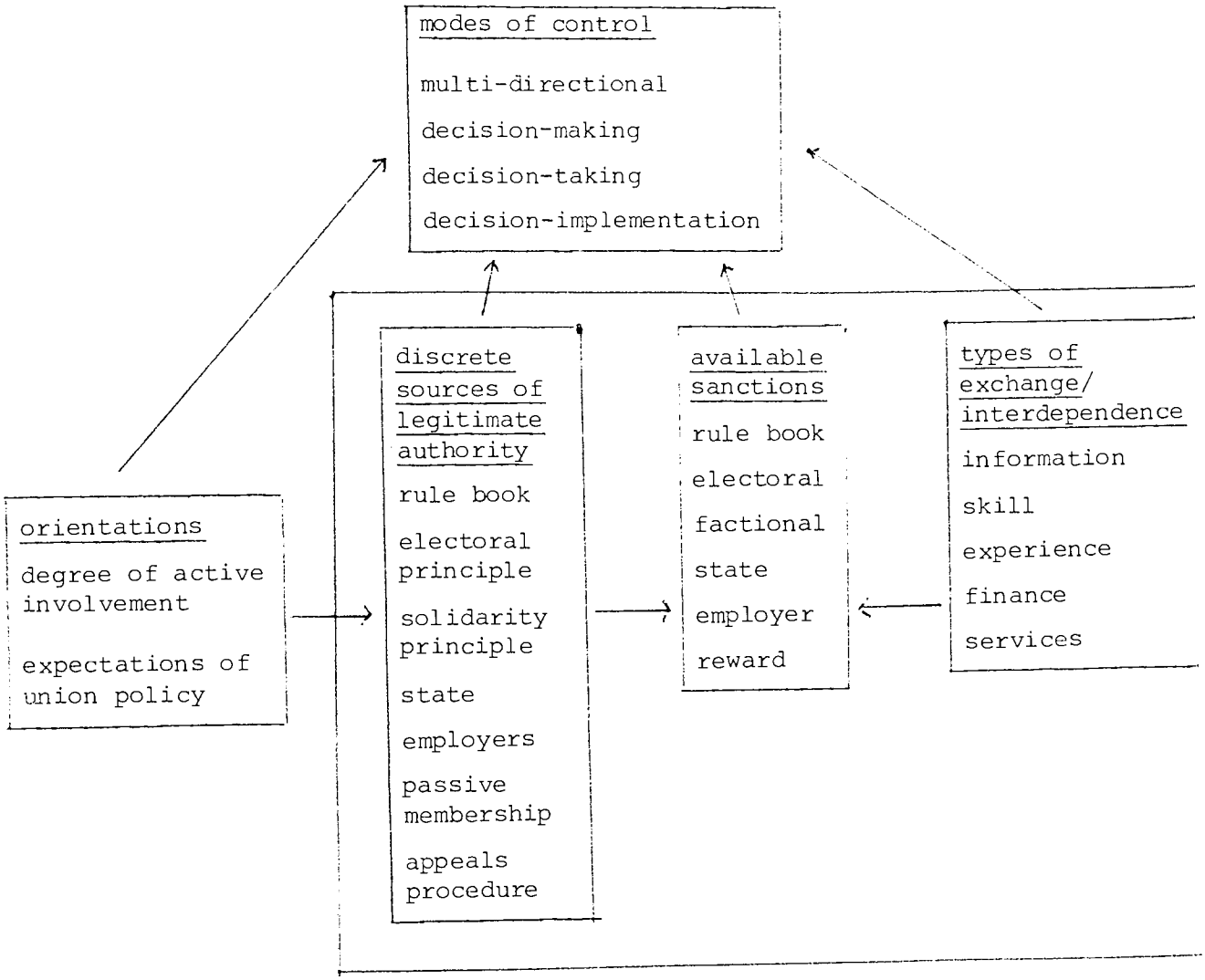

Figure 7 - General model of the power/control nexus

The model consists of five clusters of variables, each cluster containing variables of the same general type. Though the meaning of each cluster and the nature of its relationship with other clusters has been considered in depth, some further elaboration may be useful.

Control

Control is interpreted here as the outcome of a power relationship, and is clearly not synonymous with power. Control is the end to which power is the means.[1] Polyarchic control is multi-directional in that

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[1] As Malcolm Hamilton (1977) suggests: "Power is the ability to control the behaviour of others".

each element in the polyarchy can control other elements to some degree. Normally, the main focus of interest is on control over decision-implementation, that is, the degree to which compliance with decisions can be secured. However, the nature of trade union polyarchy is such that control over decision-making and decision-taking assumes great, if not equal, importance. Decision-making is the process whereby decisions are arrived at. For example, in many unions a delegate conference acts as a policy-forming body and can be said to make decisions. In the A.U.E.W., membership control over this type of decision-making is indirect in that conference resolutions are passed from the branches to the conference (National Committee meeting) via the district and divisional committee. More direct forms of control over decision-making could consist of frequent sounding out of member opinion, as might be performed by a shop steward in his constituency. Once the process of decision-making is exhausted a decision still has to be taken, for example by the issuing of an instruction or a directive.

The concept of polyarchy implies not only some control of one element over another, but also that some elements have a degree of autonomy over areas of decision-taking. For example, district committees in the A.U.E.W. are the bodies which ratify the appointment of shop stewards. Though the committee takes the decision, the decision-making process is performed through the election or nomination of the steward by the members of the workshop.

I have argued at several points that member participation in the process of decision-making is an important source of legitimation of the decision taken and thus makes leadership control over decision-implementation less problematic.

Orientations

The degree of active involvement and the congruence between the decision taken and the expectations of union policy are important parts of the control model. The typology of orientations presented here follows

from the work of Child et al in which the juxtoposition of the two dimensions (degree of active involvement and congruence between policies and expectations) gives four member types; the stalwart, the trouble-maker, the cardholder and the alienated member. The typology is useful in the discussion of control of decision-implementation over the membership, though less so in a discussion of polyarchic control, since the latter is defined mainly in terms of competition between activists. Control over the membership will be least problematic where the degree of involvement in decision-making and the congruence between policies and expectations are both high. The existence of an instrumentally-oriented passive membership modifies the argument in that congruence between policies and expectations becomes the more important dimension of the typology, and where this congruence disappears, control becomes problematic. The passive membership is more likely to comply with the decisions of a collectivity whose policies are congruent with the membership's expectations than with a collectivity whose policies are not. It was argued that the instrumentally-oriented passive member thus exercises an arbitral role in the claims of competing polyarchic elements for legitimation of their decisions.

Legitimate authority

Contingent and non-contingent legitimacy have been identified as important types of power in a trade union, stemming from such sources as the union rule book, the principle of compliance with decisions democratically arrived at (or with officers democratically elected), the principle of presenting a unified front to potential or actual oppositions, and from the state, the employers, the passive membership and the appeals procedure. In its attempts to control other collectivities each collectivity may lay claim to one or more such sources of legitimacy. In so far as authority has been defined as being an attribute of the perceptions of the recipient in a control relationship, compliance can be secured as long as these perceptions of legitimacy are maintained.

Similarly, a collectivity may claim the legitimate authority to engage in the process of decision-making, or to take certain decisions, though such claims may be contested by other collectivities.

Exchange and interdependence

Even where legitimate authority has broken down, the result may not necessarily be overt conflict, since alongside the relationship of authority exist those of exchange and interdependence. The tradition of exchange theory emphasises the importance of the structural characteristics of the control relationship, in that these characteristics determine the degree to which one collectivity is dependent upon another. In the context of trade unions one collectivity may be dependent on another for the provision of information, or of skill and experience in solving the problems with which the collectivity is faced. Similarly, there may be ties of dependence based on the provision of finance for collectivity activities (such as payment of expenses, or trade union benefits) or of services (such as the role of shop stewards in the collection of subscriptions and the recruitment of new members). In the exchange model such dependency creates an imbalance of power in that an independent collectivity is in a better position to secure the compliance of a dependent collectivity.

As in other organizations the power relations which emerge from an imbalance in exchange do not necessarily follow the same pattern as the power relations which emerge from legitimate authority, and a lack of congruence between the two patterns may be a source of friction and strain within the organization.

In the same way as I have argued that it is perceptions of legitimate authority that are important in the authority relationship, then so too are perceptions of dependence or independence important in the exchange relationship (perceptions referred to earlier as power realisation).

Several writers have noted the importance of information as a power resource. Stinchcombe (1968: 151) argues also that "the communication structure is the administrative apparatus of the system of power". Again, a lack of congruence between communication structure or information channels and the hierarchical orderings of legitimate authority may produce organizational strains.

Sanctions

The exercise of sanctions will become necessary to achieve compliance when legitimate authority and exchange power have ceased to be effective, or when there is an unresolved incongruence between these two sources of power. Except for psychological reinforcement for commitment to trade union principles, positive sanctions are rare in a trade union with a pronounced electoral emphasis on appointments and promotions. Wage rewards to full-time officials cannot be regarded as a positive sanction, nor can re-election, since in both cases we are referring to the negative sanction of suspension of wages or of being voted out of office. Trade union sanctions are normally negative and consist of fines, suspension from benefits or from office, expulsion, electoral defeat and factional schisms.[1] These sanctions may be strengthened by the State or the employer through, for example, the closed shop.

Sanctions are closely related to the exchange model in that the withdrawal of resources on which a collectivity is dependent is itself a sanction, but also because a collectivity which is independent can more easily avoid the application of sanctions and render them ineffective. For example, a workshop organization which perceived itself to be independent of other collectivities in the union may be able to avoid at least some of the sanctions imposed by higher level collectivities.

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[1] By which is meant the formation of rival groupings within the trade union, or even the formation of breakaway unions, as detailed by Lerner, (1961) and Hemingway (1978).

Orientations, legitimate authority, exchange and interdependence, and the exercise of negative sanctions, are inter-related in the general model of variables as determinants of control. To observe the control model more clearly, these theoretical propositions need to be integrated with a model of the activities of the union.

The central cycle of union activity

A starting point for such a model has been developed by Child et al (1973) from the work of Marcus (1964). They argue that a union's activities may be conceptualised as falling within two systems, the representative system and the administrative system. Though I have argued that this dichotomy may be an oversimplification it is nevertheless a convenient abstraction of trade union activities. These systems are combined with the typology of membership types to form a cycle of activity as presented in figure 8.

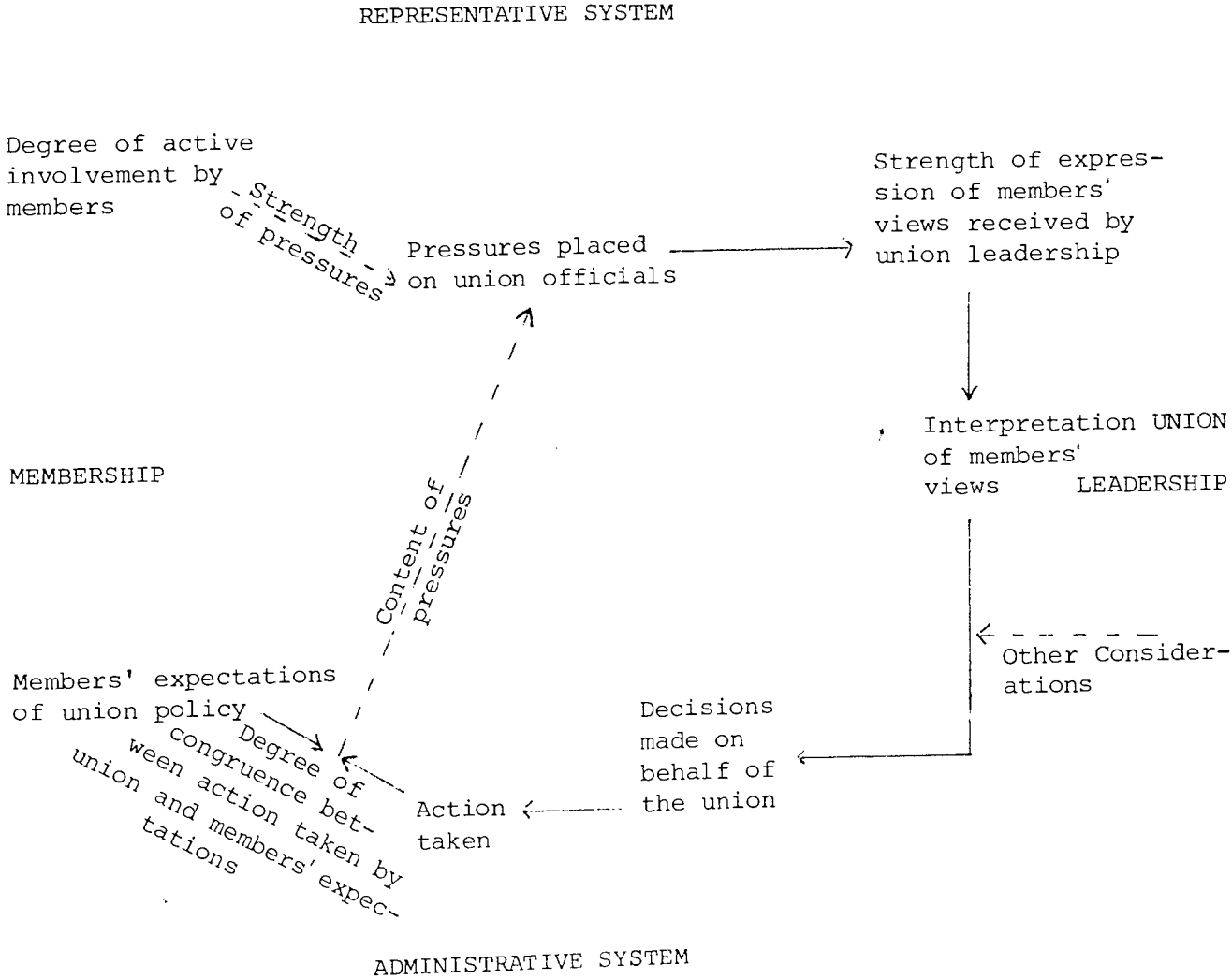


Figure 8 - The central cycle of union activity (1973: 83)

The cycle approach indicates the processes whereby demands upon the organization are channelled through the representative system to the decision-takers, and decisions channelled from there back to the membership via the administrative system. However, the emphasis on union leadership in the model obscures one of the essential features of polyarchy, which is that decision-taking is carried out not only by the union leadership (hierarchically dominant collectivity) but also by other collectivity levels, and, therefore, pressure may be put on these other levels according to their appropriateness to the demands being put.

Modification of the cycle model to embody the concept of polyarchy only requires that instead of there being just one activity cycle joining the membership and leadership, there are several. These 'activity loops' not only join the membership with other collectivities but will also join collectivities, indicating the ways in which demands on the organization can arise from within each polyarchic element. The cycle model incorporating polyarchy is presented in figure 9, in which the cycles are superimposed upon a simplified model of the A.U.E.W. elaborated in Chapter Five.

There are no directional arrows in the diagram since the control relationships are multidirectional. Within each loop there is a changing balance of control, and demands may originate from either of the elements. For the purposes of exposition not all possible relationships have been indicated; for example, links between shop stewards and the Executive Council, or shop stewards and full-time officers.

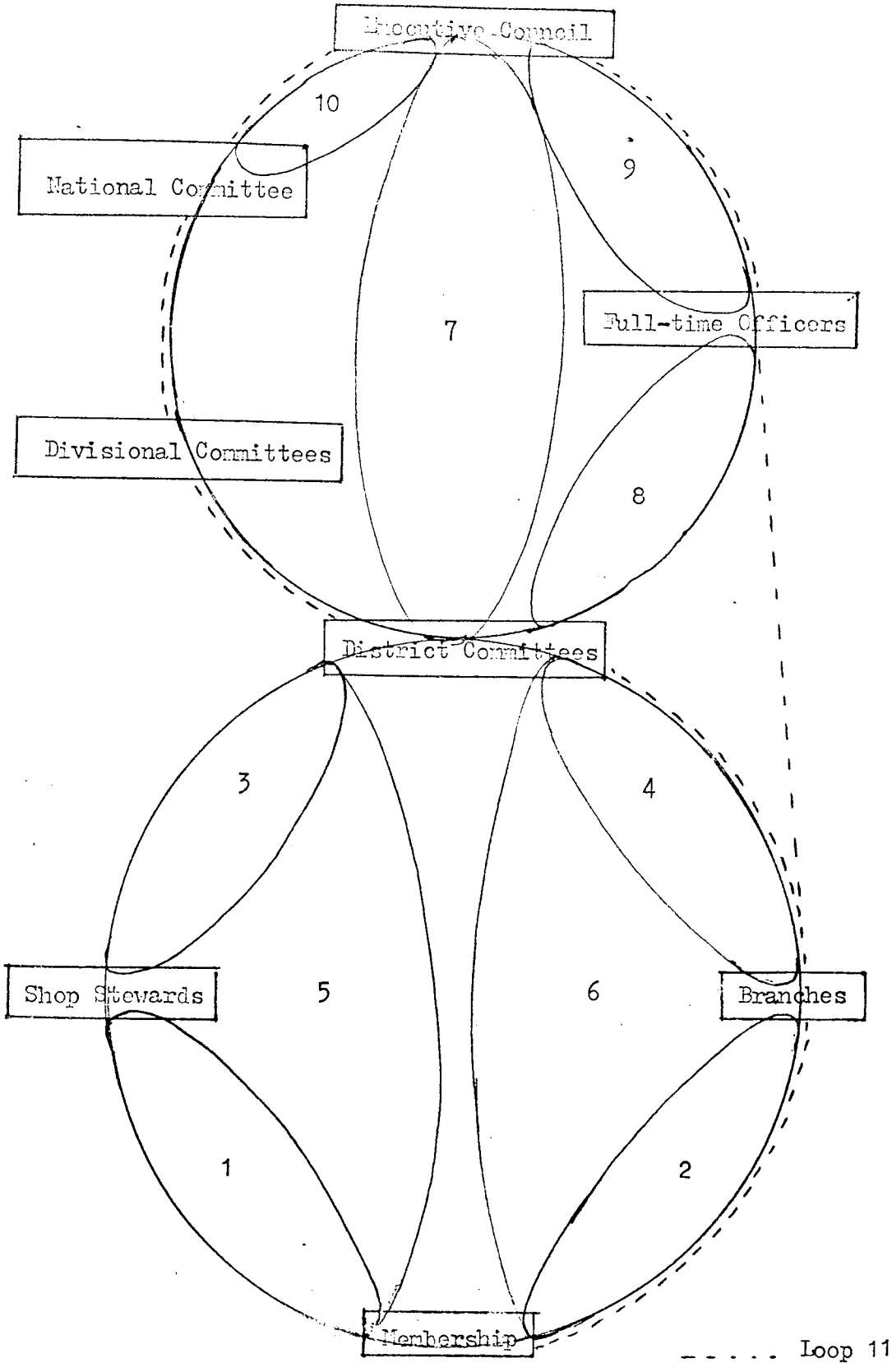
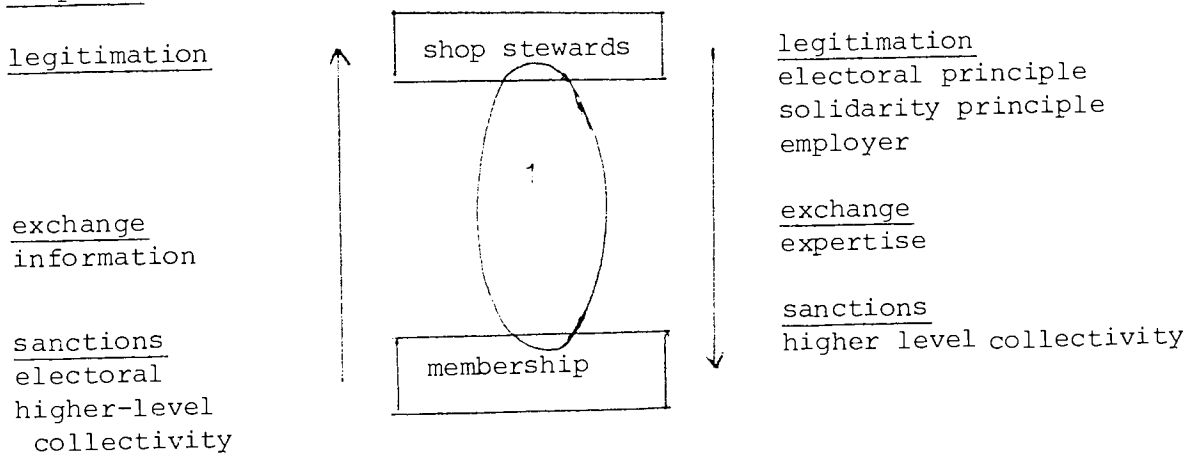


Figure 9 - Activity loops in the A.U.E.W.

Each loop corresponds to a cycle of activity and embodies elements of the model derived by Child et al, such as strength and content of pressures, orientations, decision-taking and feedback. The loops also correspond to the fields of competition between collectivities, so that analysis of control in the union can proceed by an examination of each activity loop in terms of contingent and non-contingent legitimation, exchange power, and sanctions.

Activity loop analysis

Loop One

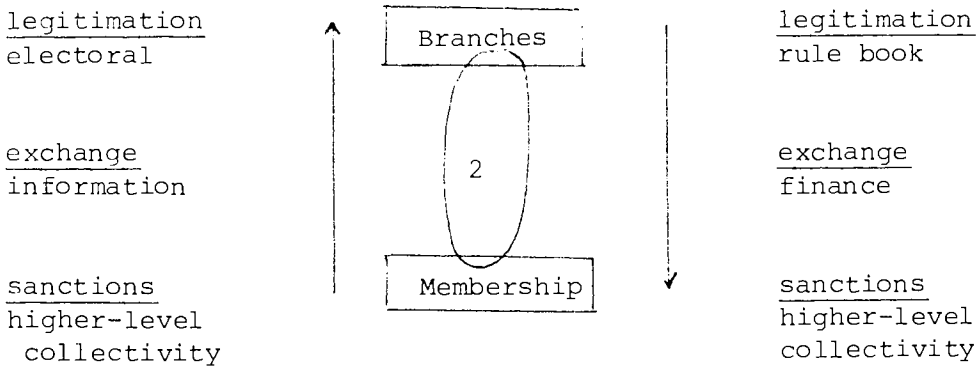


Shop stewards are elected by the membership in their constituency. Control over these members stems from the stewards elected position, from the principle of union solidarity, legitimacy granted by the employers, expertise in solving members grievances, and from the sanctions which they can ask higher level collectivities to impose on the members.

The members can attain a degree of control over the activities of their shop stewards through the holding of information, the sanction of voting them out of office, and sanctions which they can ask higher level collectivities to impose on the stewards.

The relationships between stewards and their members differ between plants and between unions. Studies by Goodman and Whittingham (1969) and more recently by Batstone et al (1977) have suggested that it is possible to categorise shop stewards as 'leaders' or 'followers' in their relationships with their members.

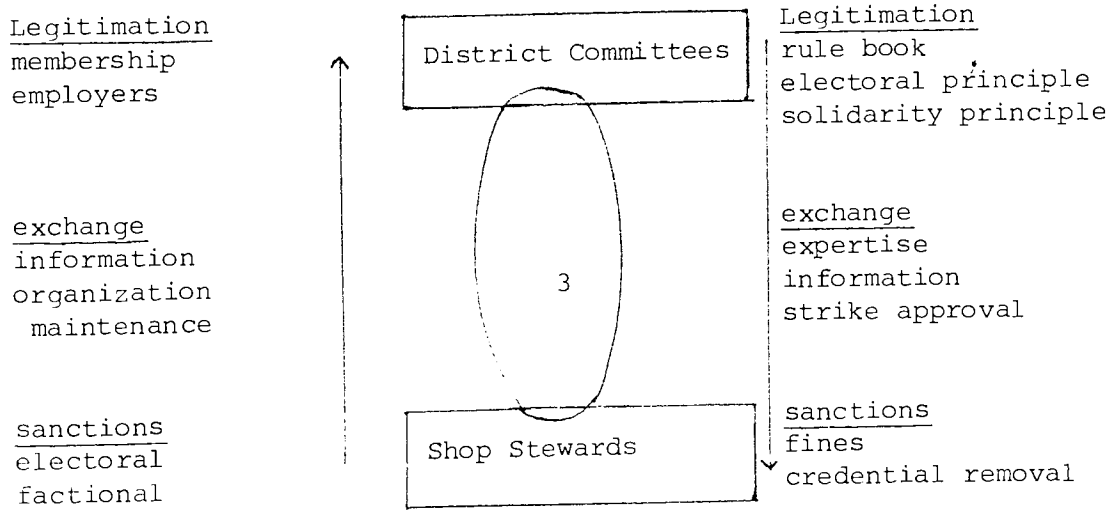
Loop Two



In the discussion of polyarchy in the A.U.E.W. it was noted how little is the power of the branch in the union's activities. All members are allocated to a branch, which is normally geographically based according to members' residence. The branch has little control over its membership except for its role in the disbursement of union benefits. It is the branch that receives union dues and forwards requests for benefits to the Executive Council. Non-payment of dues or excessive receipt of benefit may lead to branch sanctions against members.

The members can exercise control over decisions in their branch through voting and can similarly exercise electoral control over the branch officers.

Loop Three



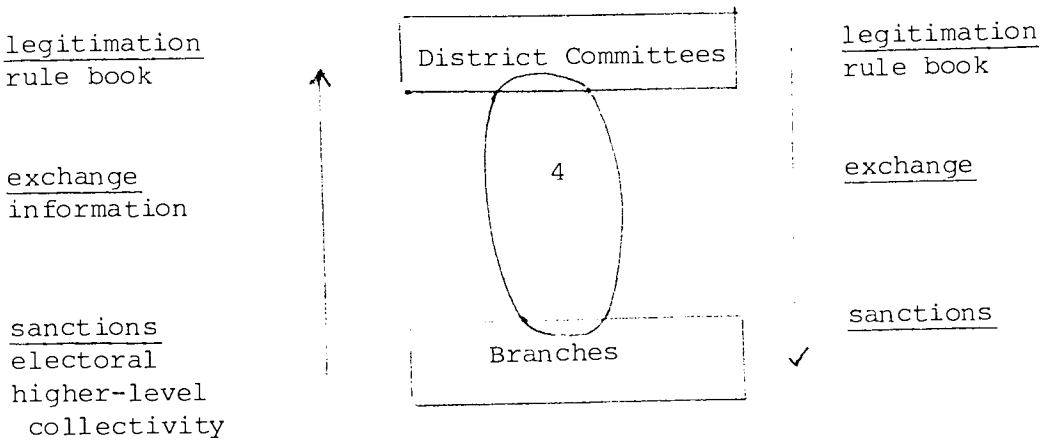
According to Rule 13 of the A.E.U. Rule Book, district committees

are responsible for appointing shop stewards and supervising their activities, and to this end the committees are authorised under the rule to fine shop stewards and to withdraw their credentials. In addition, they may control stewards by claiming legitimacy derived from having been elected by all the branches and all the shop stewards in the district (the electoral principle), and by claiming to represent the interests of the union in the district as a whole (the solidarity principle). The committees' knowledge of agreements throughout their districts provides a resource of expertise in assessing agreements reached by stewards in their plants, and some stewards may value the possibility of having strikes approved by their district committee and financed by a district levy.

These sources of power do not give the district committees freedom to impose their policies on shop stewards. The stewards may derive contingent legitimacy from the membership in plants where the employers recognise the stewards for negotiating purposes. Though shop stewards are required by the union rules to submit to their district committee reports on wages and membership in their shops, plus all agreements for ratification, the district committees are still mainly dependent upon the shop stewards for information on the day-to-day activities in the plants. In addition, the stewards perform an important role in recruitment and the collection of dues.

Though indirect, shop stewards can exercise some sanctions over their district committees via the election of shop stewards representatives, or by forming rival groupings outside the union.

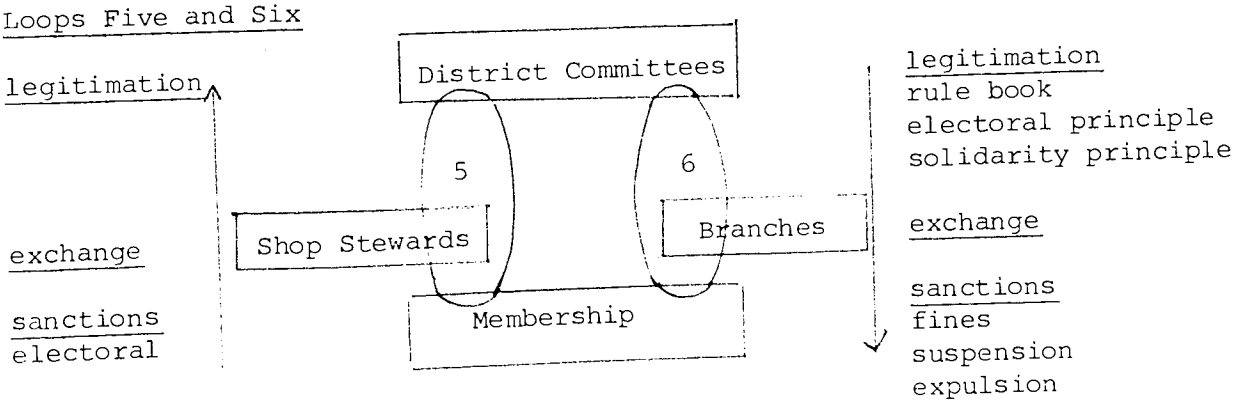
Loop Four



District Committees consist primarily of representatives elected from the branches in the district. Branches may remove their representatives and elect others in their place if they are dissatisfied with the representative's conduct. In addition, the committees rely on the branches to some extent as a source of information.

However, the relationship between district committees and branches is rarely one of control. The rules lay down that district committees "shall have no jurisdiction in matters of branch business", (1970: 25) though the generally weak position of the branches minimises district committee intervention anyway. Branch control over committee activity is slight, though branches can call upon the sanctions exercised by higher-level collectivities. A competition between a district committee and a branch may be resolved by the arbitration of a higher-level collectivity, in this case, the Executive Council.

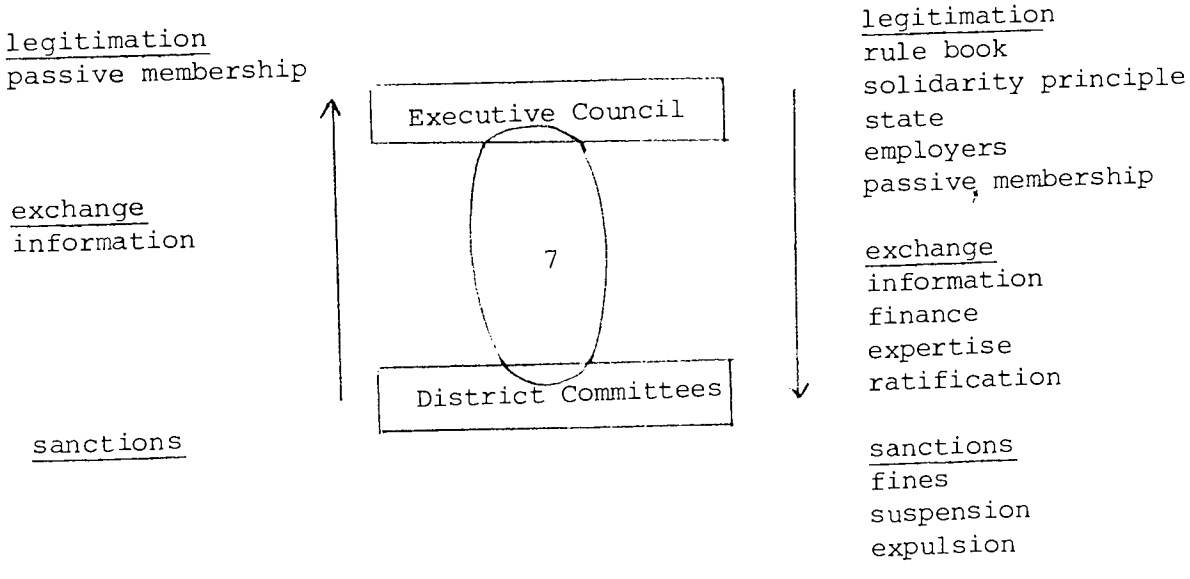
Loops Five and Six



Relationships between the district committees and the membership in their districts are indirect. Members are discouraged from contacting the committees directly and are advised to go through their branch or shop-steward. Similarly, district committee decisions are notified to the membership through the reports of representatives to their branches, and through letters to shop stewards. Under union rules, however, the committees are responsible for ensuring compliance with their decisions, in that all resolutions passed by a committee (and approved by the Executive Council) "shall be binding upon all members working within the respective districts" (1970: 25). In support of this rule are the sanctions of fines, suspension or expulsion. In addition to the legitimacy granted by the rule book committees may derive legitimacy from having been elected to represent the interests of all members in the district.

The membership can exercise little control over the activities of their district committees, though they can impose electoral sanctions through branch voting for committee representatives, and through the voting for the offices of District President and District Secretary which are held on a district-wide basis.

Loop Seven

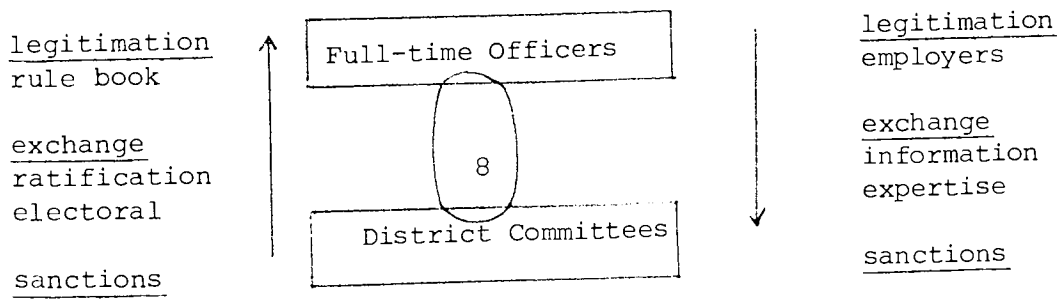


The district committees are required to send the minutes of their meetings to the Executive Council for ratification, and in this way the Executive Council can not only monitor the committees' activities, but by refusing to ratify all or part of the minutes, can prevent items such as resolutions from standing. The Executive Council also needs to give approval for district committee expenditures and hence the committees are dependent upon the Executive Council for their finance. The committees also rely on the Executive Council for copies of national agreements, circulars on union policy, and to hear of outcomes of national negotiations. The committees may wish to use the Executive Council members as a source of expertise on agreements and negotiations.

Though the Executive are to some extent dependent on the district committees for information the committees are required to forward their minutes of meetings for ratification, and in addition branches also write to the Executive Council. The balance of exchange power is thus with the Executive Council, and this power is supported by legitimation derived from the rule book, their representation of wider union interests, contingent legitimation by the state, the employers and the passive membership, and by sanctions such as dissolution of a committee.

The district committees, however, have no sanctions to exercise over the Executive Council, and their only source of power is any legitimation they can derive from the membership in their districts.

Loop Eight

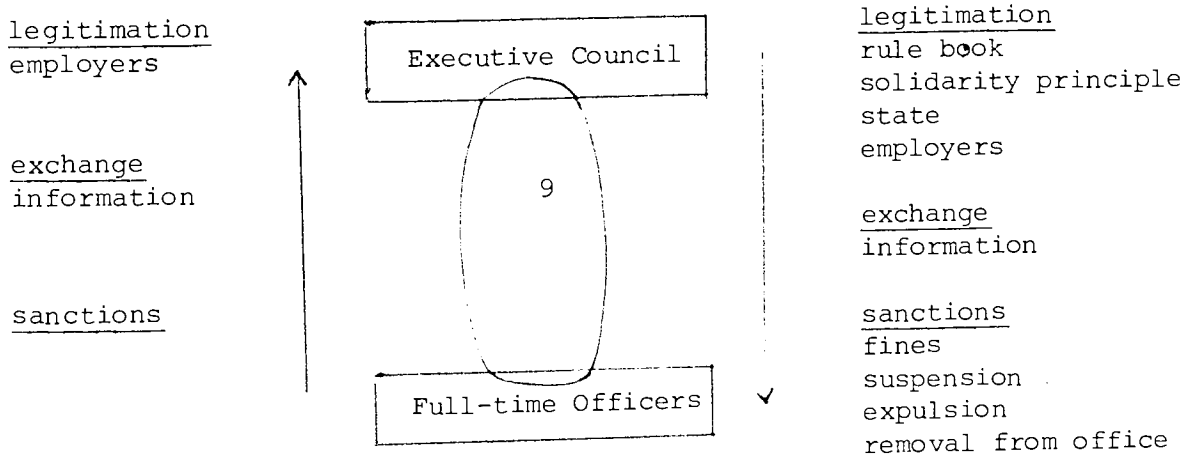


Though for convenience full-time officers have been grouped together as a single element in the polyarchy, the relevance of their activities for other collectivities varies according to the office. For the district committees the two most relevant officers are the District Secretary and the Divisional Organiser. The power relationships between these two elements are almost entirely of exchange and interdependence though full-time officers may derive legitimacy from their negotiating activities with employers, and under rule both officers are responsible to their district committees and Executive Council.

The committees rely on the full-time officers for their skill and experience in negotiations, and for information about activities throughout the district or the division since all formal communications to the district committee are channelled through the District Secretary, while the Divisional Organiser works beyond the boundaries of a single district.

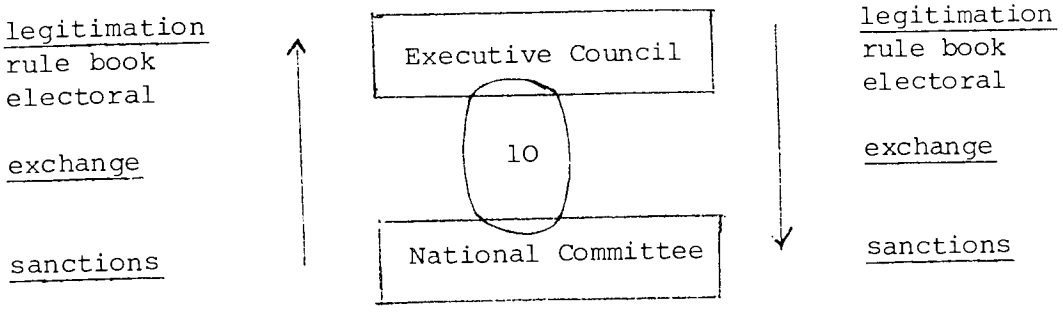
The officers, however, are dependent upon the committees for ratification of their reports (of negotiations) and failure to secure ratification would mean work wasted or to be repeated. In addition, as noted in Chapter Five, Hyman and Fryer have pointed out that full-time officers may need the support of shop stewards on district committees to achieve re-election.

Loop Nine



All full-time officers are responsible to the Executive Council, and except for some power which officers may derive from their negotiations with employers, or from their possession of information, the balance of power lies with the Executive Council, particularly through legitimacy derived from the state and the employers, but also through sanctions, including removal from office.

Loop Ten



The National Committee is the policy-making body of the union, its members elected indirectly via the district and divisional committees. According to the rules, the resolutions of the National Committee stand as instructions to the Executive Council, and thus the Committee derives legitimacy from the rule book and from the electoral principle.

The Executive Council can equally claim electoral legitimacy however and it has been argued[1] that the Executive Council's electoral base is more representative. Though such a counter-claim to electoral legitimacy may be used by the Executive Council as grounds for not implementing resolutions, it does not enable the Executive Council to exercise control over the decision-making of the National Committee. Some control may be achieved, however, since the rules permit the Executive Council to submit resolutions to the National Committee, and require the attendance of Executive Council representatives and the union President.

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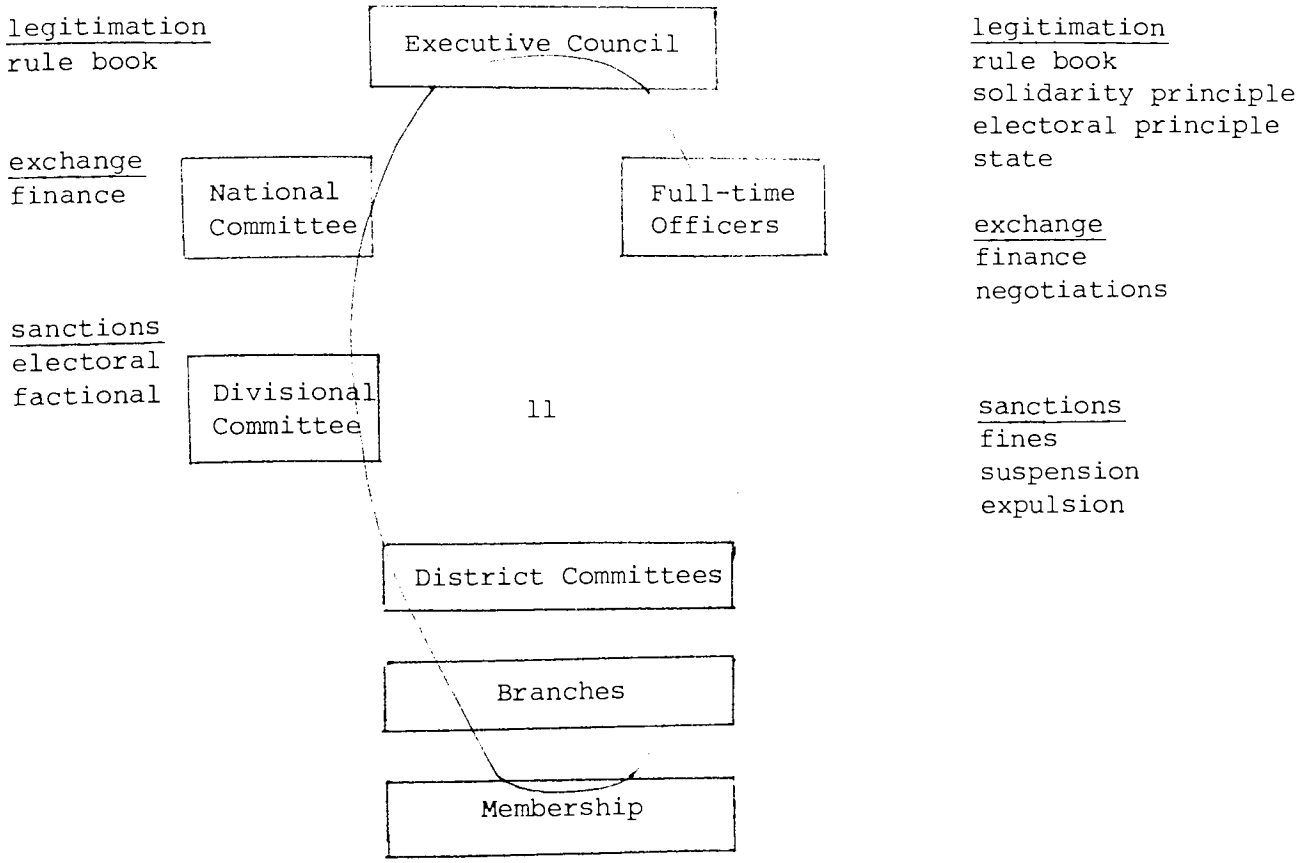
1 By Lord Carron at the National Committee meeting in 1961.

Loop Eleven



Loop eleven embodies the processes whereby the membership can exercise some control over decision-making through voting in branches for resolutions which are passed via the district and Divisional Committees to the National Committee for consideration. If the Executive Council fails to act on a resolution passed by the National Committee, or if its actions are incongruent with member expectations, the membership may impose electoral sanctions or may form breakaway groups inside or outside the union.

The Executive Council has many sources of power in its relationship with members. Legitimate authority derives from the rule book, the solidarity and electoral principles, and from the state and employers. In addition, the Executive Council can impose sanctions such as fines, suspension or expulsion, and if supported by the closed shop, these sanctions will be strengthened. Groups within the membership will be unable to avoid these sanctions if dependent on the union for benefits or negotiating rights, though on the other side of the loop, they may

be able to avoid sanctions by forming breakaway groups or joining another union.

The analysis of these eleven activity loops does not exhaust the power relationships that exist within the A.U.E.W. (for example, full-time officers are subject to the electoral control of the membership) but nevertheless indicates the key aspects of control in the union's polyarchy.

It has been stressed at several points that perceptions play an important role in the control analysis; legitimacy has been defined in terms of perceptions and I have argued that power of all types is subject to testing and realisation as part of the control process. Within each activity loop, control will be affected by the changing conditions of exchange and dependence, and by the changing perceptions of these conditions.

Loop dynamics

One of the most important factors in clarifying participants' perceptions of power is the process of power testing described in Chapter Two and it is primarily by this process that changes in perceptions of power came about. It was argued that a successful outcome of power testing would confirm or enhance the tester's assessment of his power, and conversely, that an unsuccessful test of power would diminish this assessment. An unsuccessful test of power could have several consequences, such as an unwillingness to engage in further tests,[1] or attempts to change the structural characteristics of the situation.

Power testing in the context of trade union polyarchy may take several forms. It has been noted that one form of competition consists of appeals for contingent or non-contingent legitimacy from arbitrating

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1 Sometimes referred to as the rule of anticipated reactions.

external agencies, particularly the passive membership. An unsuccessful appeal for support in such a competition would result in an unfavourable power outcome and lower assessment of legitimate power. Failure to achieve control by appeals to legitimacy may result in the competition assuming other forms, such as the application of sanctions. A model of such a process is presented in figure 10.

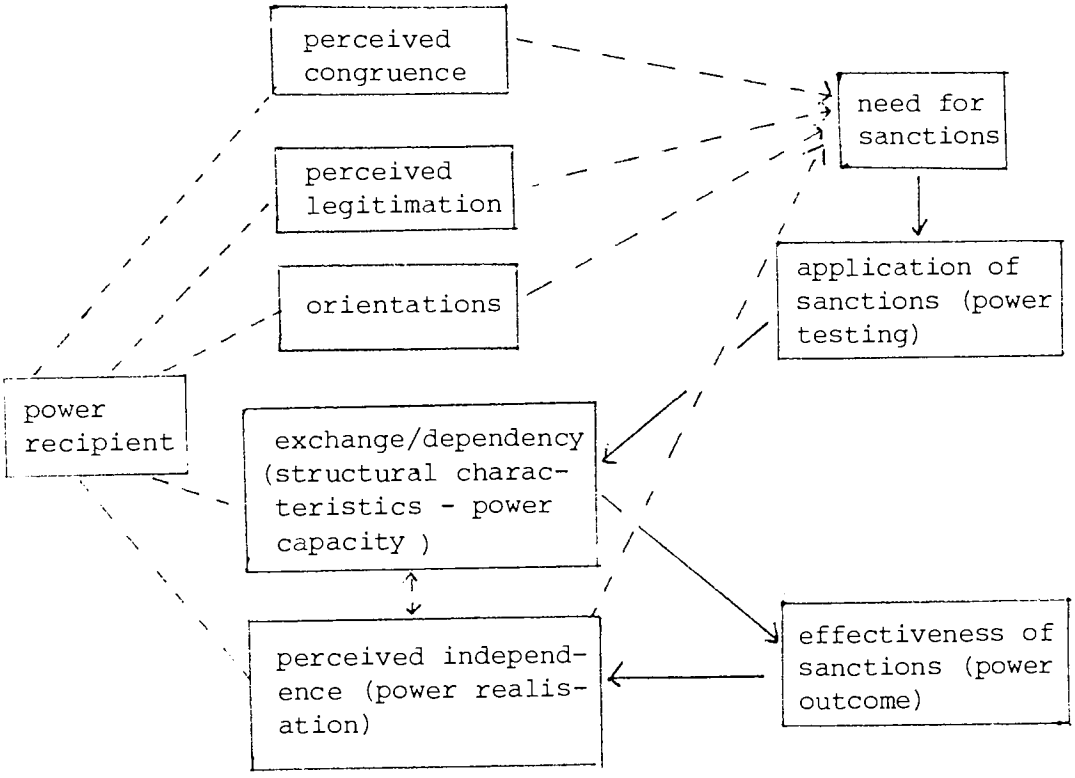

Figure 10 - Power dynamics within an activity loop

The model examines control from the recipients perspective, the need for sanctions being a function of five dimensions of the recipient:

1) Perceived congruence. Sanctions are only likely to be necessary where demands and expectations are perceived to be incongruent.

2) Perceived legitimation. If the recipient perceives the instructions or demands to be legitimate no sanctions will be necessary, even though the demands may not be congruent with expectations. If the instructions are not legitimated by the recipient, or if the recipient has had a favourable outcome in the competition for legitimacy, then sanctions are more likely to be needed.

3) Orientations. The recipient's orientations to the collectivity with which there is competition will determine the strength of opposition. The alienated member may comply with demands even though they are not congruent with his expectations and he does not perceive them to be legitimate. The activist, however, will engage in competition and hence make sanctions necessary.[1]

4) Structural characteristics. The structural conditions of any exchange relationship will influence the recipients willingness to engage in competition, but only in so far as they are reflected in:

5) Perceived dependency. A collectivity's perceptions of dependency (their power realisation) may lead them to compete with another collectivity if they assess their power to be higher than that of their competitor. If their power assessment is lower they will comply without sanctions being necessary.

Summarising these dimensions, the application of sanctions will be necessary where one collectivity perceives another collectivity's demands upon it to be incongruent with its expectations, these demands are not perceived to be legitimate, the collectivity is active in the polyarchy, and it has assessed its resources of exchange power to be high enough to win the competition.

When the sanctions are applied (power testing) they are unlikely to operate on the recipient's perceptions of congruence and legitimation, or his orientations. They will operate through the exchange/dependency nexus, and their effectiveness (power outcome) will depend upon the relative strength of each competitor's resources of exchange power (for example, being able to forego the services of the collectivity imposing sanctions). If the sanctions are effective, the recipient's power

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[1] Since polyarchy has been defined in terms of competition between activists, the need for sanctions is more likely to be necessary.

assessment will be lowered and, as suggested earlier, this may be sufficient to ensure compliance in the future control relationship.

Though the recipient may accept a lower assessment of power, such acceptance may be temporary, as attempts may be made to make the structural conditions more favourable.

An unsuccessful test of power by the demand-making collectivity may lead to a similar reappraisal of these structural conditions, and further competition may centre on attempts to lower the successful collectivity's resources. In addition, the unsuccessful collectivity may attempt to change the perceptions of its legitimacy (for example, by seeking additional sources of legitimacy, such as employers) or may attempt to change the perceptions of congruence held by the recipient.[1] An acceptance of the lower power assessment may lead the collectivity to drop its demands or to amend them to make them congruent with the recipient's expectations.

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[1] A process which Lukes (1974) would identify as the exercise of three-dimensional power.

PART TWO : COMPETITION AND CONTROL IN THE MANCHESTER DISTRICT

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

As Boraston et al (1975) note in their recent study, very little work has been done on the internal organization of British trade unions. Wide ranging studies such as those of Political and Economic Planning (1948), Allen (1954), Roberts (1956), Clegg (1954), and Clegg, Killick and Adams (1961) have been supplemented by Goldstein's (1952) now rather dated study of branch life in the TGWU, the more recent studies by Boraston et al (1975) into the relationships between workplace and union, and Edelstein and Warner (1975), Martin (1968) and Hemingway (1978) into union democracy, plus a number of studies into the role of shop stewards.[1]

With the exception of Edelstein and Warner's , Martin's and Hemingway's theories of union democracy these studies have been largely atheoretical, concerned primarily with the uncovering of certain basic data about aspects of British trade unionism.[2] Boraston et al make the point about their own research into trade union organization that:

> "It might have been possible to devise questionnaires to reveal rather more about the working of trade union organization provided we had known what questions to ask. But for that we should have had to be more knowledgeable about local union organization than we were, and the only way to become more knowledgeable, as far as we could see, was to conduct case studies". (1975: 3)

For much the same reason, though quite independently, the case study method was chosen for this study of the AUEW. This is not to say that the initial research was entirely without focus. Turner's (1950) article on the Crossley strike, the Prices and Incomes Board in 1967, the Donovan Commission in 1968 and books by Fay and Clegg in 1970, were unanimous in

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1 For example, the studies carried out for the Donovan Commission; McCarthy (1966), McCarthy and Parker (1968), Government Social Survey (1968), and Goodman and Whittingham (1969), Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel (1977).

2 Though there have been more studies of the organization of American local unions.

their criticism of the internal organization of the AEU, and particularly of the role of its district committees. It was therefore decided to examine the district level in the union hierarchy to try to assess the role of the district committees and district officers with particular reference to the sources of power that had provoked such hostility from the union's critics. The research was thus sensitised to examine power relationships and, it must be recognised, to expect that district committees would be powerful.[1] Beyond this, however, little was known or anticipated.

That it was the Manchester district committee which became the focus of the study owes more to convenience and good fortune than to the logic of enquiry. The initial research was conducted at Salford University whose administrative offices share the same building as the AUEW district offices and committee rooms. An approach to the District Secretary provided the necessary access to the district records, though not, unfortunately, to the committee itself. This was the period of the 'rolling strike' (1971-72): firms would be subjected to short strikes in an apparently random fashion, the choice of firm being left to the district committee, secrecy being a major consideration. Under these circumstances it was surprising that I had fairly free access to the district offices and records, but not surprising that I was not allowed to attend committee meetings (outsiders never, or rarely, are).[2]

The main records were the minutes of the meetings of the committee and its sub-committees from 1945 to 1970, which had been collated and bound by the District Secretary.[3] The full committee met every two weeks

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1 This view was substantially modified, not only as the research progressed but also in discussions with Malcolm Rimmer who conducted the Engineering Union studies for the Boraston et al project.

2 Malcolm Rimmer encountered the same difficulty.

3 It was pointed out to me by several people with experience of union records that this was a very unusual (and fortunate) feature.

with sub-committees meeting in the intervening week. Each year thus produced about fifty sets of minutes, the total number of sets studied being about 1300.

From these minutes it was possible to examine the workings of the committee and to develop case studies of competitions between the district committee and other collectivities in the union polyarchy. The frameworks of these case studies were then filled out with lengthy unstructured interviews with key participants, plus analysis of other documents such as newspaper reports, Final Appeal Court reports, National Committee reports, the Union Rule Book, the AEU Monthly Journal, pamphlets, leaflets, and some correspondence.

The limitations of these methods centre around the use of the case study method and of documentary analysis (and, to a lesser extent, of interviews), but before considering these limitations in detail it is perhaps worth making some general points about the nature of the theory and the methods employed.

The interdependence of theory and method

It is now widely recognised that theory and method are not independent aspects of the research process. Not only are certain methods of study more appropriate for working with and producing certain types of theory, but the initial theorising tends to lead to the adoption of certain research methods. In common with the research of Boraston et al, the present study was faced with the problem that:

> "It might have been preferable to start with a clear set of hypotheses to be tested. The case studies could then have been designed to test them as rigorously as possible. But as they were not available we had to wait for ideas to develop out of the studies as they went along, and especially from the collation and comparison of results after they were completed". (1975: 5)

Glaser and Strauss (1968, 1970) have described such a research process as the formulation of grounded theory. In this process there is

no clear division between data collection and analysis, but a continual blurring and intertwining of the operations. Multiple hypotheses are pursued simultaneously as the framework crystalises, the emerging theory being 'grounded' in the data.[1] Qualitative research is best suited to the production of such grounded theory since neither the methods nor the theory rely on the rigorous testing of predetermined hypotheses. A further argument for the use of qualitative methodology is provided by the failure of the questionnaire methods associated with sample surveys (for example those for the Donovan Commission) to further understanding of the complex linkages between the various elements of trade union government. Similarly, Hemingway remarks:

> "My aim was to explore the nature of the mechanics of government, which is better achieved through the case-study than the survey". (1978: 170)

What is required for these studies of trade union government is data on the processes of decision-making on a scale which will permit detailed analysis.

As Chapter Two indicated, such an orientation to research is not entirely atheoretical. The methodologies traditionally associated with the study of power may be conveniently divided into the reputational approach and the issue approach. In the former approach a selection of respondents are asked to give subjective assessments of the relative impact on decision-making of particular parties within the decision-making sphere. In the issue approach to observer assesses this impact for himself over a range of relevant (key) issues. These methods tend to be associated with the elitist (reputational approach) and pluralist (issue approach) perspectives on the distribution of power in a social system. As the study developed, the power relations in the AUEW were found to conform

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[1] Referring to the 'Affluent Worker' studies, Goldthorpe (1970: 201) describes how "the theory had to be applied in a post factum manner - or to put it more fashionably and flatteringly the theory was 'grounded' in the data we had produced".

to the concept of polyarchy, a notable variant of pluralism, and a modified issues approach was held to be appropriate to examine competitions within the polyarchy. The issues approach is modified to the extent that it is recognised that these competitions will only become overt when the 'taken-for grantedness' of the authority system has broken down. The approach is not as firmly within the 'issues' tradition, as for example, that of Abell, who argues:

> "It is difficult to see how power and influence could be empirically studied where there is no conflict between competing objectives". (1975: 14)

or of Hemingway who builds a model which is

> "based on the proposition that conflict reveals how control is exercised ..... and attempts to explain government by focusing on the structural and subjective aspects of situations of conflict". (1978: 12 and 13)

Nevertheless, the selection of the issues methodology reflects the broad sympathy with this approach, the reputational approach having been used indirectly as the source of the initial hypotheses concerning district committee power (derived from secondary sources). These 'reputational' hypotheses had pointed to the generalised power capabilities of district committees, but as Dahl states:

> "the hypothesis cannot be satisfactorily confirmed without some equivalent to the test I have proposed ..... by an examination of a series of concrete cases where key decisions are made". (1971: 362)

In addition, it was hypothesised fairly early on in the research process that power is not a static feature of a relationship but may be accumulated or diminished over time. For example, theories of shop steward power had indicated the growing power of stewards since 1945 associated with such variables as full employment and piecework bargaining. A study of the current power of groups by the questionnaire or survey methods is best suited to static or stable forms of behaviour, whereas the processual nature of the hypothesis lent itself to some form of historical analysis. As Pettigrew remarks with reference to his own study:

> "The present research has been guided by a concern for the elaboration of social structure; for social process. An underlying theme is that theories of organizational decision-making, power and conflict require a processual form. Operationalising such concepts necessitates a longitudinal research design". (1973: 55)

and

> "As data were being gathered on the decision process it became increasingly clear that the behaviour observed could not be adequately explained without reference to the past. The theories of decision-making, conflict and power being examined required further development in their processual form". (1973: 65)

Pettigrew pursued his study by participant observation, interviewing and content analysis of documents. As already noted, even non-participant observation was not feasible for my study, and, in any case, there was no guarantee that cases would arise during the research period which would reveal the processes of decision-making as clearly as the cases already available in the historical materials.

The other methodological perspective adopted for this study was that the systems approach to organizational analysis, while a necessary element, would not by itself be sufficient to explain the control process. The systems approach, and particularly its structural-functional variant, has been widely criticised for its assumption of goal consensus,[1] an assumption contrary to the concepts of pluralism and polyarchy. Nevertheless, the notion of a social system provides a useful point of departure for analysis, provided that the teleological explanations of behaviour (for example, in terms of systems needs) which tend to follow from such an approach are subordinated to explanations in terms of the orientations and perceptions of the actors in the social system. Similarly Bowen says of his own study of social control in the steel industry:

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[1] Particularly strongly in Silverman (1970).

> "What seems to be required is a model which demonstrates the simultaneous existence of conflicting and common interests, and an approach which combines both the processes of integration and differentiation, and the elements of co-operation, conflict and consensus within the same explanatory frame of reference .....
> The view taken here is that neither the consensus nor the conflict model alone adequately describes the reality of social life, for the characteristics which they separately define are not mutually exclusive, but may co-exist in tension within the same social system". (1976: 68)

The model outlined in Chapter Six embodies these requirements in that both consensus and divergence of interests are admitted, and are analysed within a systems framework on to which is superimposed the orientations and perceptions of the actors. Such an approach recognises Hofstede and Boddewyn's (1977) point that:

> "Power processes depend par excellence on the value systems of the organization's members, of both higher and lower level. These value systems are themselves social phenomena, related to the norms of members' reference groups and of the surrounding society as a whole". (1977: 4)

In summary, the approach adopted for this study embodied three general orientations to the research: firstly, that behaviour within a system of social relationships is to be explained not only in terms of the structural characteristics of those relationships but also the actors own perceptions of the situations and the orientations which these actors bring to their system behaviour; secondly, that these perceptions and orientations are conditions both by the current situation, and past experiences, necessitating some historical analysis; and thirdly, that the analysis of decision-making associated with overt divergences of policy preferences will reveal the relative power (ability to control) of the parties to polyarchic competitions.

The choice of methods was dictated by these guiding principles of social research into power relations, coupled with the absence of information on local trade union organization which rendered impracticable any rigorous hypothesis formulation and testing.

The Case Study Approach

In themselves, case studies are not so much methods of data collection as of data presentation and interpretation. Within the case study approach, data may be collected by participant or non-participant observation, interviewing, documentary analysis or experiment. Gopal describes the case study as:

> "a technique which considers all pertinent aspects of a situation, employing as the unit of study an individual, institution or group and intensively investigating it ..... it examines the complex situation and combination of factors involved in a given situation so as to identify the causal factors operating ..... thus the perspective of the case study is qualitative, aggregative, synthetic and developmental". (1970: 185)

The weaknesses of the case study method of presentation and analysis of data derive from the weaknesses associated with qualitative research, particularly the problem of generalising from what may be unique cases, and the problem of the investigator's role in the collection and interpretation of the data. In this study the latter weakness has been ameliorated to some extent by the use of complementary methods of data collection; the documentary analysis and the lengthy interviews with key participants. The possible uniqueness of the cases is rather more problematic, though as Cicourel (1964) notes, since measurement cannot be obtained for properties of social processes comparability between cases is always likely to be approximate at best. Social processes are best studied by collection and interpretation of data in as great detail as possible, an approach generally facilitated by the case study method. Provided that the investigator recognises the danger of ad hoc theorising from one or few cases the problem of uniqueness can be minimised.

Eldridge remarks on his own use of case studies to examine industrial disputes:

> "Much attention has been given in these essays to the presentation and analysis of case studies of industrial disputes. But, apart from the empirical information thus provided is there any theoretical value in such

> an approach? I think the answer is quite certainly yes, but the theoretical virtues which may be manifest will depend upon the kind of case study we are talking about". (1968: 6)

Eldridge goes on to distinguish three forms of case study: the representative case, which is considered as representative for a generality whose content is thereby being made manifest; the deviant case, which throws doubt on the validity of a social proposition; and the strategic case which gives another dimension of meaning to what is already statistically known.

The cases presented in this study are intended to be of the representative type. The generalisations of the model developed in Chapters Four and Six are examined in depth, both for the purposes of exposition and qualification. Thus, although the cases are necessarily unique, their theoretical relevance lies in the combined development of generalisation and particularisation inherent in the 'model plus case study' approach developed here.[1]

Sources of data

As noted, the frameworks of the case studies were constructed from the minutes of the district committee and sub-committee meetings, these frameworks then being supplemented by analysis of other documents and by interviews with key participants.

Two sources of bias are associated with documentary analysis, particularly the analysis of the minutes of meetings; firstly, bias in the records themselves, and secondly, bias in their interpretation. On the question of bias in the documents themselves, Webb et al (1966) have noted the problems of selective deposit and selective survival, and Cicourel has made the point:

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[1] Abell's "Bargaining and Influence" collection adopts a similar strategy.

> "Any researcher who has worked with official records has experienced the problem of making sense of often abstract and highly condensed incomplete records of complex events". (1964: 146)

However, the sets of minutes of the committee meetings were complete, at least in the sense that all the meetings in the study period were represented in the bound volumes. The problem of selective deposit and survival did not arise, though there are, of course, other ways in which minutes of meetings may be incomplete. Writers like to be seen at their best and thus, consciously or unconsciously, the minutes may represent a distorted account of the meetings. The district committee minutes are compiled by the District Secretary and it could be argued that to present his own role in an event in a favourable light (again, not necessarily consciously) there may be some distortion of the records. Equally, some or all of the committee members may attempt to distort the minutes in their favour. However, both of these possibilities are unlikely because of the nature of the committee and the functions of the minutes. A committee of approximately forty active trade unionists would be unlikely to agree completely on controversial issues in committee discussion. Any distortion of the minutes would be noted and cause objection when the minutes were presented to the next meeting (held only two weeks from the previous meeting, and only one week from the previous sub-committee meetings). In addition, the minutes are used as the basis of reports to the branches on district committee decisions, and are sent to the Executive Council for ratification (without which, expenses cannot be paid and resolutions are not binding on members). These functions would again render internal distortion of minutes both difficult and unlikely.[1]

Thus, although the Webbs' (1920: 149) point that "documents distort facts as well as reveal them", stands as a general caution on the

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[1] The District Secretary supported this view in discussions.

use of documentary analysis, there are reasonable grounds for accepting the minutes as an accurate record of committee meetings.

There is another sense, however, in which the validity of the minutes as research data may be questioned. Deutscher (1970) has argued that minutes are records of words and as such raise the problem of the relationship between words and deeds. He points out that there may be incongruence between doing and saying, and thus the records may correspond only to what was said, rather than to the action taken. As a justifiable cause for concern, this problem relates generally to any data based on reported, rather than observed, behaviour. For example, in her study of an American local union, Dean (1958) found that replies to questionnaires differed considerably from her own observation of actions; that is, there was a difference between reported and actual behaviour. For this reason, Dean suggests, reports of action should be treated as orientations to interaction rather than valid measures of interaction itself.

The problem is that any historical analysis is of necessity based upon reported behaviour. Ideally there should be as many sources of historical data as possible in order to offset any bias inherent in each source, and for this reason this study uses the minutes as only the framework for analysis.

The other important source of bias in the documentary analysis lies in the interpretation. The investigator has no access to the setting of events, and must reconstruct the historical materials through interpretive categories which may display the investigator's bias. Eldridge has described the problem in a passage worth quoting at some length:

> "As soon as comments are made on the documentary material we are in the realms of inference and (tentative) explanation rather than description. The dilemma is that if one accepts the documentary evidence at its face value (its manifest content) one's inference may be naive and misleading; but if one tries to describe its 'real' significance the grounds for doing so must be clearly articulated. It is then not enough to say that the documents 'speak for themselves'. To continue for a moment in terms of the dilemma thus posed:

> to take the material at its face value commonly leads on to a form of content analysis. But it may be protested that the objectivity claimed for this approach is in fact misleading since by choosing the categories for analysis, we are in practice imposing our own meaning structures on the material. If, however, one advocates the second approach, the meaning of the material is no longer obvious. On the contrary one is led on an elusive search, which one expects to be only partially successful". (1968: 18)

Thus either implicitly or explicitly the investigator imposes some form of meaning structure on the documentary material, a process which involves attributing meanings not only to the actions reported, but also to the words with which the action is described. Not only may the meaning of the words differ between groups but also over time, a problem known more generally as linguistic relativity.

Fortunately, the historical events of these case studies were sufficiently recent to enable interviews to be held with the key participants. In this way, interpretations placed on the documentary data could be checked by reference to the descriptions and interpretations of events as related by the 'witnesses'. This does not mean that the data from the interviews were accepted any less critically than that from the documents. Personal accounts are notoriously unreliable. Pettigrew (1973: 67) notes that "with historical interviews there is the problem of differentially accurate recall" and Vansina makes the point that:

> "a testimony is stamped by his personality, coloured by his private interests and set within the framework of reference provided by the cultural value of the society he belongs to". (1965: 76)

However, within the research frame of reference which ascribes an important role to the actors' own interpretations of events in the explanation of behaviour, what is in one sense a limitation of the interview technique can be turned to advantage. That is, in so far as the actors' perceptions of any situation are deemed to be partial determinants of behaviour, the "culture- bound" recall of events is empirically relevant. More of a problem is the distortion of memory with the passing of time,

particulary if 'facts' as opposed to 'meanings' are sought. Weiss and Dawis (1960) maintain that:

> "it is indefensible to assume the validity of purportedly factual data obtained by interview". (1960: 384)

In this study 'facts' were obtained and checked by reference to as many documentary[1] and interview sources as possible. The interviews were used primarily as a means of checking 'meaning structures' and uncovering actors' perceptions and orientations; that is, for the attempt to answer the 'why' questions, rather than "what, where, when, how or who".

Summary of the research process

The research was initiated without any well-formulated hypotheses about local union organization. However, considerable criticism of the activities of district committees in the AEU sensitised the research towards the examination of power and control at the district level. The research was guided by three principles of research into power relations, which may be summarised as the action frame of reference, the issues approach, and the processual analysis of perception and orientation formation.

The case study approach was held to be the most appropriate form for data presentation and interpretation; the data collection being by a cross-referencing analysis of documents and interviews (non-participant observation having been precluded by the confidentialities of the research situation).

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[1] One important source of additional documentary material was newspaper reports, but it must be borne in mind that these too must be treated with great caution. Lane and Roberts (1971) have noted the ambiguous role of the press in industrial disputes, while George Orwell (1966) has indicated the unreliability of press reports where disputes between political factions are involved.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MANCHESTER DISTRICT COMMITTEE - INFORMATION, EXPERTISE AND LEGITIMATION

Introduction

The relationships suggested in the activity loop analysis of Chapter Six, provide only a general framework within which to consider control. Onto this framework must be superimposed a detailed analysis of the structure of a loop so that it becomes possible to consider not only sanctions (as manifest in overt conflicts) within the loop, but also the day to day relationships of exchange, interdependence and legitimacy.

In particular, many writers have emphasised the role of information or communication channels in the control process, and thus it is important to consider the extent and limitations of these channels as factors in control; not only that form of control grounded in exchange and inter-dependence, but also that form grounded in contingent and non-contingent legitimacy. This chapter focusses on the linkages referred to by Pettigrew when he argues:

> "The assumption is that, in a competitive demand-generating process, the decisional outcome will not necessarily be a produce of the greater worthiness or weight of the issues ranged to uphold one or other demand in dispute, but may result from the linkages that opposing parties have with the individuals for whose support they are competing". (1973: 230)

An examination is made of the structural dimensions of the control process in those activity loops in which the district committee plays a role. In addition, the internal structure of the committee itself is analysed to avoid overstating the homogeneity of the committee as a single element in the activity loop. The organization of the committee's work is reflected in the agenda of meetings, and the meaning of the agenda items in the control process is examined in terms of those categories of power-source elaborated in Part I.

The Manchester District

The Manchester district is only one among a number of districts which cover the industrial area of South-East Lancashire and North Cheshire (before local government re-organization). Geographically, the district does not form a circle drawn from the centre of Manchester. On the East the boundaries with the Oldham and Stockport districts lie about four miles from the city centre, whereas in the West the district extends along the Manchester Ship Canal as far as Cadishead (about ten miles from the city centre). This places the geographic centre of the district near to the present site of the district offices in Salford.

The area includes a great variety of industries, light and heavy, engineering and non-engineering. There are a number of large electrical engineering plants in the district (most notably AEI, Ferranti, and Ward and Goldstone) engineering firms such as Massey Ferguson, Renold Chains and Gardners, in addition to a Royal Ordinance Factory, a large petro-chemicals site, and railway workshops.

As Table 3 reveals, the size of the membership in the district has remained stable at between thirty and thirty-five thousand members. The number of shop stewards has fluctuated between about 600 and 750 but the irregular nature of these fluctuations suggests probable inaccuracies in the returns filed by shop stewards. Again, the number of branches has remained fairly stable, although rising slightly from 85 in 1952 to just over 90 by 1964. Boraston et al (1975: 12) suggested that "The size of the union's districts varies widely from a few hundred members up to thirty thousand". Though this assessment is rather inaccurate (the Birmingham district had nearly 54,000 members before division in 1964, and the Coventry district had over 40,000 members in 1970) it remains true that at just over 30,000 members the Manchester district is one of the largest in the union.

Table 3 - Manchester district membership and shop stewards 1947-70

	SS	Branches	Men	Boys	W + G	Total
1947						33,516
1952	664	85	29,720	2,271	1,606	33,597
1954	645	85	29,563	2,212	1,569	33,344
1955	660	86	30,260	2,410	1,750	34,420
1956	663	85	30,943	2,415	2,565	35,923
1957	753	87	31,883	2,826	2,799	37,508
1959	650	88	30,448	3,421	2,592	36,401
1960	633	88	30,266	2,360	2,330	34,906
1960	615	88	30,517	2,766	2,507	35,790
1961	622	88	30,499	2,601	2,615	35,715
1962	748	89	30,992	2,491	2,726	36,209
1963	734	89	29,398	2,280	2,319	33,997
1964	745	91	29,530	2,295	2,386	34,211
1965 May	745	92	29,257	2,365	2,373	33,995
1965 Oct	752	92	29,422	2,362	2,523	34,307
1966 March	757	92	29,303	2,331	2,533	34,167
1968 Oct	698	92	27,309	1,626	2,807	30,742
1969 April	690	93	26,925	1,591	2,175	30,691
1969 Dec	690	91	27,100	1,587	3,472	32,159
1970 Oct	710	91	27,571	1,528	3,429	32,528

Source: Official Union Records held at Head Office

SS - Shop Stewards W - Women G - Girls

The problems that this size poses for representation and administration within the district has on several occasions led to calls for the district to be divided. In 1959, for example, the Broadheath Four branch complained to the Executive Council that the size of the district prevented the District Secretary from servicing properly the members and shop stewards, and that it was difficult to find branch representatives to serve on the district committee because of the problem of reporting back to three branches. At a special sub-committee meeting held on 27 October 1959, these problems were discussed, but it was decided to apply for an Assistant Divisional Organiser rather than apply for the district to be divided.

However, by 1970, although the district membership was no larger, it was decided that division was necessary. Bob Wright, Executive Council representative, put the case for division:

> "In considering the position regarding Manchester, Executive Council recognise that with a loss of industry in the heavy engineering sector, the growth of small factories and maintenance services who are organized in our Union, and the general pattern of the spread of industry, close regard must be established to the service which these industries requires from the District Committee and the Secretary. Also, that the level of activity generated by Plant Bargaining, legislation, representations of members at Appeals Tribunals, Industrial Tribunals and other individual forms of liability, require that the Secretary should be able to cope adequately with such commitments".[1]

The problems created by the size and occupational diversity of the membership in the district, which led to pressures for division, relate directly to the problems of control within the activity loops between the district committee and the branches, shop stewards and membership. As Bob Wright's statement indicates, the increase in the variety of demands placed upon the district organization makes more difficult the adequate treatment of each demand and hence lowers the quality of the service which can be exchanged in the control relationship. Similarly, this variety, by weakening the linkages that the district organization maintains with the membership in the plants, reduces the ability of the district organization to monitor the activities in the plants.

The structure of District Committee Membership

As Manchester is a district with more than 70 branches, the committee is entitled to have 30 branch representatives. In addition, the district's membership of 30-35,000 members entitles the committee to six or seven shop steward representatives (one for every 5,000 members in the district). A woman delegate and the District President brought the permitted size of the committee to just under 40 members.

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[1] From a copy of the statement made to the meeting of the district committee.

The branch representatives on the committee are elected from 30 groupings of branches which means that nearly all of the representatives would be elected from, and required to report back to, three branches. As noted earlier, this led to problems in securing members willing to stand as branch representatives. The records show that during the 1960s there was no year in which fewer than four seats were unfilled, and in a number of years (1965, 1966, 1967) there were as many as six unfilled branch seats (or 20 per cent of the total available branch places). In addition the minutes note that many of the branch representatives seats were uncontested so that nominees were declared elected without voting taking place.[1] The study of Boraston et al also suggests that the elections for branch representatives are not keenly contested. They found that "it seemed to be no great problem for a Convenor who had lost his seat as a shop stewards' representative to regain it as a branch representative" (1975: 26).

There is a difference however, between the Manchester district and the "Leachester" district with regard to the election of shop stewards' representatives. In all districts these representatives are elected at the December quarterly meeting of shop stewards of that district. In the 'Leachester' (actually Birmingham East) district the authors report that "the number of candidates seeking election as shop stewards representatives usually exceeded thirty" and the process whereby they are elected is described as 'robust' (1975: 26). Though the number of available places in the Manchester district was the same (usually seven) the number of nominations rarely exceeded ten. Thus, although in the Manchester district the shop stewards' places on the committee are more keenly contested than the branch places, there is no evidence

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[1] Beynon (1973) describes how in the election of shop stewards at the Ford Halewood plant a nomination would rarely be contested, an informal selection process ensuring that a single candidate emerged. Something of the kind may operate in the branches, but taken with the difficulty of filling some seats at all, the lack of contest would appear to indicate an unwillingness to stand.

of the strong competition to sit on the district committee found in the 'Leachester' district.

The actual composition of the membership consists of a core of about a dozen long-serving members supplemented by a fairly high turnover of shorter-serving members. For example, thirteen of the members of the committee in 1970 had served for over five years, and over the twenty-five year study period, twenty-one committee members served for twelve or more years (and several for over twenty years). In contrast, of members joining after 1946 (but not including new members in 1969) sixty-five left after serving only one term, and thirty-seven left after serving only two terms (excluding new members in 1968).

The fact that elections for the committee are not robust may severely weaken claims for legitimacy derived from the electoral process, particularly in competitions with other collectivities whose claim to electoral legitimacy may be as strong or stronger (for example, shop stewards or the Executive Council). In addition, the high turnover of committee members may weaken claims for expert power, since this is derived from experience and knowledge wider than that afforded by the individual plant. Nevertheless this weakness will be offset by the existence of an experienced core membership.

Within the committee itself this core may be expected to exercise a considerable say in the conduct of committee business. In the same way as control over decision-making in an activity loop may be in part determined by critical resources of experience and expertise, so too within the committee would the longer-serving members be able to exercise greater control of committee decision-making. The newer members, with a lesser knowledge of precedents, previous agreements, earlier disputes or current agreements, would become involved in a learning process before entering fully into committee decision-making. The felt inexperience and lack of confidence of newly-elected representatives when

faced with what appears to be an expert core tends to militate against an immediate involvement in decision-making. In particular, the experience of the core may carry the greatest weight in defining what is possible in terms of committee actions.

Length of experience provides one structural dimension on which to examine committee membership. Another dimension is that of 'status' within the union. As a craft union which has opened its membership to unskilled workers in the engineering industry, the union's membership and government conforms to Turner's (1962) definition of an aristocracy, in that a high proportion of union offices are held by members of the 'craft' section (section one). On the Manchester committee most, if not all, of the members have been section one members of the union. This could be anticipated for a number of reasons. As Table 4 reveals, the skilled section

Table 4 - An analysis of the Manchester district membership by union status 1945-1969

Section	1	2	3	4	5	5A	Women	Total
1945 Jan	16,498	1,298	78	4,481	4,587	1,772	n/g	28,887
1950	19,760	1,078	48	2,313	5,603	2,064	n/g	30,866
1955	18,700	803	23	2,176	3,511	2,363	1,750	c 27,576 a 34,420
1960 Jan	19,800	779	16	2,265	6,869	2,278	2,300	c 32,007 a 34,906
1965 Apr	18,988	551	7	2,362	7,154	2,324	2,373	c 31,836 a 34,000
1966	18,646	518		2,191	7,155	2,530	2,533	c 31,046 a 34,167
1967	18,458	505		2,042	6,979	2,319	n/g	c 30,298 a n/g
1968	17,968	471		1,701	6,679	2,148	1,807	c 28,967 a 30,742
1969	17,823	452		1,646	6,482	2,053	2,115	c 28,456 a 30,691

	1+2+3	4+5+6
1945	17,874	11,013
1950	20,886	9,980
1955	19,526	8,050
1960	20,595	11,412
1965	19,546	11,840
1966	19,164	11,876
1967	18,963	11,335
1968	18,439	10,528
1969	18,275	10,181

Table 4 (continued)

Section 1	Fully skilled member
Section 2	Skilled worker registered into membership before 1945
Section 3	Skilled worker registered into membership before 1926
Section 4	Apprentices and junior male workers
Section 5 Section 5A	Unskilled workers

c - total calculated from branch returns

a = total in Union records (from table 3)

Source: Official Union Records held at Head Office

in Manchester has been nearly twice as large as the unskilled, junior and women's sections combined for most of the study period. On this basis alone a proportionate number of elected representatives from section one would constitute two-thirds of the committee membership. However, many writers,[1] have noted the higher involvement of skilled members in union activities, either because of greater participation in several activities (inside and outside the union) or because of higher stakes in the organization. Thus on the status dimension, most, though not necessarily all, of the committee members were section one members of the union.

A third structural dimension of committee membership is that of plant membership. The studies of Boraston et al (1975) and Edelstein and Warner (1975) indicate that district elections may become dominated by large plants "with extraordinarily large turnouts, or with members in many of a district's branches" (Edelstein and Warner, 1975: 179). Unfortunately, the evidence for plant composition of the district committee is lacking, since district records contain no reference to the plant of origin of the committee members. There is some evidence, however, that the largest single plant in the Manchester district, that of Metropolitan Vickers (later AEI) was always well represented on the committee, both through branch and shop stewards elections. It was estimated for me that during the earlier part of the study period as many as nine members out of a total of about thirty-five

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1 For example, Lipset et al (1956) Tannenbaum and Kahn (1958) and Sayles and Strauss (1967).

came from the 'Metro-vick' plant, though this later dropped to only one or two.

The final structural dimension is that of political factions. Again, evidence of factional memberships of committee members is not readily available, but in the general terms of a left-right dichotomy, the evidence of resolutions passed in favour of 'proscribed' organizations suggests a fairly consistent left-wing majority on the committee. In addition, certain key posts such as the District Secretaryship from 1962 to 1970 and the District Presidency from 1968 to 1970, have been held by Communist Party members. But equally, it must be noted that the District President from 1953 to 1959 was Jim Conway (later General Secretary), a supporter of the Labour Party. In general though, the tendency was for a left-wing majority, to the extent that the committee have been described as "all a load of Communists".[1]

Four structural dimensions of committee membership have been identified, based on committee experience, union status, plant membership and factional membership. The lack of records makes it difficult to determine whether these dimensions are cross-cutting or correlated, but in general it may be said that committee membership was predominantly section one, with a majority of the left-wing faction, a core of experienced members and a fairly high representation of the largest plant in the district.

The internal processes would thus depend on the extent to which these dimensions coincided.

Organization of committee work

The work of the committee is divided between the full committee and a number of sub-committees. The full committee meets every two weeks

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[1] A remark in an interview, ascribed to a Convener who was having difficulties with the committee.

supplemented by special meetings when the need arises. In the intervening week the sub-committees hold their meetings, usually all on the same evening.

Up to 1949 the five standing sub-committees were known as the overtime, piecework, shop stewards, organizing, and general purposes sub-committees but, as each sub-committee's work was not restricted to any particular field, from 1949 onwards they have been known as sub-committees one to five. These five are supplemented by special sub-committees which meet less regularly, such as the house and office, political, motor trade, new machine rates, and library sub-committees.

Although the meetings of the sub-committees are normally held very regularly, a certain degree of flexibility remains; occasionally a sub-committee may not meet or may meet on a different night. As all of the district committee members engage in sub-committee work the special sub-committee meetings are always held on a different night to the standing sub-committee meetings.

The relationship between the sub-committee meetings and the full committee meeting is that the chairman of each sub-committee presents a report to the full committee for adoption. As the district committee standing orders express it:

> "That the procedure in dealing with the business of the District Committee shall be that the reports of the sub-committee meetings be taken at each District Committee immediately after letters from Executive Council, expenses and other minor business has been disposed of. The chairman of the respective sub-committees to move the minutes as a correct record or otherwise. Members of the District Committee to be given the opportunity to raise questions before they amend or adopt the minutes".[1]

The adoption of the sub-committees' minutes is not a formality, it being quite common for the minutes to be amended, particularly the resolutions passed. Rarely are the minutes of all five sub-committees accepted without amendment primarily because it is the sub-committees that

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1 District Committee standing orders, p 5.

perform the major tasks related to trade and organization questions in the district.[1] Communications which have arrived at the district office from a variety of sources are allocated to the sub-committees to discuss and upon which to formulate resolutions, occasionally summoning members from the workshops as witnesses.[2]

Though the issues discussed by the sub-committee have remained similar over the years, the context in which they are raised had changed by 1970. Whereas in the earlier sets of minutes the district committee was asked to arbitrate or to solve problems, in the 1970 minutes many of the items are notifications of agreements reached in the plant, or are requests for specific pieces of advice. There is much less actual discussion by the sub-committees, and though the workload in 1970 appears to have greatly increased (from about 25 items to 59 items in June 1970) the consideration given to each item appears to have reduced proportionately.

This development may be illustrated further by a consideration of what happens to the items which came up for discussion. As noted, the sub-committees pass resolutions at the end of their discussions, and in the minutes of meetings held from 1945 to 1955 a wide variety of resolutions were noted, each specific to the case in hand. For example, many cases would be referred to the Divisional Organiser to follow up, or the sub-committee would recommend the convening of works conferences. Cases which could not be resolved immediately would result in a further sub-committee meeting to which witnesses would be summoned. However, from 1960 through to 1970 it is possible to observe a shift in the locus of decision-taking, in that an increasing proportion of the decisions taken are those of the District Secretary; the sub-committee, having considered the case and the

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[1] The issues of wages, overtime, demarcation, dilution, redundancy and shop steward organization appear to be the main preoccupations of the sub-committees throughout the study period.

[2] Though, strictly speaking, the rules only legitimate the summoning of members to full committee meetings.

Secretary's response, merely endorses his action. Out of a total of fifty resolutions passed by the five sub-committees in January 1970, thirty were endorsements of the Secretary's actions, and many of the others were "contents noted". This change cannot be attributed solely to the change of District Secretary in 1962 as there is evidence that the practice was increasing in 1960 under the previous Secretary.

There is clearly a relationship between those two observations: firstly, that an increasing proportion of items raised by workshops and branches were notifications of agreements and requests for advice, and secondly, that the District Secretary had taken over the role of framing and carrying out the appropriate action in reply. Both developments have meant a reduced role for the sub-committees in the formulation of district policy, though the importance of these shifts in decision-taking (particularly that towards the District Secretary) should not be overstated. The sub-committees are under no obligation to endorse the actions of the Secretary, or the full committee to endorse the recommendations of the sub-committee (or the Executive Council to endorse the recommendations of the full committee). The sub-committee may act as a check on the Secretary's activities, for example, by referring issues back to him for further consideration.

Though the sub-committee work is usually the major item for consideration at a full committee meeting it represents only part of the committee's activity. In addition, there are important items which concern the relationship with the Executive Council and with the Full-time Officers. A typical agenda for a full committee meeting would be:

1 Minutes of previous full committee meeting

2 Delegates' expenses

3 Letters from Executive Council

4 Reports of the sub-committees

5 Correspondence[1]

6 District Secretary's report

7 Divisional Organiser's report

These items in the minutes form the basis of a detailed consideration of the district committee involvement in the activity loops with the Executive Council, workshop organizations, branches and full-time officers. It needs to be re-emphasised, however, that those items in the committee minutes represent only the formal side of the committee's work. Much work is done informally, through meetings and telephone conversations, which either does not appear in the minutes or is formalised later. For example, though there are no formal channels for individual union members to approach the committee, individual contacts in firms provide an additional source of information for the committee which, though impossible to quantify, should not be overlooked.

The Executive Council

The district committee is required to forward the minutes of its meeting to the Executive Council[2] for ratification and this forms the major information flow from the committee to the Council. Most of the correspondence from the Executive Council arises in response to these minutes. Approval is not a formality, the most common grounds for disapproval being that the committee had concerned itself with business which fell outside its scope under Rule 13.[3] Throughout the study period the district committee discussed and passed resolutions on questions as diverse as the Daily Worker, Peace Conferences, comments in the mass media, or donations to organizations proscribed by the union. In addition to disapproving these items

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1 Usually a short, miscellaneous, category of committee business, only rarely containing items of importance.

2 In practice, to the administrative assistant to the Executive Council member of the electoral division. They are only referred to the member himself if a query arises, and only to the full Council if very important issues of policy or principle are raised.

3 Which limits committee activity to specific trade questions, and shop stewards organization.

the Executive Council normally disapproved resolutions arising out of discussions of general union policy (such as national agreements or union government). Heated debate often follows through the correspondence about what is and what is not committee business.[1]

The determinationof what Abell has termed the "allocational norms" in a bargaining sphere by the explicit use of the organization's written rules is fairly common in the relationship between the district committee and the Executive Council. The rules are not only invoked to define the boundaries of legitimate activity, but also on occasions to stress the legitimacy granted by the rules to particular actions. An example of the latter is found in Appendix 2, in which it is stressed that "The above decisions are all in strict compliance with Rule 13".

Another category of Executive Council correspondence also arises as a response to the minutes but concerns issues of relevance to the district rather than specifically to the committee. Broadly speaking this correspondence falls into four categories:

1. Correspondence upon disputes in firms, some concerning the engineering procedure under which the final stages of negotiation would be conducted by national officers, and some concerning the payment of dispute benefits.[2]
2. Correspondence upon internal union disputes, or disputes with other unions. The first type of dispute arises between many of the competing polyarchic elements in the union and is often resolved by the Final Appeal Court: the Manchester district has been involved in a number of appeals, both as defendants and appellants.

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1 For example, in 1950 the Executive Council disapproved a resolution to send two delegates to an 'All Lancashire Peace Conference' on the grounds that it was not district committee business. The committee resolved that they could not agree with the Executive Council ruling as "peace is a subject matter for everybody". Minutes, 15 July 1950.

2 Though the actual administration of the benefit is through the branches.

The other type of dispute generally involves accusations that other unions are 'poaching'[1] but such occasions are rare, and inter-union disputes do not appear to have been a major issue in the Manchester district.

3. Administrative correspondence on such matters as finding branch secretaries, legal claims, acknowledgement of branch resolutions, or appointment of delegates to Advisory Committees. The range of business is large though the volume is fairly small as the branches handle most of the administrative business.

4. Trade questions not related to disputes. This is quite a small area of business, mainly concerning questions which affect more than one district, or negotiations which take place at a national level.[2]

A third category of correspondence from the Executive Council is that which is circulated to all district committees. This general correspondence includes circulars on such matters as education facilities, reports from working parties and reminders of union rules, in addition to notification of national agreements. These agreements may affect only a small proportion of members in the district and are dealt with in terms of the minutes either by just 'noting' them or by recommending that the information be passed to the relevant convenor or shop stewards. Finally, this category of correspondence also includes requests to all districts to observe the blacking of firms.

Broadly speaking, the correspondence from the Executive Council may be classified into:

1. information;
2. clarification of the scope of the district committee's legitimate activities (under rule);

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1 For example, in 1950 the Executive Council got the TGWU to agree that they had wrongly recruited AEU members at the Manchester Corporation Transport Department.

2 For example, the minutes of 22 June 1965, contain a letter from the Executive Council referring to negotiations at Manchester Airport (affecting more than one district), and those of 20 January 1970 a letter referring to negotiations for decentralised bargaining at Massey Ferguson (conducted nationally).

3. approval or disapproval of business already discussed and resolved upon by the committee.

It appears to be rare for the Executive Council to take the initiative in business which is specific to the district. The Council normally responds to the initiatives of the committee, though may derive information from branches and full-time officers in addition to that from the committee minutes.

Workshop Organization

As Appendix 1 reveals, convenors and shop stewards constitute the main formal source of information for the district committee on activity in the district. Out of the total of 339 items listed, 156 were initiated by convenors or by shop stewards. The issues raised cover a wide range of trade and organizational questions, but, as noted earlier, the emphasis has changed from requests for intervention to requests for specific advice or notification of agreements. The District Secretary's response normally takes the form of a letter to the convenor concerned, though this letter may be preceded by a telephone call if the matter is urgent.

In addition to these formal communications and any informal contacts, shop stewards are required to send quarterly reports to the District Secretary on trade and organizational matters in their plant (for example, the number of engineering workers employed, the number in the union, the number in other unions, and wages and conditions). These reports are then considered by a sub-committee as a means of comparing wages and conditions between plants and as a means of ascertaining whether conditions in any particular plant are satisfactory.

In addition to the responses generated by communications or quarterly reports from the shop stewards the District Secretary writes to inform the stewards of national or district policies affecting their plants. An example of this type of communication is shown as Appendix 2.

Though these formal channels of communication exist, they can only play a fairly limited role in control relationships. At several points in their analysis Boraston et al refer to plants "keeping their affairs to themselves", most notably when they conclude:

> "There was little they (the district committee) could do to impose their standards upon powerful workplace organizations which chose to keep their affairs to themselves". (1975: 40)

However, Boraston et al do not elaborate on the limitations of the formal communications channels which allow workshop organizations to do this. From the evidence of these channels in the Manchester district it is clear that apart from the quarterly shop stewards reports[1] there is no formal means whereby the committee can monitor activities in the plants, particularly on a day to day basis.[2]

The branches

Information from the branches, however, acts as an important supplement to that derived directly from the workshops. Of the 339 items in Appendix 1, 65 originated from the branches in the district. Though the issues raised are the same as those raised by the stewards, the branches tend to be more concerned with individual members rather than groups of workers. Occasionally the issue is a complaint against a workshop organization, or at least contains the implication that the workshop organization has not helped the member concerned. The branch would appear to provide an alternative means for individual or group grievances to be brought to the attention of the district committee, other than through convenors or shop stewards. This point is also emphasised by Boraston et al:

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1 Which are in any case, infrequent, often late, or missed altogether.

2 Arising from their general misconception of the role of district committees, Edelstein and Warner (1975: 292) understate the case when they argue "There is often inadequate contact between the district committee and the shop floor".

> "The channel for the dissatisfied steward - or member - is through the branch. About half the letters from branches dealt with industrial matters and most of them drew the attention of the committee to dissatisfaction with the handling of the issue within the plant". (1975: 29)

As was stated in Chapter Five, the relationship between the district committee and the branches is rarely one of control. The importance of the branch as a communication channel between the members and the district committee relates more to control relationships between the committee and the shop stewards. This role for the branch is made possible by the separate bases of branch and workshop organization. Whereas the shop stewards' organizations are based, naturally enough, on a single plant (or group of plants in a firm) the branches are organized geographically according to members' residence. This form of organization is normally held to be a source of weakness for the branches, in that they are divorced from the source of problems that individual branch members may wish to discuss. Similarly, since each branch contains a membership drawn from many firms, an individual member's problem in his plant would raise only limited interest.

However, in the control model this separation of organization is a source of branch strength, since it provides an important check on shop steward autonomy in the workplace; firstly, by providing the individual member with an avenue of complaint, and secondly, by providing the district committee with information on shop steward activities. Basing the branch on the workplace would tend to produce a single (though not necessarily unified) plant and branch leadership and hence remove this channel from the member and the district committee. Though on the one hand such a move could be interpreted as raising both administrative and representative effectiveness (by providing a more relevant forum for discussion), on the other hand the relative control position of the plant leaderships would be enhanced, strengthening their position in the polyarchy while further weakening that of the membership.

Full-time Officers

At the district level the two most relevant full-time officers are the District Secretary[1] and the Divisional Organiser.

It has already been noted at several points that the District Secretary's actions are subject to ratification by the sub-committees. In addition, the Secretary presents a report to the full committee, detailing his activities between the meetings. The full committee consider this report, either approving it as a whole or suggesting further consideration on specific items. The number of items in this report varies considerably, partly reflecting the amount of work the Secretary has performed, but also reflecting the time available for the compilation of the report.

In rule the District Secretary's main role is administrative. He is required to maintain a list of shop stewards, tabulate wage rates for all plants, keep records of district committee meetings, compile attendance reports on committee members for the branches, audit district funds, keep the district seal for signing documents, and handle the flow of communications into and out of the district office. These activities occupy a large proportion of the Secretary's time (the actual proportion varying from week to week)[2] but are not presented in his report to the committee. This report consists of activities which are performed outside routine administration; activities which may be classified under two headings; firstly, non-routine administrative tasks, and secondly, negotiation and organization.

The non-routine administration includes such activities as helping branches in difficulty, meeting with representatives of other organizations, arranging nominations for advisory committees, or representing members at

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[1] In the smaller districts the District Secretary is part-time.

[2] Boraston et al (1975: 16) estimate that in the smaller of the two districts they studied, administration took up about 20 percent of the Secretary's time.

state tribunals. All these aspects of his work the Secretary usually includes in his report.

The more important element of the report, however, concerns his negotiating and organizing activities. The only reference that the rules make to negotiation is that the district committee can instruct the District Secretary to enter into negotiations with employers. An examination of the minutes, however, suggests that negotiating and organizing takes up a large proportion of the Secretary's time, though this proportion does vary from week to week.

There is a tendency over the study period for the number of items in the Secretary's report to grow so that although in the 1950s the average number of items was about five, in January 1970 the number was twenty (fifteen in June 1970). In summary, the types of activity which appear in the report are:

1. visits to branches to sort out administrative difficulties;
2. representing members at state tribunals;
3. visits to firms to negotiate over wages and conditions;
4. visits to firms to meet shop stewards for a discussion of trade problems, organization or,inter-union disputes.

It may be observed that each of these activities involves leaving the district office, and it tends to be this that qualifies an item for inclusion in the report. Not included in the report, therefore, are activities carried out in the district office, even though these activities may involve the resolution of problems arising in firms. These items are generally referred to the sub-committees for endorsement.

The linkages between the district committee and the District Secretary are such that the committee can very largely control the activities of the Secretary. Not only does the committee 'instruct' the Secretary under the rules, but only when the committee has ratified his activities can the Secretary finalise any negotiations. It is important to note, however,

that it is the District Secretary who does the negotiating, rather than the committee or sub-committees, and this provides the Secretary with a degree of intimacy with the subject matter not possessed by the committee. The Secretary thus has access to sources of information about the negotiating process which he can use to present his report in the most favourable light. For example, the committee are not in a good position to question the Secretary's assertion that a particular outcome of negotiations with an employer was the best attainable. Though this places the Secretary at some advantage it does not prevent a dissatisifed committee from instructing the Secretary to re-open negotiations.

Though the rules make partial reference to district committees conducting negotiations[1] it would be a mistake to interpret this more widely and to argue, as do, for example, Edelstein and Warner (1975: 291), that district committees generally negotiate with employers.

The pattern of relationships between the district committee and the District Secretary is repeated in the relationships with the Divisional Organiser (and in Manchester, his assistant). In Manchester the similarity is emphasised not only by the physical proximity of their two offices on the same floor of the building, but also by the Divisional Organiser presenting his report to the committee in person (in the smaller districts of the Division the report is read out 'in absentia').

Rule 17 states that the Divisional Organiser is jointly responsible to the Executive Council and to the district committee of the district in which he is working. Like the District Secretary he is required to present a report of his activities to the committee for endorsement, and may be instructed by the committee to enter into negotiations.

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1 "District Committees may enter into negotiations with employers in their respective districts with a view to having shops worked exclusively by the members of the Union". Rule 13 Clause 12.

During the study period, the engineering procedural agreement was in operation, and the responsibility under the rules for the Divisional Organiser to attend local conferences led to some division of labour between himself and the District Secretary. The Divisional Organiser tended to concentrate his activities on firms which were party to the procedural agreement (members of the Engineering Employers Federation) whereas the Secretary concentrated on non-federated firms. However, there was a considerable overlap in their activities and it was common for the two officers to visit firms together, either for negotiations with management or for recruitment and organizing.

Other than for cases in procedure for which he had to be informed, the Divisional Organiser only occasionally derived his choice of activities from the district committee. He appeared to be more independent than the District Secretary, basing his recruiting and negotiating activities more on his own initiative and requests from the workshops. As Boraston et al note, if the Divisional Organiser reported back to the district committee throughout the procedural negotiations at local conferences, these negotiations would have become protracted. The Organiser thus tended to report only concluded negotiations, and if the outcome was acceptable to the Organiser, the firm, and the stewards, it was unlikely that the committee would raise any objections. If the negotiations were concluded with a failure to agree the committee had little option but to pass the issue to the next stage of the procedure.

As with the District Secretary, there would thus be a tendency for the Divisional Organiser's report to be ratified without too much difficulty, even though the committee had the right, under the rules, to refer the Organiser back to the form for further negotiations.

Though the two full-time officers are both responsible to the committee, it does not follow that they are always unanimous on the

approach to be taken to a given issue. This is illustrated by Turner,[1] when he argues:

> "Thus it appeared - at least to an outsider - that at one stage in the Crossley dispute, the District Secretary and Divisional Organiser concerned, both elected, were pulling - from neighbouring rooms in the AEU's Manchester Office - in opposite directions". (1950: 183)

In such an instance each officer must try to persuade the committee to support his views. In the above case, for example, the Divisional Organiser persuaded the committee to recommend a return to work, a decision which the District Secretary "reluctantly" conveyed to the members.

Thus, although the full-time officers have significant areas of autonomy in conducting negotiations, the committee's ability to withhold ratification balances control in the committee's favour, particularly with reference to the District Secretary. The evidence from the Manchester district indicates furthermore, that such ratification is by no means a formality.

The communications map

Figure 11 represents an elaboration of the communication flows within the activity loops relevant to the district committee.

Issues originate in the workshops and branches, or from other bodies such as other district committees of the union, managements, other unions or fund appeals. Broadly speaking, these issues may be classed as industrial (such as disputes or agreements related to wages, hours, working conditions, redundancy, dismissals or dilution) or organizational (questions of members' status in the union, shop stewards credentials,

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1 Though Turner rather weakens this argument by a confusion of the Manchester and Stockport districts, and a confusion between districts and Divisions in the AEU.

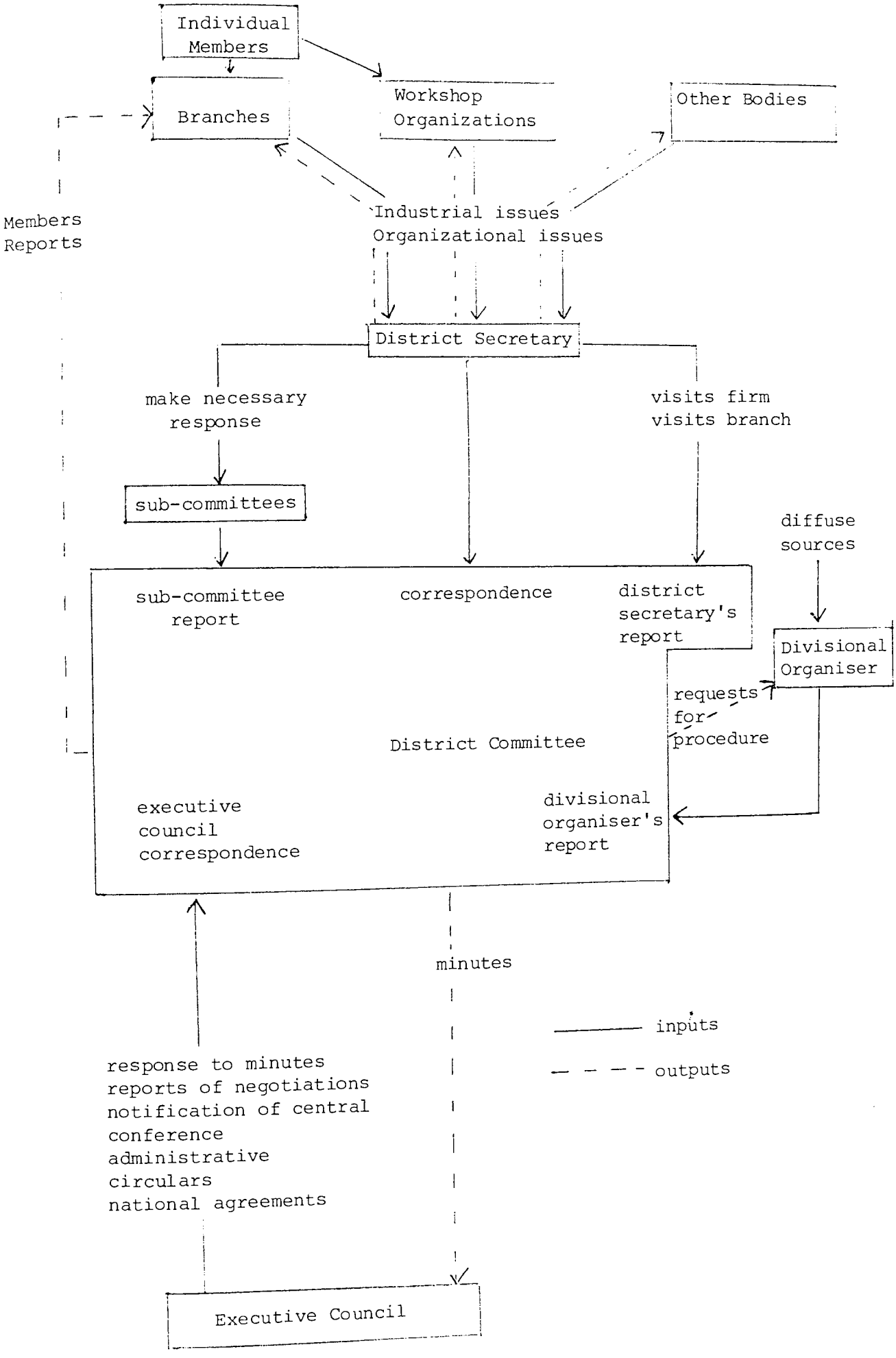

Figure 11 - A Communications Map of District Committee Activities

union elections, complaints from or about stewards). The District Secretary receives communications from these sources and can take one of four courses of action:

1. He can pass the issue to a sub-committee to discuss and resolve upon.
2. He can take action himself without leaving the district office (by writing in reply, or by forwarding the communication).
3. He may visit a firm to meet management or stewards, or visit a branch, or a tribunal.
4. Infrequently, a communication may be placed before the full committee for consideration.

The full committee considers the action taken, either directly as in the fourth case, or via the sub-committees' and Secretary's reports.

Before any of the resolutions carried by the committee are binding upon members in the district they have to be approved by the Executive Council and this is carried out via the committee minutes forward by the Secretary. This correspondence from the Executive Council consists largely of responses to these minutes. In addition, it includes notification of national agreements and central conference decisions, and administrative and general circulars.

The Divisional Organiser acting partly on his own initiative and partly on requests for procedural negotiations, conducts negotiations on a variety of industrial and organizational issues in the district, submitting his actions for approval via his report to the district committee.

Reporting back to the source of the issue occurs through a number of channels, though it should be noted that only when cases are referred to a sub-committee will contact with the source of the issue not be immediate (as with visits to firms, or written replies). Problems of reporting back arise when the committee does not endorse the officer's actions, or when the decision is arrived at in committee debate.

Each branch representative is required to report back to three branches, which not only involves a heavy workload for existing representatives but also leaves many branches without representation. It is normal, therefore, for the Secretary to write to those with an interest in a particular decision.

Decisions are also conveyed informally (particularly when urgent), but the channels whereby district committee decisions are conveyed to the membership are very weak, and may be the source of considerable confusion.

Conclusions

Information, exchange and negotiated outcomes

Information has been identified as an important source of exchange power, and thus one element in the control process. However, it may be observed that information serves a dual purpose in these control relationships, on observation resting on the distinction between the 'quality' of a communications system, and the use of information as a power resource. The former stresses the channels which enable decision-makers to collect information, convey the decision to the area to be controlled, and then monitor the implementation of the decision. Such problems are often treated as communications engineering. Information as a resource stresses the strategic role of information in the exchange process; unless sufficient resources are offered in exchange, information may be deliberately withheld. Mouzelis highlights this dual role of information:

> "For instance, there is a tendency among communication theorists (especially in industrial contexts) to reduce all difficulties and troubles in an organization to communication problems, which could be solved by improving communication channels, reducing noise or making messages redundant. Although such techniques may be very successful in some cases, they are not effective whenever the real trouble does not lie in bad communication engineering but elsewhere - for instance in antagonistic groups fighting for power or scarce resources". (1975: 141)

The evidence reveals that at an engineering level the formal communication channels between the district committee and the workshops are poor, and this emphasises the importance of the 'voluntary' exchange of information. Without information, the district committee is limited in its decision-taking abilities, a point they recognised when they referred to "the inability of the district committee to take a decision because of the disregard of Brother Brennan for the district committee" during a dispute with a works convener.[1] It is concerning the role of information in this sense that Mouzelis writes:

> "It is through the communication channels, running in all directions, that the information indispensible for establishing the factual premises of a decision, is transmitted". (1975: 127)

Though the formal channels are poor, evidence from the Manchester district (supported by evidence from Boraston et al's study) suggests that there are other, informal, information channels which can ameliorate, though not entirely compensate for this inadequacy of the formal channels. The branches, in particular, appear to perform this role, and so too does the practice of summoning witnesses to committee meetings.

Communication between the committee and the Executive Council or full-time officers is less problematic. Here there is formal provision for scrutiny on a regular basis, and within the framework of the rules a system of ratification and legitimation that creates ties of dependency beyond those of information exchange.

It is important not to overstate the relevance of information in the production of negotiated outcomes, as it is only one of several sources of exchange power (for example, expertise). Nevertheless, since the passive membership has been identified as the ultimate source of legitimation, or arbitor of outcomes, the weak link between the membership

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1 Sub-committee minutes, 18 June 1968.

and the district committee places the workshop organizations at an advantage in any arbitrated polyarchic competition between the committee and a workshop organization.

Legitimation and negotiated outcomes

Appendix 2 illustrates that the legitimation derived from the rules is stressed as a means of gaining compliance with decisions. The rules provide the framework within which polyarchic competition takes place,[1] though the rules themselves are often the outcomes of these competitions. Gouldner (1954) has identified three types of bureaucratic rule; the work, the punishment centred, and the representative. Rules in the AUEW tend to be of the representative type,[2] in that compliance is generally perceived to be for the common good. Nevertheless there are limitations on the use of rule alone. On this point Perrow points out:

> "The conventional, structural viewpoint says that rules direct or control behaviour. You tell a man what the rule is and he follows it or is punished". (1973: 291)

Yet in practice, Perrow goes on, rules are only part of the control process: behaviour is shaped or controlled without reference to conventional items of rules or commands, through unobtrusive means of control.

Non-contingent legitimation from the rules is thus only one aspect of negotiated outcomes. Appendix 2 reveals an appeal to the solidarity principle in that the committee resolves:

> "Whilst recognising that there may be certain difficulties in particular establishments, we nevertheless recognise that we must establish a common policy for all Engineering workers in the Manchester district, irrespective of the type of industry in which they are employed".

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[1] Silverman (1970: 210) remarks of Crozier's (1964) study of maintenance workers: "The participants thus interacted within the limits of the rules of the game", though here 'rules' is being used more abstractly than is implied in 'written rule' following.

[2] They are reformulated every five years by a Rules Revision Committee of the elected National Committee. Fletcher (1973) notes that the rules embody a mixture of detail and ideology.

At the same time, relationships between the committee and the Executive Council are coloured by the wider solidarity principle of the Executive Council. Appeals by the Council to uphold national agreements, and the attempts to limit committee discussions to district questions, are often based on the Executive Council's 'wider responsibilities'.

Of the forms of non-contingent legitimacy identified, least emphasis is given to the electoral principle in day-to-day activities. This may be because each of the elements discussed has some claim to electoral legitimacy, which tend to balance out.

Throughout, reference has been made to the manifestations of the various sources of power other than external legitimation and sanctions. In some ways this is misleading, since it is in the nature of these sources that they are usually unarticulated. Control is achieved without explicit reference to the rules, or to resources of information and exchange. Though polyarchy has been characterised in terms of competing collectivities, such competition will be predominantly latent rather than manifest, legitimation in particular representing a reason for compliance without overt conflict:

Clegg has made a similar point:

> "Power relations are only the visible tip of a structure of control, rule and domination which maintain its effectiveness not so much through overt action, as through its ability to appear as the natural convention. It is only when taken-for-grantedness fails, routines lapse, and 'problems' appear that the overt exercise of power is necessary. And this is exerted to reassert control". (1977: 35)

This chapter has emphasised the taken-for-grantedness of the day-to-day control processes within the district committees activity loops. As Clegg suggests, it is when this breaks down that competition becomes manifest.

CHAPTER NINE

THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE AND THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL : A CASE STUDY IN NEGOTIATED OUTCOMES

Introduction

When the 'taken-for-grantedness' of decision-making breaks down, competition between collectivities becomes manifest in two forms. In one form the collectivities settle their difference between them, the outcome being determined by each competitor's sources of authority and other forms of power. The outcome produced by this form of competition I have termed a 'negotiated outcome'. The other form of competition, in which the collectivities appeal to agencies external to the competition, produces what I have termed an 'arbitrated outcome'.

Negotiated outcomes in a polyarchic trade union government rest on the balance of power sources internal to the competitive arena. These, it has been suggested, may be classified as sources of legitimate authority (such as the rule book, the electoral principle and the solidarity principle), and other sources of power (such as sanctions and interdependence).

This case study examines the production of a negotiated outcome in the competitive arena (activity loop) which comprises the Manchester District Committee and the Executive Council.

The substantive issue which created the manifest competition was control over dilution policy in the Manchester district. Appendix Three examines the background to the dilution issue for the union as a whole, but in addition, this case study considers dilution in the Manchester district, and the perceived congruence between district committee policy preferences and Executive Council policy preferences.

General levels of congruence are explored through an examination of the 'tone' of relationships between the committee and the Executive.

The core of the chapter consists of a case study in which, legitimate

authority having broken down, other forms of power are mobilised to produce the decisional outcome, and an examination is made of the affects of this outcome on later decisions.

Post-war dilution in the Manchester District

Appendix Three shows how closely related have been the disputes with management over job control and internal disputes within the union over local autonomy. Both types of dispute have been ascribed by Hinton (1973) to the craftsman's traditional rejection of any form of control over his work, whether from management or from the trade union hierarchy. Though the Manchester district has not figured prominently in the historical struggles against dilution (as compared, for example, with the Clyde) several commentators have noted the post-war resistance to dilution in the district. The Donovan Commission (1968: 89), for example, heard evidence that in Manchester the AEU refused "to allow such persons (Government Training Centre workers) to be employed as skilled men even if registered as dilutees" according to the national agreement on dilution of labour.

Resistance has been particularly strong to workers from the various post-war government training schemes. On the 21st April 1967, for example, Ray Gunter, the Minister of Labour, opening a new Government Training Centre in Manchester, commented:

> "The district committee of the AEU, despite the shortage of skilled engineering workers in the area, refuses to accept our engineering trainees".[1]

The national agreement on dilution (Temporary Relaxation of Existing Customs) was introduced at the beginning of the Second World War, but, instead of being allowed to lapse at the end of the war it continued into peacetime and was amended in 1954. It is to this national agreement that the district committee took exception throughout the post-war period. The Executive Council, on the other hand, as signatories to the

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[1] Quoted in Hall and Miller (1971).

Agreements, were in favour of them being operated. On Vocational Training, for example, the Executive Council wrote to the district committee in 1953, following the committee's withdrawal of support for the scheme:

> "The Vocational Training Scheme Agreement of 1951 was a permissive agreement to provide for the training of certain individuals within the engineering industry, always bearing in mind that such training or employment should not be prejudicial to the employment of our skilled members, and also should have the co-operation of local officials, and was not intended to supercede the Relaxation Agreement.
>
> Within these limits Executive Council feel that the scheme should still continue to operate and that the fullest use should be made of local discussions on this matter where difficulties are encountered".[1]

Though opposition to dilution was strong throughout the period it must be recognised that the problem would not be felt equally in all firms in the district. Of the twenty largest engineering firms in the district (that is, employing about a thousand workers or over) only half were engaged upon work which dilutee labour could perform. Dilution is primarily required in those firms with a large machine shop. Other firms require only very skilled toolroom workers plus a large number of semi-skilled production workers.

The policy preferences of the Executive Council and district committee were incongruent on the dilution question throughout the post-war period.

General congruence - the tone of District Committee/Executive Council relations

Dilution, however, represents only one area in which incongruence manifested itself. The historical tensions between local autonomy and and centralised control have been examined in some detail in Chapter 5, and the mechanics of the formal relationship between the committee and

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1 District Committee minutes (1953). Unless otherwise attributed all quotations in this and the succeeding chapter are from committee minutes.

the Executive Council have been elaborated in Chapters 6 and 8. It is worthwhile emphasising at this point the generalised lack of congruence which persisted through the post-war period (though naturally, the intensity, or degree, of incongruence varied). This may be interpreted as meaning that some degree of incongruence was inevitable or even 'normal' and that it would be unwise to place too much importance upon it. There is evidence, however, that the incongruence was not perceived as 'normal' by the participants, but rather was perceived in terms of conflict. Indeed, at a shop stewards quarterly meeting in 1958 one shop steward used the word 'conflict' to describe the district committee's relationship with the Executive Council.

In Chapter 8 it was noted that the district committee was predominantly left-wing for the whole post-war period. The Executive Council, on the other hand, was predominantly right-wing. It is notable that during those periods when the Executive Councilman for the Manchester district was left-wing (1957/8 and 1964 onwards) the degree of congruence was greater, there being far fewer recorded disputes.

The disagreements with the Executive Council may be classified under a number of headings:

1) A branch or a member appeals to the Executive Council over a district committee decision or action. This is quite an important source of disagreement, one or two appeals of this nature occuring every year. When the district committee fines or expels a member, that member has the right to appeal to the Executive Council. If the Council's ruling is challenged by either the member or the committee the case can be referred to the Final Appeal Court, at which, technically, the Executive Council is the defendant. As might be expected, the disagreements arise when the Council upholds an appeal against the committee.

2) The use of funds. A number of disagreements have arisen over the committee using funds to contribute to organizations 'proscribed' by the union.

3) The committee discussing and passing resolutions on matters not covered by Rule 13. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8. The dissension largely arises over matters about which the committee might be expected to have some interest, such as circulars from the Executive Council to the branches.

4) Disputes with particular firms. The Executive Council may disapprove of the committee's actions under this heading for a number of reasons. The most common is that the committee gives its support to a stoppage of work before the Engineering Procedural Agreement has been exhausted. The Executive Council may not only recommend a return to work, but also refuse to make the dispute official (thus precluding the payment of dispute benefit).

5) General issues of policy. More than any other area of incongruence this involves the complex problem of local autonomy; the ability of the district committee to pursue a policy different from that recommended by the Executive Council, not only on dilution, but also such issues as piecework, overtime and redundancy. District opposition to nationally reached agreements occurred in 1956 and 1959 over redundancy policy, and in 1965 over apprentices policy.

The resolution of these conflicts was achieved without recourse to sanctions, and it is instructive, therefore, to consider the circumstances in which sanctions became necessary in the context of the dilution dispute.

The Breakdown of Legitimacy

At the National Conference of the union held in June 1951 a new wages claim for the coming round of negotiations was drawn up. In support of this claim the National Committee resolved that:

> "This National Committee instruct Executive Council that they shall not agree to any further dilution within the engineering industry until our reasonable demands for a wage increase be granted".[1]

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1 National Committee Report (1951).

A number of points need to be made about this resolution. Though the resolution may be interpreted as an expression of labour market economics, it seems equally reasonable to interpret it as a form of industrial action or policy of non-co-operation which has the advantage of having an economic rationale (the same sort of bargaining strategy as, for example, a temporary overtime ban). In addition, under the 1941 Agreement (see Appendix Three) the Executive Council would only be involved in dilution at the level of the National Joint Relaxation Committee, after agreement had failed at plant and local levels. Thus for the resolution to prevent dilution it would be necessary for union representatives in the workshops and on local committees to oppose employers' applications for dilution. Equally, it should be noted that the resolution instructs the Executive Council to break a national agreement (though in the context of trade union bargaining, temporary withdrawal from agreed procedures is not in itself uncommon).

The resolution was published as a matter of routine in the July issue of the AEU Monthly Journal. The difficulties experienced in Manchester over dilution began that month when the convenor of shop stewards at a firm called Churchill Machine Tools Ltd., was approached by the management wanting to upgrade some men to fitters. The stewards considered the National Committee resolution and rejected the management request. When the management made a further approach for the upgrading, the stewards contacted the District Secretary for advice,' and were told initially that guidance was being requested from the Executive Council. On being pressed for advice by the stewards the District Secretary advised that for the time being they should not agree to any dilution.

Later (how much later is not clear from the records) the management told the stewards that they had been advised by the Head Office of the AEU that a circular was being sent to all districts indicating that the resolutions of the National Committee were not to be operated, and management again asked them to agree to dilution. The stewards asked

the District Secretary to go to the factory to meet them, and he confirmed that the terms of the Temporary Relaxation Agreement were still in operation as had been indicated in the circular from the Executive Council.

To this point, although the stewards and the district committee would seem to have preferred to implement the National Committee resolution, there were no signs that the issue would develop into one of principle. Following discussions, proposals were agreed for putting to the management as a basis for agreeing to the request for dilution. Though these proposals were put to the management, a meeting of union members in the Fitting Department decided that they were not prepared to accept any dilution. Initially, therefore, the strongest opposition to the dilution came from the members in the workshop.

The management at Churchill's began to put pressure on the Executive Council through the National Employers Federation. The Executive Council wrote to the district committee and on the 6th September 1951 the number one sub-committee carried out an enquiry into the dispute. Letters were read from the Executive Council, the National Employers Federation and from the local Employers Association reporting that the shop stewards had refused to agree to the registration of four men to milling.

After the events of the dispute had been related, the chairman of the shop-stewards' committee at Churchill's outlined a number of points to the members of the district sub-committee. Firstly, the shop stewards wanted to have some say in the question of who should be upgraded; they wanted to interview the men and ensure that prospective dilutees were members of the AEU. Secondly, he said, the firm were in the habit of sending for the convener and asking him to sign registration forms (see Appendix Three) without any previous consultation. In concluding his statement to the sub-committee he added that the members in the shop had stated quite categorically that they would not agree to dilution.

Quite clearly, this last point in particular must have placed the sub-committee in a difficult position. On the one hand, the firm was exerting pressure on the Executive Council through the Employers Federation, yet on the other, there appeared to be a clear refusal on the part of the members to accept dilution. The sub-committee referred the matter to the full district committee (which would have needed to ratify any decision anyway), which advised the stewards at Churchill's not to agree to any further dilution pending advice from the Executive Council, and sent a report of the dispute to the Council.

On the 20th September the District Secretary received a letter from the Executive Council outlining the 'Official' position that the Temporary Relaxation Agreement be operated, and criticising the district committee for advising the Churchill stewards otherwise.

The full committee meeting of the 27th September considered this letter and a resolution was proposed:

> "That this district committee is not satisfied with the reply from Executive Council and request that Bro. R. Openshaw be allowed to attend a meeting of the district committee to hear our views on this matter as we are not prepared to advise our shop stewards of the terms of the letter received from Executive Council".[1]

This resolution did not carry, however, and was succeeded by an amendment that:

> "Executive Council be informed we do not agree with the principle of dilution in this district". ,

This amendment was carried unanimously. The shop stewards quarterly meeting three days later resolved:

> "That this shop stewards quarterly meeting endorses the attitude of the district committee re. the Temporary Relaxation Agreement and its non-operation".

It is at this point that the issue is generalised from dilution at a particular firm to dilution in the district as a whole. Though opposition in principle need not imply that no dilution would be permitted, the implic-

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1 Openshaw was the Executive Councilman with responsibility for the Manchester District.

cation is clear that the committee and the Secretary would oppose any dilution applications that came within its purview. It must be borne in mind, however, that under the terms of the Agreement, direct control of dilution was not open to the committee. Only through instructions to shop stewards and district officials could a policy of opposition to dilution be pursued. In terms of the effectiveness of opposition to dilution in the district, the support the committee received from the shop stewards quarterly meeting would thus be of great importance.

Executive Council and the Solidarity Principle

On 9th October the Executive Council replied to the Committee's resolution with a fairly conciliatory letter:

> "While the district committee may not agree with the principle of dilution as stated in the resolution ultimately carried by the Manchester district committee until such time as the agreement is terminated it is encumbent upon all districts and members to give effect to the terms of the agreement. Executive Council propose to raise with the engineering employers certain aspects of the Relaxation Agreement but at the same time they feel that all points raised by the Manchester district committee are safeguarded within the terms of the agreement entered into by the Union. Executive Council, therefore, insist on the Agreement being operated and provided that strict observance of the agreement is insisted upon they feel that the apprehensions of your district committee are fully safeguarded".

This appeal to observe agreements reached on behalf of the whole union by national negotiations (and the hint at renegotiations), was not accepted by the district committee. Following the phraseology implied by the National Committee resolution they resolved at their meeting on the 11th October:

> "That this district committee authorise the District Secretary to inform the Executive Council that the Manchester district committee have only suspended the operation of the Temporary Relaxation Agreement".

Executive Council and the re-affirmation of Legitimacy

The Executive Council then attempted to re-affirm the legitimacy of their action in the eyes of the district committee. On the 17th October, they wrote:

> "Executive Council note the reasons which are apparently influencing the district committee in their attitudes and decisions. It is apparent that your district committee do not as yet clearly understand the factual position in connection with any or all resolutions carried by the National Committee. In the first place it must be clearly understood that National Committee resolutions are instructions to the Executive Council who decide when and how these resolutions are to be operated, and there is no evidence that we know of that justifies your committee in even assuming that this particular resolution will not be given effect at the appropriate time and in a way which in the opinion of Executive Council will obtain the best results for the members. It is quite obvious, if you examine the large number of resolutions adopted by the National Committee, that very often contributions to the discussion which help to guide the members of the National Committee in adopting the resolution have to be taken into account by the Executive Council".

This attempt to restore legitimacy had no more effect than the appeal to observe national agreements. It became clear to the Executive Council that there was no longer any basis in legitimate authority to which it could appeal, in order to get the district committee to follow its instructions. The district committee had denied that the Executive Council could legitimately refuse to operate the National Committee minutes, and had refused to implement a nationally agreed procedure.

Application of Sanctions

On the 23rd October, the Executive Council sent a further letter to the District Secretary, which was discussed at a special meeting of the district committee on 1st November. At the request of the District Secretary, the Chairman and Secretary of the Churchill shop stewards committee were also present. The letter which was read to the meeting emphasised again that shop stewards and district committees were bound to give effect to agreements entered into by the union. It pointed out that the district committee had no authority to suspend any agreement, and

that "the Executive Council could no longer tolerate a flouting or evasion of their instructions". The letter continued:

> "This letter must be placed before the district committee, and Executive Council desire to be informed of the members of the district committee who either abstain from voting or voting against giving effect to Executive Council instructions, and in conformity with Rule 22 Clause 1 intimate their intentions to proceed against such members under the said Rule and Clause, lines 10-13-' or refuse to comply with the order or decision of any committee, council or conference having jurisdiction over such member under these rules' and lines 25-28-' or who being an officer shall have refused to perform their duties imposed upon him by these rules or any of them, may be expelled by his Branch, with the approval of the Executive Council, or he may be expelled or otherwise dealt with by the Executive Council. Executive Council desire the information by 5th November 1951".

What this quotation from the rules does not convey very clearly is that 'may be expelled or otherwise dealt with' applied not only to the officer of line 25 but to the whole of Clause 1. Thus all of the members of the district committee were threatened with disciplinary action, the most extreme form of which would have been expulsion from the union. (In the 1970 Rule book, the phrase 'or otherwise dealt with' is amended to read 'or suspended from office or fined a sum not exceeding £5.' Though not spelt out in the Rules of 1951 these would appear to the sanctions other than expulsion available to the Executive Council).

The minutes of the meeting note that the discussion following the reading of the letter was lengthy and heated. The shop stewards chairman stated that the management were still unwilling to meet shop stewards on the dilution question. He said that the management were not prepared to specify their requirements; they wanted assurances that the terms of the Temporary Relaxation Agreement would be operated and that as and when they wanted dilution in the factory it would be granted. Only then would they be prepared to discuss the conditions under which the upgraded men would work.

Concern was expressed at the meeting that it appeared to be the employers rather than the shop stewards who were trying to breach the agreement. In the event of shop stewards not approving an application for dilution the case should have been referred to the Local Relaxation Committee. The employer's insistance on imposing dilution unilaterally was a breach of the agreement, and the Executive Council was criticised by the meeting for not supporting the district committee on this point.

The minutes record that the majority of the committee were not only very critical of the decisions which the Executive Council had taken, but also of the means whereby they were being enforced. But eventually, on the advice of the District Secretary, the following resolutions were adopted:

"1. That this district committee accept the decision of Executive Council on this matter under protest.

2. That this district committee express concern at the terms of the Temporary Relaxation Codified Agreement.

3. That the Conveners in the district be advised of the decision of the district committee on the letter received from Executive Council.

4. That this district committee disapprove of the terms of the letter dated 23rd October, and ask under what Rule does Executive Council have the power to state that they are the body who shall decide how and when National Committee decisions are operated.

5. That we ask for the voting of Executive Council members on this question which resulted in the letter of 23rd October being sent".

A further resolution, signed by 277 members at Churchills was forwarded:

> "We the undersigned members of the AEU employed at Churchill Machine Tools request the district committee to press Executive Council to recall the 1951 National Committee and explain their reasons for the non-implementation of the 1951 National Committee Resolution Number 54".

It is clear from these resolutions that this issue had been resolved in favour of the Executive Council. In the Council reply to the district committee no more was said on dilution except to repeat that they intended to raise the Agreement with the Employers National Federation. The Council vote on the decision to send the letter had been unanimous, they reported. The Council did make another attempt to reassert their authority on the 'resolution problem':

> "Executive Council point out that in the absence of any specified date being laid down by National Committee for the operation or application of resolutions it must be left to Executive Council as the governing body of the union to decide in accordance with the circumstances at what time it is appropriate to operate certain resolutions ..... It cannot be the prerogative of a district committee to select one resolution and to decide to operate such ..... and it will be for the National Committee, not any district committee, to pass judgement on Executive Council in respect to their actions upon decisions passed by that body".

As far as the evidence of the minutes reveals, this marked the conclusion of this particular incident. It is perhaps worth re-emphasising that the committee did not pursue the case to arbitration by either the Final Appeal Court, (there being no ground (under Rule) on which the case could have been fought) or the membership in the district.

Orientations and Dependence

I have argued that in an overt competition the importance of the 'dependence' variable is that it makes sanctions difficult to avoid and thus more effective. In this particular instance the 'active' orientations of the district committee members paradoxically created the conditions of dependence. Though fines and expulsions were possible sanctions the most likely sanction was dissolution of the committee and the election of a new one. It was effective primarily because of the value which the committee members placed on membership, rather than because of reliance on 'resources'. It is not necessary to specify the source of this value, only that the committee members clearly felt that there was something which they could

achieve as members of the committee that they could not otherwise achieve. When asked why the committee had not contested the issue further, Eddie Frow (a committee member at the time, and later District Secretary) explained that they had decided that further opposition was pointless. They would not be able to get the Council decision reversed; all that would happen is that another committee would be elected (albeit with some difficulty) which would probably be less competent and certainly less experienced.

Underlying the rationale of these views is the pervasiveness of the union's electoral system and the existence of factions. As Edelstein et al (1975) and Martin (1968) have emphasised, the AEU is characterised by both a vigorous electoral system and factional groupings. That the issue was not thrown open to membership arbitration may be ascribed in part to the risk of that arbitration producing a right-wing majority on the district committee. It has been argued elsewhere that the Executive Council (a predominantly right-wing collectivity) would receive the support of the instrumentally oriented passive members because of the legitimacy granted to them by the state and employers. In this context Tannenbaum (1968) refers to the ratification power possessed by the membership as the "potentiality of control" (1968: 280).

In this sense, it may be argued that the passive membership exercised a latent arbitral role even though the issue was not referred to them. However, since the issue was resolved without manifest arbitration, the term 'negotiated outcome' remains appropriate.

In addition Eddie Frow stressed that the committee members valued their position on the committee as participation in union activities; removal from the committee thus represented an important sanction.

Power dynamics - the post-sanctions phase

It has been noted that congruence between the district committee and the Executive Council was low throughout the post-war period. Thus

the outcome in favour of the Executive Council in 1951 did not reduce the general level of dissension. On dilution, however, the few years subsequent to 1951 show a marked change in committee decisions. In May 1952, less than six months after the Churchill dispute, a problem arose in the Tank Shop at Ferranti's. The convenor informed the numberone sub-committee that the shop stewards were not prepared to operate the Relaxation Agreement, because the introduction of dilutees had affected skilled earnings (through slower working, and hence a lower contribution to a Pool Bonus Scheme). The sub-committee resolved:

> "That we cannot agree to dilution at Ferranti's if it means our members will lose financially".

and also:

> "That we instruct the convenor to open negotiations with management to ensure that our members do not lose financially".

By referring the matter back to the firm the sub-committee was able to avoid having to make a decision. They were able to do this again in July of that year when a dispute arose in the Transformer Machine Shop at Ferranti's. The members in the shop felt that if they were accepted the dilutees would be given the large batch, easier jobs, while the earnings of the skilled men would be reduced because they would have to do the jobs involving frequent setting up. The members had decided to refuse the application and also to refuse co-operation, if dilutees were introduced. The sub-committee resolved that:

> "In view of the fact that there are no real grounds for refusing dilution we advise our members to comply with the terms of the Temporary Relaxation Agreement".

But this resolution was qualified with another:

> "That the district committee advise the Engineering Employers Association that our members are reluctant to co-operate; therefore, the management must make themselves responsible for the supervision required".

Again, the sub-committee compromised, but nevertheless advised that the Agreement be operated. For the next few years the pattern of dilution cases was the same. Under the Relaxation Agreement the committee could

only become involved indirectly if the stewards in a firm objected to a dilution application, and even then they could only 'instruct' or advise shop stewards, or the representatives on the Local Relaxation Committee (usually the Divisional Organiser). The stewards complaints were usually over earnings, and in each case the committee either recommended a rejection of dilution until the earnings issue had been settled, or recommended that dilution be accepted and earnings negotiations take place. A typical dilution resolution was the one in July 1952 over dilution at Churchill's:

> "That in view of the fact that there are a number of anomolies affecting the earnings of our skilled members arising from the introduction of dilutees, we instruct our shop stewards to open negotiations with management with a view to removing these anomolies, as until they are resolved we are not prepared to advise our shop stewards to agree to the present application".

During this period the 1954 Codified Agreement replaced the 1941 Agreement, and the minutes record only a noting of the new clauses (see Appendix 9/1). The district policy, as far as one can be identified, appeared to be that the Relaxation Agreement should be operated.

The re-emergence of district legitimacy : The Platt's Closure 1956

In 1956 the proposed closure of Platt's (Barton) Ltd., manufacturers of textile machinery, created the prospect of 2,000 jobs being lost in the Manchester district. Of these a good proportion would have been skilled workers and so, on the 10th October, the number five sub-committee met to consider the question of dilution in the district. They resolved:

> "That we agree to defer any further dilution until all the skilled men at Platt's are absorbed elsewhere. The question of agreeing to further dilution be considered again when it is known that the skilled men in each particular trade have been absorbed. At this stage, consideration be given to dilutees taking similar jobs in other factories where they should be re-registered".

As has been shown before, such a blanket ban on dilution is contrary to the Agreement, which insists that each application must be considered, and, if necessary, pursued through the Relaxation Procedure. On the 30th

October the number one sub-committee considered a number of letters from Convenors in the district advising that they had received upgrading applications from their managements. As a number of stewards were being pressed by their managements for a decision, the District Secretary suggested to the sub-committee that a firm decision was required. The sub-committee agreed to the request at three firms 'in view of special circumstances' but passed a more general resolution:

> "That our shop stewards be advised that we are not prepared to grant permission until fully skilled man affected by the proposed closure of Platt's are absorbed".

Just under a month later the Local Relaxation Committee considered the closure of Platt's as well as a 20 per cent redundancy at a firm in the neighbouring Ashton district. The trade union representatives refused any further dilution until a more stable labour position was established, so the Employers referred the matter to the National Relaxation Committee. The district committee (in a resolution to the Divisional Organiser's report) endorsed the stance of the representatives at the Local Committee. The employers' reference to the National Relaxation Committee was heard on the 5th December (the District Secretary represented the district committee), and after discussion the matter was referred back for discussion locally 'in the light of existing circumstances'. At the subsequent Local Committee meeting in January 1957 the trade union representatives were not prepared to change their minds and decided that "dilution will continue to be resisted throughout the division whilst the present conditions remain" (my emphasis).

The district committee was thus able to derive legitimacy for its opposition to dilution from a number of sources. Firstly, the closure at Platt's meant not only that there existed unemployed skilled members whose job rights they needed to protect but also that the Agreement was being operated in principle (the employers could not prove that no skilled labour was available). Secondly, to some extent the Agreement had been operated,

since the matter was referred to the National Relaxation Committee which, unable to reach a decision, had referred it back. Thirdly, the ban stemmed not from the Manchester district alone, but also the other districts in Division Eleven (Stockport, Ashton, Newton and Warrington) covered by the Local Relaxation Committee. The policy was only outside the Agreement in so far as blanket opposition to dilution was outside the Agreement.

The Executive Council wrote to the district committee, insisting that the Agreement be operated. After a discussion of this letter and the correspondence related to the Employers' reference to the Local Committee the number four sub-committee resolved:

> "That we instruct all shop stewards to forward all applications for dilution to the district committee for agreement or otherwise".

When the full committee considered the matter a week later, the District Secretary pointed out that he was required to write to the Executive Council on the subject and felt that a firm opinion should be expressed by the committee. The previous decision to ban dilution was re-affirmed.

A further exchange of letters between the Executive Council and the committee then followed; the Executive Council insisting that the Agreement be operated, the committee replying "that we are operating the spirit and intention of the agreement".

The Employers again referred the matter to the National Relaxation Committee at which one strand of the legitimacy of district committee opposition was removed. It was decided that:

> "In view of statements made by the Employers as contained in the short-hand notes, the Union representatives agreed that the Relaxation Agreement be implemented".

The district committee still attempted to retain some control over dilution, and on the 26th April 1957 the Executive Council wrote to report that the Employers were considering a referral to the Industrial Disputes Tribunal. Though the committee relaxed its ban during June and July, the

Employers were concerned to remove any control over dilution from the district committee. In September the Manchester Engineering Employers Association referred the case to the Industrial Disputes Tribunal. The Ministry of Labour suggested a meeting of the parties before the hearing of the Tribunal to which the Divisional Organiser agreed, though he also requested specific details of the Employers' allegations that the Agreement was not being operated. The Organiser presented his report of this procedure to the district committee, and at the same meeting the committee agreed to an application for dilution, "bearing in mind the report of the Divisional Organiser".

At the pre-tribunal meeting the Employers insisted on proceeding to arbitration on all firms where agreement on dilution could not be reached, though the trade union view was that where sufficient reason was given for refusing the applications this could not constitute a dispute. The reference to the Tribunal was withdrawn, and a meeting of the National Relaxation Committee arranged, at which it was agreed that the matter be referred back for decision locally. The district committee, considering the meetings which had taken place, resolved:

> "That this district committee endorse the action of the Divisional Organiser in advising the Engineering Employers Association that there will be no further dilution whilst the present position obtains".

The evidence suggests, however, that in spite of this resolution there does not appear to have been great difficulties over dilution after this date. The issue appeared occasionally in the minutes, but usually as a formality or where the shop stewards wanted to discuss some related question. On the few occasions when this resulted in a refusal of the applications the Employers usually protested to the Executive Council, who wrote to the district committee insisting that the Agreement be operated. There is no evidence that these cases raised any of the problems that occurred in 1951 and 1956.

Conclusions

The question that must be asked, therefore, is why the district committee's statements on banning dilution did not arouse the same degree of Executive Council hostility in 1956 as in 1951. Certainly, the Executive Council wrote many times in 1956/7 insisting that the district committee operate the agreement but they did not resort to sanctions. There are a number of reasons why this may be so. Firstly, although the district committee stated that dilution was banned there is evidence that the ban was operated reasonably flexibly. Even immediately after the resolution banning dilution in September 1957 there is little evidence of dilution problems occurring. It is possible to argue, therefore, that the district committee, mindful of the events of 1951, were not prepared to push opposition to dilution to that level where the Executive Council would be impelled to take more severe action. Secondly, in 1956 the district committee could legitimise their actions on the ground that there were skilled workers unemployed, that the procedural agreement was being implemented in a way, and that all the other districts in the division were involved in the ban. This may be compared with the source of legitimacy in 1951, which is the third reason why the Executive Council acted more severely. The position taken by the district Committee on Resolution 54 in 1951 may be interpreted as a challenge to the policy-making freedom of the Executive Council, not in the single area of dilution policy, but on the whole question of the implementation of National Committee resolutions. As Appendix Three notes, the degree of Executive Council control over policy-making has been a contentious issue in union affairs throughout its history. The problems of 1951 may thus be interpreted as a dispute over legitimacy in general, whereas in 1956 general principles were not at stake.

A fourth reason may be that during the dispute in 1957, the Executive Councilman dealing with Manchester affairs was Les Ambrose, a left-winger,

which may have raised the general level of congruence between the parties.

In several ways, therefore, the evidence from this case study bears out some of the hypotheses put forward in Chapter Six. The 1951 conflict may be presented in terms of that model as follows:

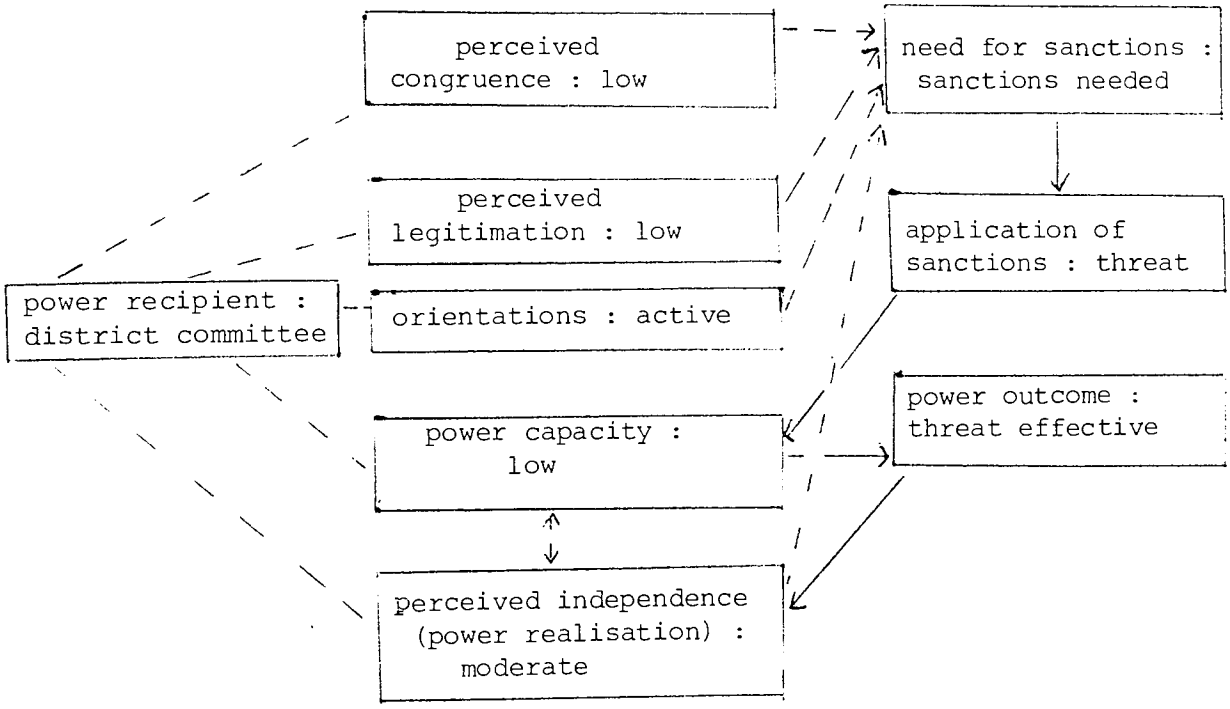

Figure 12: The process model and conflict with the Executive Council

Sanctions in the model must be reinterpreted as the threat of sanctions, made in an unambiguous, overt fashion. Though conceptually not the same thing, application of sanctions and overt threat of named sanctions may be regarded as sufficiently similar to apply the analysis. These threats become necessary since congruence was low, legitimation had broken down and orientations were 'active'.

Though the power capacity of the district committee was low vis-a-vis the Executive Council (see, for example, loop seven in Chapter Six) the district committee had at least sufficient belief in their own power capacity to make a temporary stand against the Executive Council. It was in part a realisation of lower power capacity that prevented the threat of sanctions being converted into the application of sanctions. On the one hand it may be argued that the district committee's perceptions changed during the course of the conflict, but it seems more likely that the district committee were aware the whole time that they could only

oppose the Executive Council up to the point of sanctions being threatened. In any case, the dependence of the district committee's members on membership as a source of valued participation in union activities enabled the threat of sanctions to be effective.

Perhaps more important in terms of the dynamics of power within an activity loop is that the Executive Council's evident willingness to apply sanctions acted as sufficient reason for the district committee to operate the Relaxation Agreement in the subsequent years. Even when challenging Executive Council authority again in 1956 the district committee were more careful not to provoke the Executive Council too far, and to justify their actions on grounds which the Executive Council might partially accept as legitimate.

Legitimacy is equally important in any consideration of the threat of sanctions and its effectiveness. Though it was a breakdown of legitimacy which in part made the threat of sanctions necessary, the imposition of sanctions was perceived as legitimate by the district committee; there were no references in the discussion at the relevant committee meeting to the Executive Council 'having no right' to impose the sanctions. This regard for legitimacy derived from the Rule Book has been noted in Chapters Four and Eight. And as Fletcher (undated: 4) puts it:

> "Democracy therefore entails the acceptance of the 'rule of law' within the union and, as a result, a meticulous and legalistic attitude towards the rule book".

The outcome produced in this competition may justifiably be termed 'negotiated', since, although the district committee were pressed by shop stewards, and the Executive Council by the Employers, neither party appealed to outside arbitors in the dispute. The Executive Council used sanctions granted to it by the Rule Book, and the district committee complied because of dependence on Committee membership. (If it were argued that the district committee members might have been expelled from the union, and

thus possibly put out of work, the basis of dependence would be altogether different. This sanction seems to have been unlikely, however).

CHAPTER TEN

THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE AND A WORKSHOP ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY IN ARBITRATED OUTCOMES

Introduction

Arbitrated outcomes have been described as those outcomes of a competition which are reached by appeal to an agency (arbitrator) external to that competition. In Chapter Four, the state, the employers, and the passive membership were identified as significant sources of legitimation for rival collectivities in a trade union polyarchy, and this legitimation forms the basis of their capacity to arbitrate an inter-collectivity competition.

This chapter examines the process of outcome arbitration in a competition between the Manchester district committee and the shop stewards organization in the largest engineering firm in the Manchester district. Hyman says of such relations:

> "As in the case of management-worker relations those between shop stewards and the representatives of the official trade unions normally involve a process of 'negotiation of order.' Reciprocal expectations, obligations and understandings develop, and in normal circumstances a stable working relationship (involving the acceptance of areas of autonomy) is created. Yet on occasion the 'negotiated order' can be disrupted and the power balance inherent in the relationship generate overt conflict". (1975: 163)

The firm in which this case study is located produces heavy electrical engineering products in two Manchester district factories,' the larger built in Trafford Park before the First World War and the other a transformer factory built in Wythenshawe in 1955. Founded at the turn of the century by the Westinghouse Corporation of America it came under British ownership during the First World War as Metropolitan-Vickers Ltd, reverted to part American ownership again in 1928 (when it became part of Associated Electrical Industries) and reverted back to British ownership in 1953. As part of the search for a corporate identity the Metropolitan-Vickers

title was dropped in 1960 in favour of A.E.I. (Manchester) Ltd.

Takeover by the General Electric Company in 1967 was followed quickly by merger with English Electric in 1968. The rationalisation which followed these changes accelerated the reductions in manpower which A.E.I. had been implementing during the 1960s, so that an estimated workforce of 15,000 manual workers at Trafford Park just after the Second World War, was reduced to less than 5,000 by 1970.[1]

The plant organization contained several features likely to make control by the district committee more difficult. Over twenty trade unions were represented on the twenty strong workers' side of a works committee (this committee, with representatives both of trade unions and management was set up in 1917), density of union membership was high, and a large number of issues (particularly concerning piecework) were traditionally dealt with in the workplace, allowing trade union experience to develop. However, the plant organization was not always unified, one area of friction being between some E.T.U. and A.E.U. shop stewards.

This chapter examines three occasions of overt conflict between the district committee and some of the A.E.U. stewards on the workers' side of the works committee (most notably, the A.E.U. Convenor of shop stewards, Bert Brennan). Two of these occasions centred around strike calls and the third around the redundancy problem of the late 1960s. In keeping with the 'process oriented' model of power accumulation and diminution employed in this study, the incidents are examined in chronological order. In addition, the external sources of legitimacy drawn on by the Convener are examined in each case. These are the legitimacy granted by the management, other shop stewards on the works committee, the Executive Council, some full-time officers, and in the arbitral sense, contingent legitimacy granted by the passive membership in the plant.

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1 For the managerial and financial background to these mergers see Jones and Marriott (1972).

Before examining these incidents in detail it is worth re-emphasising some general points about the relationships between shop steward organizations and trade union hierarchies.

Sources of workshop organization independence

Although Rule 13 of the Union Rule Book prescribes a form of bureaucratic control relationship the extent to which a district committee can exercise control over workshop organizations is severely limited in practice by a number of constraints.

a) Problems of information flow.

The information which the district committee receives from workshop organizations is extremely variable in quantity and quality. Shop stewards quarterly reports are a formal channel whereby information about density of union membership and wage rates in force are conveyed to the district secretary and hence the committee. However, even when these are fully and promptly returned, they cannot convey information about issues which arise on a day to day basis such as disputes. As an alternative to information coming from the shop stewards the committee can and does receive communications from individual members, either directly or indirectly via a branch, and from managements.

However, individual members that do not attend branch meetings (and, therefore, do not hear the committee representative's report) are unlikely to be in a position to know what is district committee policy. Similarly, managements will not usually be aware of district committee policy and will only complain to the district secretary, or the employers association, if they feel that national agreements are being infringed contrary to their (the employer's) interests. Thus the committee may find it difficult to ascertain whether or not its decisions are being complied with in the workplace.

b) The role of shop stewards in the maintenance of the organization. Several writers have noted that shop stewards play an important part in the recruitment of members and the collection of union dues. Goodman and Whittingham (1969) have argued that the competition between unions for members has limited the extent to which sanctions can be applied to shop stewards. Many union officials, they suggest, consider that expulsion not only creates martyrs and hostility to the union, but also removes offenders from the union's influence, while not preventing them from influencing union members.

In the A.E.U. the rules provide that contributions must be paid at branch meetings and therefore imply that collection by stewards at the place of work is contrary to rule (Rule 7, Clause 12). However, according to McCarthy (1966) all the A.E.U. stewards in the Royal Commission's study collected contributions each week, and in the Clegg, Killick and Adams (1964) survey it was found that 68 per cent of A.E.U. shop stewards collected contributions. The Clegg et al survey shows that shop stewards do almost as much collecting in a union which makes no provision for it, and in which the practice appears to be contrary to rule, as in unions whose rules prescribe for the appointment and payment of collecting stewards. How else, asks McCarthy, could the Engineers collect contributions in a large factory in which they organise hundreds or even thousands of members who certainly could not be persuaded to attend branch meetings regularly? The introduction of "check-off" schemes would weaken McCarthy's argument, but in their absence the shop steward plays an important role.

The part played by shop stewards in carrying out essential union functions means that full time officers or lay committees such as the district committee must be very careful to give the impression that the shop steward's work is appreciated and to give the shop stewards support whenever possible. McCarthy suggests that only in

extreme cases, where shop stewards have systematically defied instructions or have led open revolts against accepted union policies, is it possible to withdraw credentials or expel dissident members without giving rise to a widespread conviction that they have been unfairly treated or punished for defending the workers interests.

c) The relationships between shop stewards and work groups.

This last point of McCarthy's implies further that sanctions are difficult to apply because shop stewards have a closer relationship with the members than the full time officers or lay committees. Because of the close knowledge that the shop steward has of plant affairs, and because he is directly elected by the work group he represents, it may be argued that the authority of shop stewards is perceived by the members as being more legitimate than those of 'outsiders'. As Fox notes:

> "It must suffice to say that in some situations the individual may come to feel that his only real refuge is his immediate work group. Loyalty to that group and its leader may then rank as a prior obligation. Especially is this likely to be the case where the work group has proved the most effective instrumental level through which the individual goals are pursued. If, at the same time, the group members find themselves in normative conflict not only with management but also with some higher-level collectivity of their union, and unable therefore to legitimize the policies of either, the strength of their identification with the work group as their only source of legitimate leadership is likely to be very great". (1971: 112)

Though this is probably true it should be borne in mind that the relationships between shop stewards and work groups are very complex. Not only is the notion of a work group itself vague, but also different groups will interpret the role of stewards differently, as too will different stewards. Goodman and Whittingham, particularly, have drawn attention to the divergences which may arise between shop stewards and work groups:

> "Stewards may not know sufficiently well the tasks of the work groups to represent them effectively in collective bargaining and may even lack sympathy with the attitudes of some groups within their constituencies ..... the importance of group activity can be exaggerated". (1969: 75)

In addition:

> "Evidence suggests, particularly in large plants, that as shop stewards become accepted by management, and as they develop bureaucratic tendencies within their own shop stewards associations, the senior ones become dissociated from the work groups they nominally represent". (1969: 85)

Since the relationships between shop stewards and work groups can vary quite considerably, so too will the extent to which members orient themselves to the plant organization as a collectivity. It is where this orientation is strong that restraints are imposed upon the ability of full-time officials and lay committees to apply sanctions against members of the plant organization.

d) Multi-unionism

Goodman and Whittingham draw attention to the way in which shop stewards associations may develop bureaucratic tendencies and hence produce a rift between stewards and workplace members. These associations are often composed of a number of unions and pose difficulties of control not only for members but also for higher levels in the collectivities. McCarthy (1966) notes that where multi-unionism exists individual union control becomes difficult.

The TUC report of 1960 stated that:

> "cases of muddle, duplication and even conflict have arisen through these bodies acting as though they were independent of union obligations". (TUC 1960: 129)

Problems of control arise particularly when one union is attempting to impose a policy on the workshops whereas the other unions are not. With reference to an overtime agreement in the 'Leachester' district, Boraston et al found that:

> "Control was probably effective among the skilled workers but production workers were divided between several unions, and the other unions had little

> regard for the agreement. There was therefore no means of ensuring control of overtime worked by members of the union (AEU) on production". (1975: 35)

A similar point is made by Turner, Clark and Roberts (1967: 205), and by Hyman and Fryer (1975: 155) who comment:

> "For where, as normally happens, the shop stewards of different unions in the same factory act jointly, control from above by the full-time officials of the various unions is very difficult. This point is of some relevance for the question of control by union leaderships....."

e) Other sources of workshop organization independence.

To some extent the factors already considered will, by making plant organizations less liable to sanctions, be sources of independence from control by full time officials and the district committee. There are, however, a number of other factors which will allow workshop organizations to build up their strength within a plant and hence become less dependent on union assistance. McCarthy (1966) identifies the state of the labour market, the socio-technical system of the plant, the level of decision-taking, the wage structure, the scope of agreements, and employer, union and work group attitudes as the main determinants of the behaviour and influence of shop stewards. Goodman and Whittingham (1969) see the influence of shop stewards in a plant as being much more a function of trade union organization. In particular they identify multi-unionism, branch apathy, vague rule books, the paucity of full-time officials and the role of shop stewards as work group leaders, as contributing to what they call 'shop steward power'; though in addition they also mention loose industry bargaining and the willingness of management to concede to force.

However, Boraston et al (1975) suggest that from the evidence of their studies many of the factors considered above are not as important as has been thought. For example, it does not appear to have made much difference to workshop independence whether branches

are organized geographically (when apathy is said to be highest) or on the workplace. Similarly they found that "the availability of full-time officers therefore has an effect on workplace independence, but the studies also show there are limits to this effect". In addition, "the case studies produced no instances of a wide scope for bargaining encouraging independence" (1975: 167 and 180).

The variable that they found to be of the greatest importance was the size of the workplace organization, since the larger this is, the greater the resources at its disposal and the more independent its behaviour. In addition to the size factor they argued that resources will be larger the greater the unity within a workplace organization, the trade union experience of its members and their status as employees.

In view of these difficulties in achieving control over workshop organizations, and in particular in applying sanctions, it is easy to agree with Goodman and Whittingham when they argue:

> "Unions have little effective redress against the steward who occasionally exceeds his authority and assumes the powers to extend his role" (1969: 178).

And similarly with Boraston et al when, with particular reference to district committees in the AEU, they state that:

> "There was little they could do to impose their standards upon powerful workplace organizations which chose to keep their affairs to themselves". (1975: 85)

Negotiation of legitimacy and allocational norms

As was noted in the introduction, 'areas of autonomy' are part of the negotiated order between shop stewards and other hierarchical collectivities in the trade union. The questions of autonomy and legitimacy occur at the outset of this case study in what may be termed 'overt negotiation', though the outcome was probably not the one intended by either party to the negotiation.

Nevertheless this outcome was used as a source of legitimacy twenty-two years later. The problem arose with a dispute during the Second World War between the shop stewards of the AEU and those of the ETU on the works committee, concerning the type of procedure to be followed in the factory. The ETU claimed that an arrangement had been reached with management allowing the ETU chief shop steward to approach the superintendents or higher management without the consent of the works committee man for the area concerned. An AEU member objected to this with the result that the works committee (which at that time had a majority of AEU members) repudiated the agreement, on the grounds that they could not agree to one union being in a favoured position. Mr Blackwell, the ETU chief steward had brought the question up on the Area Committee of the ETU and they had endorsed the procedural agreement he had reached with management.

At a joint meeting of representatives of the ETU and AEU, held on the 29th January 1946, Hugh Scanlon, the AEU Convenor of Shop Stewards, put forward the opinion that a question of principle was involved - should the sole responsibility for negotiations rest with the works committee or should any separate union be entitled to carry on negotiations without the knowledge of the works committee? He suggested that the procedure which the ETU were attempting to establish was entirely cutting out the works committee procedure and would mean each separate union conducted its own negotiations.

It can easily be seen that Hugh Scanlon's question of principle was anything but an either/or problem. He posed the two possibilities as being 'sole responsibility' with the works committee, or 'without the knowledge of' the works committee. Clearly, these are rather extreme alternatives but nevertheless the joint meeting resolved:

> "That the Works Committee shall be solely responsible for negotiations within the firm".

Of course this resolution established an awkward precedent with regard to the position of full-time officers and the district committee. The Executive Council of the AEU in a letter to the district committee (dated 25th February) noted this resolution but asked for its terms to be made clear with respect to the position of full-time officers. There appears to be no evidence of whether this was ever done, but the resolution was never amended.

It should be noted that the reasons for this dispute were more than just inter-union rivalry. By putting responsibility for negotiations onto the works committee the resolution gave added importance to the role of the AEU Convener, a post held at this time by Hugh Scanlon, then a member of the Communist Party and a notable local militant. Similarly, the repudiation of the agreement achieved by the ETU reduced the role of the ETU chief shop steward, Mr Blackwell, a prominent local Catholic and Labour Party supporter. Not only were there factional problems between the two unions but also within them, particularly within the ETU. In late 1948 Blackwell had his credentials withdrawn by the ETU district committee after a minor shop dispute in which a Communist shop steward of the same union was involved. As Turner says:

> "Many of the inter-union and politico-religious conflicts which culminated in the Blackwell affair of 1948 had centred in this body (the Works Committee at Metropolitan-Vickers)." (1950: 208)

The AEU district committee, under whose auspices the joint meeting had been held, was probably fairly satisfied with the outcome as Hugh Scanlon, a district committee member himself, appeared to have a good relationship with the committee and kept them fully informed of developments within the plant. In 1947, however, he was elected to the post of Divisional Organiser and his place as AEU convenor was taken by Bert Brennan who had been his deputy.

Power testing and legitimation: Phase I

It was not until late 1951 that the first of the major difficulties

arose between the district committee and the works committee. The issue was the dismissal of a Mr B. Rothman, an AEU shop steward and works committee man (though not on the district committee). Rothman was a militant shop steward who spoke of himself as "a thorn in the side of the management", and it was believed by the district committee that his dismissal was directly related to his trade union activities. At a full district committee meeting on the 22nd November 1961 standing orders were suspended to hear representatives from Metropolitan-Vickers who had stopped work because of his dismissal.

The dispute arose on the 20th November when a welder was given a job to do without a fitter, previous practice in the works being that the fitter worked in conjunction with the welder. The welder was instructed to proceed with the job under threat of dismissal. Three leading stewards all viewed the work concerned and agreed that it was a fitter and welder's job, whereupon the men in the department stopped work.

Rothman decided to call a meeting in his own department, at which it was decided to support the action of the men in the department where the dispute had arisen. He was dismissed for 'participating in a stoppage', and as a result the men in the West Works stopped work. At a meeting following the stoppage they decided that they were not prepared to resume work until Rothman was reinstated.

Hugh Scanlon (now Divisional Organiser) and the District Secretary, at the factory for a works conference on other matters, heard of the dispute and asked Bert Brennan to arrange an informal meeting with the Assistant Works Manager, Mr Main. Through the shop stewards the men were asked to resume work to allow these informal discussions to take place, and this they did. However, at this informal meeting between the Divisional Organiser, the District Secretary and the management, the management refused to expand on the statement that Rothman was dismissed for participating in a stoppage, though Mr Main, the district committee was told, said, 'This is a question

for the management to decide, I am running this factory and I am going to have discipline'.

When the results of this meeting became known the men in the West Works again stopped work, and this was how the situation stood when the district committee met on the 22nd November. Considerable discussion took place and the following resolution was moved and seconded:

> "That this district committee is of the opinion that the week's notice given to Brother Rothman is a straightforward case of victimisation and constitutes a threat to the shop stewards in the area.
>
> It further declares its appreciation of the action taken by the workers in the West Works and hereby decides to call a meeting of all members at Metropolitan-Vickers on Friday noon 23rd November 1967 to call support of the action taken by the members in the West Works".

An amendement was then put that the second part of the resolution should be deleted and "that a meeting of workers be called by the Works Committee on this issue" be inserted. The voting on the amendment was 14-14 and the President ruled that the resolution was not carried. A further amendment was put that the second part of the resolution should read:

> "It further declares its appreciation of the action taken by the workers of the West Works and instructs the AEU Convenor to call a meeting of our members on Friday 23rd November 1957 on this issue".

The second amendment was carried 13 votes to 12, and the whole resolution was carried 19 to 4.

From the narrowness in the voting margins on the second part of the resolution it seems clear that there was a large split of opinion within the district committee, the main area of difference being whether or not to try to spread the stoppage from the West Works to other parts of the Metropolitan-Vickers factory. Though he was a district committee member, Bert Brennan was not present at this meeting. The day following the meeting the District Secretary rang Brennan to inform him of the district committee's resolution. The content of their phone call became a source of some con-

fusion, Brennan claiming initially (in a report submitted through the Divisional Organiser) that the District Secretary had instructed him to call a meeting to gain support. At a later sub-committee meeting after the strike Brennan conceded that the Secretary had not actually used those words, but that the implication was the same (Letter from A. Jones, District Secretary, to Ben Gardner, General Secretary 25.1.51). Brennan did not call the meeting as the committee instructed, and indeed, the works committee, led by Brennan, urged the men in the West Works to return to work. His view was that attempting to make an issue of the dismissal could only jeopardise the relationships between the works committee and the Metropolitan-Vickers management. In addition, the Stretford (local) Branch of the ETU, containing 1500 members (many at Metropolitan-Vickers) declared itself against the strike. Two important sources of legitimation for Brennan's approach may be observed here. Firstly, as was noted in Chapter Four, shop stewards may need to preserve the relationship with management if they are to retain the support of the instrumentally oriented members in the plant. Secondly, support came from the other main union on the works committee.

The District Secretary wrote to Brennan instructing that no sub-committee minutes of the works committee meetings were to be signed until the matter had been discussed with officials, so that their case should not be weakened at Central Conference (Works and Local Conferences having registered failure to agree), as Rothman claimed that the minutes were inaccurate. The Secretary of the works committee was also told this over the phone, but nevertheless Brennan and the Works Committee Secretary allowed the minutes to be accepted.

In the West Works a strike committee was formed, backed by the district committee, and a number of pamphlets entitled 'Unity' were issued in support of the strike. On the 26th November a special meeting of all AEU shop stewards at Metropolitan-Vickers was addressed by the Divisional Organiser and District Secretary. Estimates of the number on strike varied

from 2,800 claimed by the strike committee to 654 claimed by the management. It is clear, however, that the attempt to spread the strike had failed. Indeed, the works committee now declared itself united in support of the dismissal of Rothman. By the end of November work had been resumed. The passive membership had exercised an arbitral role by refusing to go on strike and thus had registered their support for the Convenor and the works committee.

On the 17th January the number one sub-committee held an inquiry into what had happened at Metropolitan-Vickers, particularly with reference to the failure of the strike. Summoned to attend were the AEU Convenor (Brennan) the Secretary of the Works Committee (a Mr Purcell), Mr Rothman and a witness in his favour (a Mr Shaw). The meeting began by considering the letter from the District Secretary to the Convenor, stating that no sub-committee minutes of works committee meetings held in the factory should be agreed with the Employers until the matter had been discussed with the officials. Brennan replied that the minutes referred to had been accepted as a correct record by the negotiating sub-committee, by the workers' side of the works committee, and by the chief stewards of the five unions concerned. There is a clear implication that he considered this to be more than sufficient to accept the minutes without consulting the officers. There also seems to be very little the number one sub-committee could do about it. The meeting then moved on to consider why Brennan had refused the instruction to hold a mass meeting.

He said that C. Renshaw and J. Crawford (both militant shop-stewards at Metropolitan-Vickers and district committee members) had contacted him the morning after the district committee meeting and told him of the decision. He was under the impression that they had brought the message from the District Secretary but later found that this was not true. Renshaw said that he felt Brennan should be made aware of the committee's decision before he got a garbled report from workers in the shop who had attended the meeting (and Crawford supported this). A member of the ETU

was present in the stewards room at the time and Renshaw had not been prepared to discuss the decision of the committee in his presence.

Brennan agreed that the District Secretary did not use the words 'to gain support for our members in dispute' but claimed that the 'inference' of the resolution was to gain support, and it was for this reason that he felt unable to justify holding the meeting. In reply to questions he said that he felt he could have negotiated the reinstatement of Rothman if the men had returned to work, and that Rothman had contributed to his dismissal by taking part in irregular action, though he had to agree that other men had taken part in the same action without being dismissed. Purcell supported Brennan's argument, though Shaw said he was fully satisfied that it was victimisation. When Rothman argued that Brennan had initially agreed that it was victimisation, Brennan replied that this was because he had been misinformed by a number of members, including Rothman.

Brennan was asked if he would attend the district office when requested by the officials to discuss points made by the Employers at the Local Conference, and he replied by saying that he was a member of the Union and was always prepared to comply with the rules of the Society.

The sub-committee then passed the following resolutions:

> "That this committee reaffirms the decision already taken by the district committee that Rothman was victimised by his dismissal under the circumstances and the evidence considered tonight".
>
> "That this committee, having heard the statements by Brother Brennan are fully satisfied that the District Secretary at no stage instructed the convenor to call a meeting 'with a view to gaining support for our members in dispute'."
>
> "Failing to get a satisfactory decision at Central Conference on this case the district committee review the future supply of labour to Metropolitan-Vickers including dilution".
>
> "That at the appropriate time the District Secretary and Divisional Organiser attend a meeting of AEU shop stewards with a view to strengthening the organization and explaining the position of the district committee and officials in this matter".

Legitimation from management, from other stewards on the works committee and contingent legitimation from the membership (except those in the West Works) supported the Convenor in this dispute. It is clear that the competition was arbitrated in the Convenor's favour by the other stewards and by the passive membership.

The Convenor later received support from the Executive Council as well. Early in December the Executive Council were willing to pay the dispute benefit to the members who had stopped work, and full wage benefit (equal to the 'district rate' and payable when a job has been lost as a consequence of union business) to Rothman. But on the 19th December they sent a letter refusing to pay the benefit, basing their decision on the report of the dispute sent to them by Brennan. In this letter they said that they felt the men were unwise not to follow the advice of their own elected representatives and to grant benefit would be tantamount to a repudiation of the advice which the works committee gave. The Executive Council did later relent however and paid dispute benefit, but the case itself was never resolved in Rothman's favour.

The Convenor and managerial legitimation

Though not in itself a very important incident, it may be useful to illustrate the strains in the district committee-Convenor relationship created by the Convenor's perceived need to maintain the support of management for his role. Batstone et al suggest that:

> "In a sense all domestic organizations are highly dependent upon management". (1977: 131)

And Walton and McKersie (1965: 201) have shown how managements and Convenors or leading stewards have an interest in protecting and maintaining the power of the other.

On the 24th February 1952 a letter from the Salford 4th Branch was considered by the number two sub-committee. A member of the branch, Mr H. Wrigley, had been late returning to work at Metropolitan-Vickers after the one hour's extension to the dinner break on the 24th December,

and the firm had refused to pay him for the two statutory holidays. The Convenor's observations had been requested and these stated that the works committee had negotiated for the whole factory to have one hour's allowable lateness on Christmas Eve, and as all workers knew the penalty for lateness beforehand the works committee could not support the claim. The district committee resolved:

> "That we instruct the Convenor to register 'failure to agree' in order that application for a Works Conference can be made".

However, Brennan did not register 'failure to agree'. When the case was reconsidered by the number three sub-committee two months later he told them that he had been informed by Mr Main, the Assistant Works Manager, that if the case of Wrigley was pressed the concession would be withdrawn for the whole works in future. The reason for the delay, he said, was in exhausting procedure in the factory. The sub-committee considered the position and resolved:

> "That this committee regret the delay of correspondence in answer to the letter of the 25th February but in view of the statements made we await a full report of the position to date".

An amendment, "That we accept Brother Brennan's explanation of this case" was defeated, and the resolution carried by five votes to two.

At the next meeting of the number three sub-committee (on the 1st May) the Convenor's report was considered. This merely reiterated that management had stated that if the matter went into the procedure the concession would be withdrawn. The sub-committee resolved:

> "That the district committee reaffirm its previous decision to instruct the Convenor to register 'failure to agree'."

Voting on this resolution was two in favour and two against, and it was declared carried by the Chairman.

Three weeks later Brennan resigned from the district committee, giving as his reason pressure of work and responsibility to wife and family.

In a letter to the district committee he said that he would always assist them to the best of his ability and perhaps at some later date he would rejoin.

In the Divisional Organiser's report to the district committee of 10th July 1952 was the item:

> "Metropolitan-Vickers - Works Conference on claim for Christmas holiday pay to a member was not successful".

Power testing and legitimation: Phase II

Though there were minor disputes in the intervening years the next important conflict between the district committee and some members of the AEI works committee occurred in 1964.

A system of four twelve-hour shifts was introduced at the factory, and the district committee insisted that this system must stop. The Convenor was summoned for a breach of the National Agreement, but returned the summons. In view of this refusal to discuss the problem the shop stewards and members at the factory were instructed to cease the practice, shop stewards who failed to do so being threatened with the withdrawal of their credentials.

However, this dispute was not followed up, for in May 1964 it was followed by a more serious dispute, which turned out to be an almost exact repeat of the Rothman case of 1951. This time the man dismissed was Cliff Renshaw, a member of both the district committee and the works committee, and considered to be one of the more militant of the AEI shop stewards. Frank Parker, another militant shop steward from AEI, on both of the committees, gave the district committee his version of what had happened.

Renshaw and three other members were having a chat on the shop floor when the Superintendent approached and asked what they were doing. Renshaw replied "passing the time of day", but when the Superintendent asked another

worker, a stone trimmer, he replied, "Trade Union business". According to Frank Parker, all four workers were dismissed for this. The case was reported to the Convenor and, again according to Parker, it was at Brennan's instigation that Renshaw was given a week's notice. A meeting of members in B Aisle (where the problem arose) decided to place the matter in the hands of the works committee. A sub-committee was set up of five representatives from each of the management and worker's sides but no progress was made. The firm claimed that if the men had been alert they would have seen the Superintendent approach, and in the interests of maintaining discipline the dismissals would have to stand. On the 12th May a meeting of the members (about 500) in B Aisle was held and they decided to withdraw their labour, though Brennan urged them to remain in work.

The district committee meeting, held on the evening of the 12th resolved:

> "That this district committee considers the members concerned were wrongfully dismissed and in the case of Brother Renshaw his discharge constitutes victimisation. We therefore endorse the actions of our members at AEI in withdrawing their labour and instruct the District President and District Secretary to contact our shop stewards for full support of all AEU members in the factory".
>
> "We request Executive Council to give official recognition to this dispute and to protest to the Engineering Employers Federation against the actions of this firm".
>
> "That we call upon Executive Council to give permission to operate Rule 13 Clause 15 for a local levy".
>
> "That the District Secretary be empowered to call a special district committee meeting".

The following day (13th May) the management sent out telegrams to a number of strikers (estimates as to how many received these varied between 200 and 400). The telegram read:

> " 4.5 p m
> Due to your unofficial action not supported by the Works Committee unless you present yourself for work at 7.45 a m tomorrow it will be accepted that you have terminated your employment.
>
> Paterson, Works Manager"

That evening the special meeting of the district committee was held, at which a deputation of shop stewards from AEI gave a report on the dispute. After considerable discussion the following resolutions were passed.

> "We reiterate the district committee decision of 12th May 1964 that all our members be instructed to withdraw their labour".
>
> "That the decisions of this district committee be conveyed to the Convenor for the attention of all AEU shop stewards".
>
> "We condemn the telegram sent to members by the company as denying a fundamental Trade Union right in the right to withdraw labour".
>
> "An approach be made to the ETU for a Joint factory meeting to be held on Friday 15th May at 12.15 p m".
>
> "A letter be sent to the Confederation district committee explaining the decisions of the district committee".

By the 14th May, estimates of how many men were on strike varied from 4,000 (the union estimate) to 2,300 (the management estimate). On the 15th the lunch time meeting of all 12,000 manual workers was held to vote on whether to stage a mass walkout. About 6,000 people turned up to the meeting, though management claimed that these included "many sightseers, staff employees, and people from neighbouring factories". However, the meeting voted in favour of a full stoppage and on the 16th a strike committee was set up.[1] On the following Monday (18th) estimates of how many were on strike varied between 10,000 (Daily Worker), 6,000 (unions) and 3,000 (management). The management continued to blame 'unusual outside pressures' for the strike saying "Management and workpeople alike remain mystified at these persistent outside attempts to intervene in a purely domestic issue".[2] By 'outside' the management was referring particularly to the district committees of the AEU and the ETU, although the strike was also backed by the Confederation (CSEU) district committee.

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[1] An account of the strike and details of the composition of the Committee was published as AEI Voice No 1, May-June 1964 and AEI Voice No 2 June-July 1964.

[2] Guardian, 19th May 1964.

On the 18th May the works committee made its opposition to the strike clearly known. Nearly 500 copies of a statement issued by the works committee were put up all over the factory. These read:

> "The Works Committee dissociates itself from the self-styled AEI strike committee and recommends all workers to return to work forthwith to enable the dispute to be dealt with through the proper domestic and national procedure".

On the 19th another call was made to extend the strike from the 7,000 which the union estimated were on strike to all 12,000 workers in the factory. At this meeting strikers called for the credentials of the works committee stewards to be withdrawn, and Bob Wright, secretary of the Confederation district committee, commented that as seven members of the works committee had joined the strike, the works committee could not issue statements with full authority.

The works committee stewards had also refused to comply with a summons to meet the Confederation district committee "to agree a common policy".

It was on the 20th that the deadlock was broken when the management cancelled the dismissal telegrams to the strikers. Their withdrawal, said Bob Wright, meant that the main obstacle to a resumption of work had been removed. On Thursday 21st the strikers accepted a recommendation from the strike committee and union officials to return to work, with the case of the four men dismissed to be dealt with through the procedural system. As far as the strike is concerned, like the one in 1951 it must be judged a failure. Although the union officials claimed that no 'climb-down' was involved in returning to work, the situation was exactly as it would have been if no strike had taken place, the issue being dealt with through the procedure (a procedure which the events of 1951 and 1952 had shown was unlikely to give the union much satisfaction).

After the strike, the district committee tried to get the Convenor to attend a meeting to give an account of what had happened, but each time he refused. For six months he refused to co-operate in any way with the district committee, sending in no shop stewards quarterly reports and replying only by letter to the numerous demands that he attend the district committee or have his credentials withdrawn. On one occasion he wrote:

> "I will not be in attendance to consider this matter as I consider this to be ultra vires as far as you are concerned".

And on another:

> "I am in receipt of your summons to which I replied on the 28th August 1964; as I am not aware of any other dismissals no further comment is necessary, as I have previously stated".

As in 1951, the district committee got no support from the Executive Council, nor did the Confederation district committee. The Confederation committee had asked the National Executive of the Confederation to investigate the way that the union side of the works committee had behaved. The investigation was carried out by Bill Carron, the AEU President and George Barnett, the General Secretary of the Confederation. However, they concluded that the Confederation district committee had exceeded their rights in backing the strike and organising meetings, and they had no criticisms of the works committee.

The Executive Council at first approved dispute benefit for the members who had gone on strike (at this Executive Council' meeting were W. H. Bradley, P. Hanley, C. Berridge and H. Scanlon, and they voted unanimously to approve benefit), but then later reversed their decision (at the second meeting Scanlon was on annual leave and Carron, Boyd, Tallon and Lewis had returned from theirs). In response to the district committee's protest about this, Executive Council replied that the matter was nothing to do with the district committee as the payment of benefits was a matter between branches and the Executive Council, district committees being informed for information purposes only.

The procedure was then exhausted, 'failure to agree' having been recorded up to and including Central Conference level. When the district committee asked the Executive Council for permission to proceed into dispute with the firm this was refused on the grounds that the Executive Council wanted to be sure that a majority of members in the establishment would support the action.

Knowing that the district committee could not get the Convenor to attend committee meetings (because the district committee had written to ask their advice), the Executive Council said they would only approve a ballot of the membership after the Convenor had attended the district committee to be consulted. They then informed the committee that there was no provision in Rule for summoning members before a sub-committee, though they could fine members for not complying with a summons to attend the full committee. (The district committee appealed against this ruling to the Final Appeal Court, but lost).

When the Convenor again refused to attend a full committee meeting to consider further action at AEI the district committee again asked the Executive Council for advice and Hugh Scanlon (now Executive Council representative for Division Four) attended a sub-committee to discuss the whole question. At this meeting considerable discussion took place and it was resolved:

> "Bearing in mind all the circumstances, and in the best interest of the membership we consider no useful purpose would be served in pursuing this matter. Shop stewards refusing to attend the district committee in future when summoned, this to be dealt with as provided for in Rule 13B Clause 4, lines 39-42". (Members failing to attend, after being duly summoned, may be fined in such sum as the committee may determine, such fine not to exceed 10s).

Thus, even after the strike and the conflict between the district committee and the works committee, the four sacked men did not get their jobs back, no sanctions were applied against Brennan or the other shop stewards, and, if anything, the district committee was in a worse position,

since they had lost one of the rights they thought they had (to summon members compulsorily to sub-committee meetings).

Power testing and legitimation: Phase III

In 1967 AEI was taken over by the General Electric Company (GEC) and then merged with English Electric. The management began to pursue a programme of rationalisation in the factories of the new group. During the second half of the 1960s the number of manual workers at the Trafford Park works was reduced from 12,000 to 5,000, the bulk of the redundancies occurring as a result of the merger.

In response to expressions of concern from the branches, the number one sub-committee was delegated by the district committee in March 1968 to held an enquiry into the possibility of redundancies. The Convenor was summoned to attend but replied by letter, refusing to discuss the problem.

Branches were writing to the District Secretary detailing how the problem was affecting them; for example, two branches wrote to say that apprentices at AEI had been informed that they were liable to be made redundant on reaching 21. The district committee again summoned Brennan to attend but he replied that there was no problem to investigate and that he did not intend to be at the enquiry. The district committee resolved:

> "That we are unable to accept that there are no problems relative to redundancy at AEI and Brother Brennan's refusal to attend the district committee and we impose a fine of 10/- on Brother Brennan".

Complaints about redundancy were still coming from the branches, so at the end of April the number one sub-committee held another enquiry to which Brennan was summoned, but again did not attend. At this enquiry it was reported that the Electronics Department at Trafford Park was undergoing a phased closure over a twelve months period, involving about 500 workers. The shop stewards had not taken steps to deal effectively with the position, and overtime was being worked all over the factory,

including that department. Another member stated that sixteen members had been made redundant in the Meter Department. Overtime was being worked and the Convenor would not consider work-sharing. Yet another 'show-cause' summons was sent to Brennan but he replied:

> "Everything concerning redundancy is quite satisfactory inside the factory irrespective of what anyone may say outside the factory to the contrary ..... I therefore will not waste my time or yours by attending on the question".

In May, Brennan was fined another 10/- for failing to attend the district committee, and still the complaints from branches and members about redundancy at AEI kept reaching the district committee.

The AEU shop stewards at the Wythenshawe transformer factory decided, along with the stewards of the other unions, to form a separate Joint Shop Stewards Committee, unconnected with the works committee at Trafford Park. This was agreed by the district committee and the Trafford Park works committee, and shortly after, the new Convenor at Wythenshawe wrote to the district committee giving full details of the Company's policy relative to redundancy as it affected the Wythenshawe factory (about 300 employees being involved).

In June, Brennan was fined another 10/- for failing to attend the district committee, and he also refused to attend a meeting of officials and shop stewards held to discuss a common policy at AEI. The district committee was forced to the conclusion that it had little option but to withdrawn Brennan's credentials. On the 18th June the number one sub-committee resolved:

> "Recognising the concern of a number of branches regarding redundancies at AEI/GEC Trafford Park and the inability of the district committee to take a decision because of the disregard of Brother Brennan for the district committee, we therefore charge that Brother Brennan has acted contrary to the interests of the membership and under Rule 13 be summoned down to show cause as to why he should not be disciplined".

The resolution was endorsed at the full district committee meeting the following week. When Brennan failed to attend the next full committee meeting (9th July) the district committee resolved unanimously:

> "That the credentials of Brother Brennan as shop steward at AEI, Trafford Park be withdrawn".
>
> "Subject to approval by the Executive Council of the above resolution a meeting be called of all AEU shop stewards at this works to elect a Convenor".

The meeting to elect a new Convenor was held on the 15th August. Forty-two shop stewards were present and a report was given of what had happened between the Convenor and the district committee during the course of the year. Frank Parker (a member of the district committee) was elected as the new Convenor, and three days later the district committee received a letter from the AEI management stating, "We shall be pleased to grant Mr Parker the usual facilities for Convenor in this factory". It is difficult to assess precisely what this meant in terms of the relationship between the new Convenor and the management. At face value it would seem to mean that Parker had received the legitimation of management.

However, other AEU shop stewards refused to co-operate with Parker, and less than two weeks after the election they were summoned to attend the number one sub-committee to explain their refusal. Only one of the six AEU shop stewards on the works committee attended, though Parker said he had issued summonses to them all. Two men had 'refused point-blank' to attend, and the others had decided not to attend after some discussion. All five were issued with 'show-cause' summonses but again refused to attend, and were fined 10/-. A further resolution was passed to the effect that they be summoned to attend, to 'show-cause' why their shop stewards credentials should not be withdrawn.

On the 19th September the District Secretary received a letter from the Executive Council deploring the attitude of the shop stewards, and suggesting that if they failed to carry out their undertakings in accordance

with Rule, they would consider action in accordance with Rule 13 Clause 10, lines 1-9 (That district committee resolutions be enforceable by a £5 fine, suspension from benefits, or expulsion from the union). This letter was read at the plant to the shop stewards concerned but they still refused to attend. Early in October the district committee resolved to withdraw their credentials and to hold a meeting of all AEU shop stewards at the works. At this meeting the five indicated their willingness to attend the district committee, so they were summoned once more. On the 29th October they attended the number one sub-committee to 'show-cause' why their credentials should not be withdrawn.

They explained that as works committee members they were in an awkward position. The Convenor (Brennan) had refused to attend the district committee as the works committee considered that the problem affected all unions in the factory; and they felt they should support him in this issue. As they said they would support the district committee in future the sub-committee resolved:

> "That we accept the assurance that shop stewards present will attend the district committee when summoned to do so. Under these circumstances we reverse the decision to withdraw their shop stewards credentials".

The stewards' point illustrates the rival claims for the Convenor's loyalty by the district committee and the works committee. The Convenor chose to act as a representative of the multi-union workers' side of the works committee rather than as an AEU representative in the firm. According to the stewards he was thus entitled to receive, and got, their support in any dispute with the AEU hierarchy that this may have produced.

Even though the stewards agreed to support the district committee, Frank Parker continued to have 'difficulties' doing the job of Convenor at Trafford Park. A further sub-committee enquiry was carried out, at which Parker, Brennan and the other AEU members of works committee attended.

Brennan referred to the decision of the district committee in 1946, when the AEU and ETU had been in conflict. He quoted from the minutes:

> "That the Works Committee shall be solely responsible for negotiations within the firm".

He had no intention of breaking Rule, he said, the whole thing had been a misunderstanding and the organization was bigger than himself. He stated that he would attend the district committee when summoned, and when asked by the Chairman if he was asking for the return of his credentials he said 'yes'. The sub-committee resolved:

> "That we accept Brother Brennan's assurance that he would attend the district committee when summoned".
>
> "That we accede to Brother Brennan's request to restore his credentials".
>
> "That the district committee call a meeting of all AEI/GEC shop stewards at an early date to report on district committee decisions".

This meeting was held at the end of November 1968 and Parker tendered his resignation as Convenor. When voting for the new Convenor took place Brennan was elected with 28 votes against Parker's 10. It is clear from these voting figures that Brennan continued to have the support of the majority of AEU stewards in the plant. Though his statements at the meeting might appear to indicate a resolution of the competition in favour of the district committee, it is clear that this meeting was only a face saving exercise. The lack of support for the district committee's nominee as Convenor was the crucial arbitral factor.

On the 3rd December a letter from the Executive Council was read to the full district committee meeting:

> "The Executive Council is gravely concerned at the reasoning of the members summoned from GEC/AEI Trafford Park. The plea that obligations to a body outwith the structure of this Union exempts such individuals from the authority of the district committee is completely unacceptable to the Executive Council.
>
> No member of our union can represent or act on behalf of our union, or its members, in any capacity, outwith the provisions of Rule 13 and the approval of Executive Council.

> Attention is drawn to Rule 13 Clause 10 which gives power to the district committee to pass resolutions on subject matters affecting the remainder of Rule 13 which, when approved by Executive Council, shall be binding upon all members working in the respective districts.
>
> Executive Council feel that there is no ambiguity about that phrase and attention should specifically be drawn to the fact that Rule 13 Clause 10 also provides for the enforcement of this clause by fine, suspension from benefits, or by expulsion.
>
> Referring to recent circumstances within GEC/AEI Trafford Part the Executive Council expects the district committee to act strictly in accordance with the provisions of Rule 13 Clause 10 should repetition of these circumstances take place in future. The Executive Council will not tolerate individuals or groups of individuals seeking to undermine or set aside the authority of the district committee. If such individuals have reason to complain then there is adequate scope within Rule 20."
> (Rule 20 refers to the complaints and appeals procedure).

This letter from the Executive Council is of course in complete contrast to the one they sent to the district committee on the 19th December 1951, in which they refused to pay dispute benefit to the members who had gone on strike, because they followed the instructions of the district committee, and not those of "their elected representatives", the works committee. However, this seems to be more a reflection of the changing composition of the Executive Council than a conversion to the notion of district committee authority on the part of the Council members of 1951.

In January 1970 the Convenor was criticised by the district committee for the Christmas Holiday arrangements and a piecework agreement negotiated by the works committee. In January 1971 the Convenor was fined £5 for allowing the same Christmas Holiday arrangements to be implemented.

Conclusions

Having considered in some detail the three incidents which make up this case study it is now possible to re-emphasise some key features of the control model. One of the first conclusions that emerges from the case study is that the orientations of the Convenor and the AEU members of the works committee were much more strongly directed towards the plant organization as a collectivity than towards the district committee. This generalis-

ation should be modified in at least two ways. Firstly, it is notable that in the first few years of the study the Convenor (Brennan) was a member of the district committee, both while Scanlon was Convenor (up to 1947) and then for a few years after (up to 1952). As one of the shop stewards later expressed the problem, a conflict between the district committee and the works committee placed works committee members "in an awkward position". It would seem that by his membership Brennan must initially have been orientated towards both committees. It was after he became Convenor and a conflict of orientations arose that the orientation to the district committee became weak (so that he left) and later appeared to become antagonistic as the conflict strengthened. The evidence is that Brennan was strongly oriented towards the principle of collective organization but that he saw this principle as best served by the plant organization. As Fox puts it:

> "The relevance and importance of these different levels of collective organization tends to fluctuate according to which goals are most immediately pressing and which level is perceived as most effective for their satisfaction". (1971: 111)

The second modification of the generalisation is that the AEU members of the works committee did not always represent a unified group. Usually there were some members from this committee sitting on the district committee and these too might be expected to face a problem of conflicting loyalties. (For example, Renshaw, Crawford and Parker). From the evidence it would appear that these members were more strongly oriented to the district committee.

However, as the incidents progressed the antagonism between the two groups became greater, and it would seem reasonable to say that, in terms of the model, the congruence between the decisions which the district committee tried to impose and the expectations of the works committee was extremely low. In the two dismissal cases the district committees decision was to call a strike, and this was opposed by the works committee who preferred to negotiate.

The problem of legitimation of district committee decisions occurs at several points in the case study. The resolution passed in 1946 giving the works committee sole negotiating rights in the factory appears to have provided the Convenor with at least a bureaucratic rationalisation for his actions. He could claim, as he did in 1968, that his actions were legitimated by this resolution and that the district committee and district officials had no right to intervene in negotiations within the factory.

As far as the application of sanctions is concerned it would appear to have been necessary to apply sanctions against the works committee members, and the Convenor in particular, in each of the three main cases. That is, in terms of the model, because of the orientations, the degree of congruence and the perceptions of legitimacy, sanctions were necessary in each case. However, they were not applied until the last case. This seems to be a reflection of the degree of independence which the plant organization had developed. The problem of 'information flows' was not that the district committee received no accounts of events, because these were related (though perhaps with some bias) almost as soon as they took place, and in the redundancy case a lot of information came from the branches. The problem was the lack of formal means of conveying district committee decisions to the Convenor and works committee and perhaps more importantly to the membership in the plant. The Convenor was in a much better position to receive the support of the membership because of his superior 'linkages' (to use Pettigrew's term) with them. The problems of multi-unionism and work group support appear to have been much more important constraints on committee application of sanctions. The likelihood is that sanctions would have been ineffective. This proposition can be tested against the evidence of the last case (redundancies) where it can be seen that in the long run the sanctions were ineffective. The source of Brennan's 'power' vis-a-vis the district committee appears to lie in the support which he received from other members of the works committee, from the majority of other AEU

shop stewards in the plant, from the management, from the Executive Council and from the plant membership. Though it has not been revealed by the incidents in this case, it was suggested to me that when the plant dominated the district membership statistics, the district and even national full-time officers tended to seek Brennan's favour for electoral support.

Until the district committee had applied sanctions against the other AEU members of the works committee it was not possible even to attempt to control the AEU section of the plant organization. Although the immediate response was favourable in that Brennan and the other stewards asked for their credentials to be returned and agreed to abide by district committee decisions, the longer affect was less favourable.

The model may now be interpreted directly using the evidence of the case study:

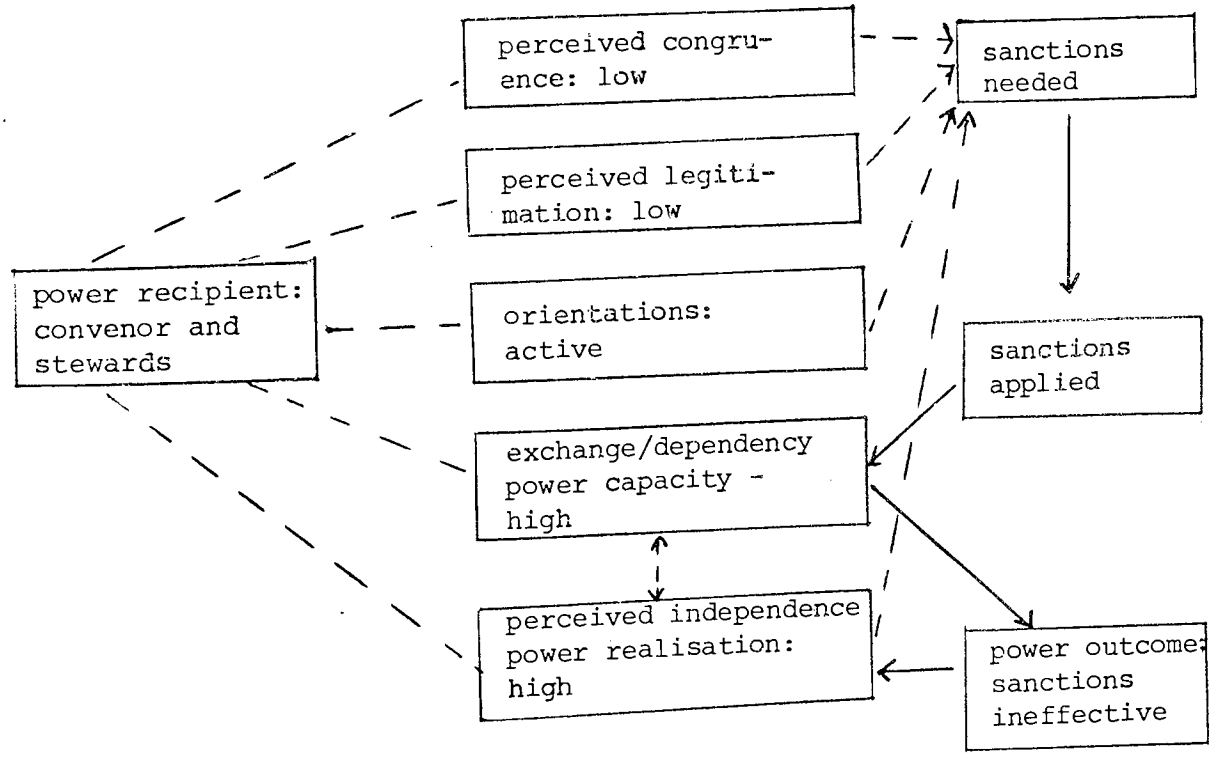

Figure 13: The process model and conflict with a workshop organization

The refusal to recognise the decisions as legitimate stems from two sources; firstly from the belief that the district committee had no right to intervene in plant affairs - "I consider this to be ultra vires as far

as you are concerned" (Brennan, 1964), and secondly, that being elected directly by the workforce at the plant they had more right to control plant affairs; a view supported at the time by the Executive Council - "the men were unwise not to follow the advice of their own elected representatives" (Executive Council, 1951)

In each of the three phases of power testing the Convenor received sufficient legitimation for his activities to achieve a favourable outcome. In the first strike incident he received the support of all the identifiable sources of legitimacy, and the passive membership arbitrated the dispute in his favour. In the second strike incident the district committee attempted to regain some legitimacy by obtaining the support of the multi-union district committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (C.S.E.U.) but legitimation was denied to this collectivity as well (for example, the report of enquiry into the dispute by the union leadership criticised the CSEU district committee for overstepping its role). Although more of the membership followed the district committees' strike call, the management, some stewards, some of the membership, and the union leaderships were collectively too 'powerful' for the district committee. The case was again resolved in the Convenor's favour.

The experience of these incidents contributed to the decision to withdraw credentials in the third incident. Not only had legitimacy broken down between the Convenor and the district committee (as in all previous cases) but it had been shown that arbitrated outcomes had favoured the Convenor. The application of sanctions thus represented an attempt to 'internalise' the outcome, by the production of a 'negotiated outcome'. Despite this intention the outcome was arbitrated by the other stewards on the works committee, who refused to co-operate with the district committee's nominated Convenor. The sanctions were thus rendered ineffective. Similar findings were reported by Batsone et al (1977). Looking at policy differences between full-time officers and the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, they found that where a Convenors' coalition disagreed with a

full-time officers' coalition, the Convenors' coalition more frequently won. They note:

> "The Convenors, then, were sufficiently powerful generally to win the day". (1977: 200)

PART THREE : RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT : AN EVALUATION OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE MODEL

I began this study with an attempt to clarify those areas into which the analysis of power and control may be conveniently categorised. These are the theoretically and empirically contingent (or even symbiotic) problems of definition, empirical measurement, and explanation, and it is appropriate to begin a review of the study in terms of this categorisation.

Definition

The tradition in which my definition of power (and related concepts) can be located is that begun by Weber and developed by writers such as Dahl in the pluralist framework. The essential features of such a definition are that power is a property or feature of a relationship, rather than of an individual or group (elite), that the recipient in the relationship acts contrary to his own preferences or interests, and that authority (or as some writers prefer, domination) is a form of power which is in some way legitimated by the recipient in the relationship. This could be taken to imply that the recipient's preferences are congruent with the instructions of a legitimate authority, but this is not necessarily the case. Rather, Weber was concerned to show that in an authority relationship, compliance would be forthcoming whatever the recipient's initial preferences. It is for this reason that authority may be viewed as a type of power. In a relationship of legal-rational authority subordinates accept the 'commands' or 'demands' of superiors precisely because 'subordination' and 'superiority' are defined in terms of a set of rules, which are in turn legitimated.

> "In this type, an individual who holds authority does so in virtue of impersonal norms which are not the residue of tradition, but which have been consciously established within a context of either purposive or value rationality. Those who are subject to authority obey their superordinate, not because of any personal dependence on him, but because of their acceptance of the impersonal norms which define that authority ..... Those subject to legal authority owe no personal allegiance to a superordinate, and follow his commands only within the restricted sphere in which his jurisdiction is clearly specified", (Giddens, 1971: 157)

I have suggested that these norms, or rules, may themselves be the outcome of power relations. Hyman and Fryer (1975) take this argument to imply that the distinction between power and authority is therefore unimportant. However, this would appear to deny the importance of the perceptions of the relationship held by the recipient and thus restrict the analysis of behaviour to a narrow definition of 'objective' interests. The concept of 'false consciousness', employed by writers such as Hyman and Fryer or Lukes (1974), discounts the value of actors' perceptions and transfers this value to the investigator's perceptions, a procedure which, as Martin (1977) suggests, contains a degree of arrogance.

It has been shown that the notion of rule is critical to an understanding of power relations in the AUEW. Fletcher has noted how trade unionists adopt a 'meticulous and legalistic attitude towards the rule book', and the cases have shown the importance of 'legitimation under rule' in the process of competition resolution. The distinction between authority and other forms of power has been demonstrated to have been of crucial value in interpreting both the 'taken-for-grantedness' of power relations and overt conflicts.

Control was defined as the outcome of a power relationship; the end to which power is the means. This definition contrasts sharply with Tannenbaum's (1968) view that the concepts of power and control may be regarded as synonymous, a view which fails to distinguish between the properties of a relationship (power) and the properties of action (control).

The other essential feature of Weber's definition of power and authority is embodied in the phrase "follow his commands only within the restricted sphere in which his jurisdiction is clearly specified". Though pertaining to legal-rational authority, the phrase draws attention to the non-generalisable character of power relationships, a principle central to the pluralist tradition of power analysis, and which informs the methodology for power identification and measurement.

Identification and measurement

The research was sensitised from the outset towards power relationships in broad sympathy with the Weberian perspective on power and politics. Mommsen says of Weber's work:

> "Not only did he contend that power is the very essence of politics, but he went so far as to define political systems primarily in terms of power relationships. To Weber, almost any social relationship is or can be interpreted as a display of power, however, indirectly this may be done". (Mommsen 1974: 36).

The orientation towards union hierarchies was from the perspective of political systems analysis and, as in Weber's work, power is considered to be the essence of politics. The examination of trade union political systems was framed initially in terms of the debate around trade union democracy, particularly the efficiency versus representation arguments. As the study progressed it appeared to me, as to Banks (1974), that trade union political systems correspond more to the idea of polyarchic government than to either democratic or oligarchic government. The distinction between active and passive democracies paved the way for a dichotomous categorisation of member orientations to their unions in terms of active and passive orientations. It was suggested that in most unions, but in the AUEW particularly, activists are distributed throughout the union hierarchy and the union's political life is pervaded by the 'competitions' between the active members of each collectivity in the hierarchy for control over areas of decision-making (autonomy) or over specific decisions. Thus the political systems of trade unions were found to be pluralistic in general and polyarchic in particular, with the AUEW outstanding among trade unions as an example of the polyarchic type. However, political structures (constitutions) by themselves do not constitute the sole determinant of action. As Martin (1977) and Hemingway (1978) suggest:

> "Variations in the administrative and political structure of unions, and the environments within which they operate, condition but do not determine the distribution of power: they can make it more or less difficult for union leaders to 'control' their members, or the reverse". (Martin 1977: 140)

> "..... members may find it necessary to go beyond the constitutional arrangements for democracy in order to exert control over their leaders". (Hemingway, 1978: 3)

Commitment, participation, abilities and perceptions mediate between structure and action, so that the analysis must extend beyond structure in order to observe and explain action.

The method most suited to this observation is the issues approach, embodying as it can, both the pluralistic perspective of power relationships and the action approach to theory and empiricism. The issues approach focuses attention on the production of outcomes in a 'bargaining' or competitive process. In the discussion of the nature of trade union polyarchy two types of outcome were identified. A negotiated outcome is produced when the collectivities settle their difference between them, the outcome being determined by 'internal' sources of authority and other forms of power. An arbitrated outcome is produced when the collectivities appeal to agencies external to the competition. This dichotomy was found to be particularly useful in identifying the sources of legitimacy within a polyarchy.

If the issues approach has a weakness it is that by focusing on observable cases of conflict it fails to take into account the underlying structure of power and domination. The most successful exercise of power, it can be argued, is that which is never challenged, either because it is so absolute (as Bachrach and Baratz (1962, 1965) imply) or because it is invisible (as Lukes (1974) implies). The force of these arguments cannot be ignored, highlighting as they do the superficiality of an unmodified issues approach. This study has attempted to overcome this difficulty by additionally directing attention to those sources of power that are usually unarticulated, and as Chapter Eight concluded:

> "Control is achieved without explicit reference to the rules or to resources of exchange and information. Though polyarchy has been characterised in terms of competing collectivities, such competition will be predominantly latent rather than manifest".

These sources of power form part of the third area of enquiry, that of the explanation of power.

Explanation

The distinction between authority and other forms of power draws attention to the different sources or bases on which different types of power rest. French and Raven's (1959) fivefold classification of the bases of social power provided the starting point for the analysis of the explanation of power, these five types being reduced in this study to three; firstly, exchange and interdependence; secondly, negative sanctions; and thirdly, legitimation.

The exchange/dependency theory as developed by Blau (1967) and Emerson (1962) has found its way into organizational analysis largely through strategic contingencies theory. Imbalances in the interdependence of organizational sub-units set up a network of power relationships. The explanation of power is thus located in the structural dimensions of the organization, and for this reason Clegg (1975) has argued that the theory is too static. What Clegg suggests and what this study has stressed is that the perceptions of the structural conditions are as important determinants of action as those conditions themselves (assuming an objective definition is even feasible).

Crozier expresses the perspective of strategic contingencies theory in a more acceptable vein:

> "Strategic analysis consists in using the comments of the actors to trace the different sources of their conflicts and then in analysing, through key decisions concerning those conflicts, the type of solution usually arrived at and thereby the implicit kind of game that is being played". (1972: 242)

Perceptions thus form the bridge between structure and strategy (action) and the exchange/dependency explanation is only viable in the context of a research process which focusses on the actors' interpretations (meanings) placed on the relationship. In particular I have argued that it is the

recipient in a hypothesised power relationship which is the empirically relevant unit of study.

Sanctions are closely related to exchange and interdependence, in that the degree of dependence in part determines the ability to avoid sanctions. Power is here related to the strength of the sanctions available, modified by strategies for avoidance.

However, I have argued that in the explanation of power within a trade union legitimate authority takes precedence over both exchange/dependency and sanctions. Martin notes that:

> "Where dependences are balanced, and it is relatively easy for subordinates to escape, power is likely to be based upon authority: the relationships can only be preserved with the consent of the subordinate". (1977: 56)

In the absence of any closed shop agreement we may recognise this as a description of a polyarchic political system in a trade union. The essence of authority is legitimation and two classifications of legitimation have been identified in this study; firstly, the internal and external classification; and secondly, the contingent and non-contingent classification. Where outcomes are negotiated in a polyarchic competition then the competitors may appeal to internal sources of legitimacy such as the rule book, or general principles of democracy (such as the electoral principle) or general principles of trade unionism (such as the solidarity principle). However, competitors may appeal to external agencies such as the passive membership to legitimise their actions; and arbitrated outcomes thus rest on external legitimation. The case study of arbitrated outcomes reveals how the passive membership conferred legitimacy on the work-shop organization in preference to the district committee.

What is the basis of external legitimation? Here the distinction between contingent and non-contingent legitimacy is useful. Fox (1971) suggests that the trade union member will legitimise that collectivity (or official) which satisfies his expectations. For a collectivity to satisfy these expectations it may require legitimation from another

source. Thus a collectivity recognised (legitimated) by management for bargaining purposes will be legitimated by those shop floor members with primarily instrumental orientations.

The model stresses the predominantly instrumental orientation of the passive membership, concurring with Hyman that:

> "Whatever the limitations of sociological surveys of workers' attitudes (and they are considerable), there can be no serious grounds for questioning the evidence that the majority regard trade unionism primarily as a source of material advantage. They do not admire collective bargaining simply as an elegant ritual, a procedural pas-de-deux as significant for its aesthetic sophistication as for its substantive outcome". (1978: 32)

Legitimation by the instrumentalmember is thus contingent upon that collectivity continuing to secure economic gains. The case study of arbitrated outcomes again reveals the concern showed by the workshop organization to retain the legitimacy granted by management.

The explanation of power in a trade union embodies authority, exchange and interdependence, and the exercise of sanctions, though the mechanisms whereby such bases become manifest (referred to by Hemingway (1978) as action resources) are conditioned by the opportunities open to the actors. Voting behaviour is only feasible given the opportunities to participate in elections, leaving the union is only feasible in the absence of the closed shop, sanctions are prescribed by rule, and it may be rare that members have the opportunity to demonstrate support for one collectivity versus another (for example, by striking, or refusing to strike).[1]

The Model

The model embodies three stages in the development of the analysis of power; conceptualisation, structure and process.

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[1] Clegg (1970) has noted that unofficial strikes may be a restraint on autocratic leadership.

The conceptualisation stage is represented by a general model of variables which sets out in a systematised form some of the arguments on power and control in a trade union which are developed in Part I of the study. As a summary of these conceptual arguments this model represents a general orientation to the broader model of action, and is an important foundation on which the broader model rests. In itself, however, the general model of variables is only the first step in the analysis.

The second stage is that of structural analysis, in which the structure of the AUEW engineering section is presented in the form of a systems model, embodying the notion of activity loops and the sources of power (derived from the general model of variables). Each loop corresponds to a competition between the collectivities that comprise the loop, and contains the key elements of Child et al's conceptualisation of union activities; that is, the strengths and content of pressures, orientations, decision-taking and feedback. Nevertheless, aside from orientations, the systems model represents little more than a crude cybernetic approach to the analysis of power. If the analysis were to stop at this point, the explanatory power of the model would be weak. Enough has been said to indicate that action cannot be explained by reference to structure alone.

Hence the third, and most important, stage of the model is concerned with the elaboration of power as a social process, considering not only orientations but also perceptions. The processes whereby both structure and meanings can change over time are emphasised as key elements in the explanation of power. The structural dimensions of each activity loop determine what is referred to as 'power capacity' or 'possible power', the element of power analysis associated most strongly with strategic contingencies theory. Before possible power is translated into action the collectivity's perceptions must be such that they assess their power to be high in relation to other competing collectivities. This has been termed 'power realisation'. Action may consist of either power testing or compliance, depending on these perceptions of relative power. As was

suggested in Chapter Two, "the outcomes of the testing process may reinforce or modify the initial power realisation and may lead to further action, such as an attempt to change the structural characteristics of the power relationship". Bowers and Spencer have remarked:

> "The issue of structure and process has in some ways served as the standing 'chicken and egg' joke of modern organization theory". (1977: 13)

In the model for this study no suggestion is made of any 'chicken and egg' unidirectional causality. It is clearly emphasised that neither structure nor process are prior to the other, but that both are conditioned by the other in a reciprocal relationship.

Perceptions also play an important role in that part of the model which analyses power in the absence of overt conflict (power testing). Much has been made in this study and elsewhere of the atypical character of overt conflict and the 'taken-for-grantedness' of systems of power and control. In this, the important factors are the perceptions of congruence between policy preferences, and the perceptions of the legitimacy placed on policy preferences by the recipient of any attempt to control. The means to control perceptions of congruence (and to some extent, of legitimacy) has been termed three-dimensional power by Lukes .

The dividing line between three-dimensional and more obvious forms of power is a thin one. Fox has pointed out that:

> "To the extent that either party feels coerced by an exercise of power from the other, legitimacy and authority will be absent. As we saw, however, this is not to say that an exercise of power by one side necessarily results in the other feeling coerced. It may contribute to a shift in perceptions which results in a fully-legitimised normative agreement". (1971: 186)

It must be recognised that the model makes no attempt to account for three-dimensional power, though at the same time the possibility of its existence is admitted. I have argued, however, that within the action frame of reference three-dimensional power may be legitimately downgraded in favour of the actors' perceptions, however these are determined.

The Case Studies

Though the lack of detailed knowledge of how local union organizations actually operate represents a regrettable hiatus in our understanding of trade unionism, the purpose of these case studies was not solely, or even primarily, an attempt to remedy this deficiency. Rather, the case studies have been used as settings in which to examine the ideas about the processual nature of power and decision-making in a trade union.

In the two activity loops considered, the model is shown to be a fairly accurate representation of these processes, the case studies corresponding to the type referred to as 'representative' by Eldridge (1968). As in most social research, the construction of the model and the development of the case studies proceeded jointly. As Scott puts it:

> "most field researchers 'explore' and 'test' concurrently, and one is often hard put to determine where one activity leaves off and another begins". (1965: 269)

The model and case studies must therefore be viewed together as comprising a statement about the nature of decision-making in a trade union, rather than as a hypothesis-test formulation. This statement emphasises the polyarchic nature of the AUEW and the role of the membership as arbitors of arbitrated outcomes, and in a ratification sense, even of negotiated outcomes. It was seen that structure, in so far as it creates differential access to the membership, cannot be ignored as a determinant of power, but it was seen also that structure is not immutable, and may itself be the outcome of differential power. The key to the problem is the concept of time. It is the processual, rather than static, analysis of power which provides the greatest insight into the determinants of decision-making and control, an observation for which no claim of originality is made, Weber having made the point that:

> "The empirical facts which are used by sociology in a paradigmatic manner, in order to develop its own concepts, are largely, though by no means exclusively, identical with the concrete processes of action which are relevant from the viewpoint of the historian". (1968: 19)

Structure, perceptions and orientations are thus all subject to modification over time, not least among the reasons for such modifications being the experiences of competition.

In this discussion I have given considerable attention to the concepts of structure and perception, but rather less to the concept of 'orientation'. For the purposes of the model a rather crude dichotomy between active and passive orientations was utilised. This may be developed further in terms of Fox's characterisation of a trade union as a number of collectivities and the notion of polyarchy in which activists are distributed among these collectivities. The existence of activists at each level (shop stewards, district, Divisional and National Committees, Executive Council) suggests that not only the passive membership, but also the activists, may have differential orientations towards each collectivity. In the same way as I have argued that the passive membership will confer contingent legitimacy on that collectivity which it sees as appropriate to its ends, so too may the active member be more positively oriented to that collectivity in which he is a participant, again in the belief that it is the most appropriate to his ends.[1] The notion of competitive polyarchy stresses that a positive orientation to collective action need not be equated with a positive orientation to any particular trade union collectivity (such as the leadership or hierarchically dominant collectivity).

Implications

The power of the district committee

If the evidence of the case studies accurately depicts the relationship between district committees and other collectivities in the AUEW, there are considerable grounds for questioning the widely held view that the district committees possess 'too much power'. These criticisms became

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[1] Though it must be recognised that activists may aspire to higher collectivities than the one in which they are participating.

embodied in the Donovan Commission's conclusion that the district committees had powers to obstruct reform which derived from "the tradition of regulating work practices on a district basis, and the constitution of the district committee which tends to make it a coalition of representatives of the most powerful groups of stewards in the district". (1968: 42)

It is clear from this study that though tradition may imbue the district committees with certain advantages for the exercise of power (for example, derived from rule), these advantages are severely limited by the weak structural linkages with those whom they would wish to control (the membership) and by the existence of rival claimants to membership legitimation. Although tradition may be one element in an authority relationship (as Weber suggested) it is not sufficient on its own to explain why groups comply with decisions which they feel are against their interests. To suggest that the tradition of district autonomy led to the creation and maintenance of an organization structure in which few restraints are placed on the activities of the district committees, and that sanctions are placed at their disposal for the enforcement of district policy, would come closer to a correct appreciation of the role of tradition as a basis for committee powers, but would still be wide of the mark as an assessment of their overall power.

It is equally misleading to suggest that district committees derive power from any bargaining role. As I have shown, the committee members do not themselves negotiate but instruct and ratify the work of the local officials.

Warner (1972) suggests that attention should be directed at the "new district centres of power which are developing" from a coalition between district committees and workshop organizations. While correctly seeing the district committees as"a rival source of authority and influence to the headquarters of the national union" he tends to overstate the unity of interest between the committees and workshop organizations. As this study has shown, there is no more reason to suggest a unity of interest (comm

policy preferences) between the district committees and the shop stewards as opposed to the head office, than between any other of the hierarchical collectivities in the trade union. Indeed, a workshop organization may find more common ground with the head office (to use Warner's expression) in competition with a district committee.

Hyman correctly characterises the relationship between district committees and workshop organizations as one of the negotiated order, in which "reciprocal expectations, obligations and understandings develop" (1975: 163) but which may be disrupted.

The evidence on the extent of district committee power revealed by this study is broadly in line with the conclusions of the only other study which has examined local organization in the AUEW in any detail. Boraston et al (1975) noted several examples of plant organizations over the activities of which the Leachester district committee had little control. In one plant, other unions had production members and "there was therefore no means of ensuring control of overtime worked by members of the union on production". In another plant the Convenor "was openly at odds with many of the current members (of the district committee) ....., handled all issues personally, and referred nothing to the district". The Leachester district committee had policies on overtime, piecework, productivity, redundancy and measured day work but:

> "the committee and the shop stewards sub-committee could not impose these principles throughout the district. They could act only where their attention was drawn to a draft agreement or to excessive overtime working, and they had no effective means of ensuring that their decisions were carried out". (1975: 35)

In an endeavour to correct the erroneous picture of district committees held by several commentators there is a danger that the 'powerlessness' of the committees has been overstated. There are several means whereby the committees can gain control over the activities of workshop organizations. They can derive legitimate authority from the provisions of the rule book, and from the electoral and solidarity principles. Appendix 2

indicates the appeals to legitimacy derived from representing the whole district (solidarity) and from the rules. As was noted of traditional authority, however, these forms of legitimation may not be sufficient to ensure compliance. The district committee can also offer the workshops some expertise, information, strike approval and perhaps also external legitimation in their dealings with management.

Part of this 'service' is a fund of information about agreements, both local and national, which may be used for comparisons, and as a source of expertise for assessing agreements. Under rule, all agreements should be sent to the district committee for ratification, and it was suggested to me that only workshop organizations confident of not 'getting into a mess' with their agreements would risk ignoring this rule.

The approval of strikes (if in turn ratified by the Executive Council) opens the way to the payment of dispute benefit to the strikers and to the levying of a district strike fund. This is a 'service' (in the sense of exchange theory) and should not be taken to mean that the district committee can control strikes. Boraston et al found that only a fraction of the Leachester districts' strikes come before the committee and hence the committee had little power to control strikes.

In the event of legitimation and exchange power breaking down I have shown that negative sanctions may be wielded against workshop organizations, but that this strategy is rare.

A further important source of control over the workshops derives from the relationship between the committee and the district officers. I have shown how the committee can 'instruct' the district officers in their negotiations, and that the officers' work must be ratified by the committee before it can be finalised. Although I pointed out in Chapters 5 and 6 the limited nature of this power, it nevertheless represents an important addition to the committee's means of control over the workshops.

On balance, therefore, I would argue that the district committees play

an important role in the union's polyarchy but that this role is limited by a number of restraints which throw considerable doubt on the current orthodoxy of the district committees possessing 'too much' power.

The role of the branch

Current orthodoxy has it, and I have argued similarly, that the branch plays a negligible role in the activities of the AUEW. In terms of branch attendances and the extent of branch control over decision-making this proposition would seem to be valid. Hyman and Fryer state that "few union branches genuinely function as instruments of intra-union democracy" (1975: 155).

Nevertheless, this study has identified a branch role which is worth emphasising. After workshop organizations as a source of information, district committees receive most information on plant activities from the branches. This information is often, though not always, concerned with members' complaints about the way in which shop stewards are handling either members' grievances or general policy issues. In the case study on the control of workshops it was seen that the main source of complaints against the Convenor's handling of the redundancy issue was the branches. In this way the branches provide an important communication channel between the members and the district committee which serves to limit the autonomy of the workshop organization. This role is made possible by the separate bases of branch (geographic) and workshop organization.

Those who argue that the branch should be based on the workplace should at least be aware that any gain in administrative or representative effectiveness may be at the expense of a further increase in the autonomy of shop stewards. Since it has been argued that the immediacy of the shop stewards relation with those he represents yields an approximation to primitive democracy, such a move may be welcomed. However, to the extent that shop stewards may themselves be formed into bureaucracies which "possess their own institutional interests, to be defended against membership

as against management and unions" (Goodman and Whittingham, 1973: 127) there are grounds for arguing that some alternative channel of membership complaint is desirable.

McCarthy (1966) suggested that compared with the South of England, AEU branch life is more vigorous in the northern industrial areas where shop stewards were initially only a supplement to strongly organized branches. To the extent that this is true, it may be argued that the observed use of the branches as a channel of complaint may reflect more active branch life in general, and that the observation, while not atypical, may be characteristic only of northern areas. However, Boraston et al found that in the Midlands (an 'intermediate' area on McCarthy's branch activity scale) the branch is widely used by the dissatisfied member to draw attention to the handling of an issue within a plant.

The conclusion is that the branch, far from being completely redundant as an element in the polyarchy, plays an important moderating role in relationships between district committees, shop stewards organizations, and the membership.

Amalgamation and bureaucracy

The current AUEW has developed out of a series of amalgamations, the first phase of which culminated in the formation of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers out of a merger between the 'Old Mechanics' (the Journeymen, Steam Engine and Machine Makers Friendly Society) and a number of small societies in 1851. These amalgamations between local craft associations set the pattern for the district organization of the early ASE, and the tensions between district autonomy and centralised direction which were to characterise both the ASE and (following the ASE's merger with nine other unions in 1921) the AEU. Hinton (1973) has shown how the anti-bureaucratic craft tradition manifested itself in a desire for autonomy from both management and trade union hierarchy. This desire was an important determinant of the polyarchic structure of the AEU, in which provisions for

election of officials and representatives were supplemented by a formal division of powers between a legislative (the National Committee), an executive (the Executive Council) and a judiciary (the Final Appeal Court). As the dominant force behind the 1851 amalgamation the Old Mechanics were able to secure the continuation of the craft organization in the ASE. As the dominant force behind the 1921 amalgamation the ASE was able to continue this tradition in the AEU.

When the AEF (Amalgamated Union of Engineering and Foundry Workers) was formed in 1967 out of a merger between the AEU and the Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers, the dominant role of the AEU in the merger again meant that the old constitution survived almost unscathed. The last amalgamation occurred in 1970 whenthe AEF amalgamated with the Construction Engineers Union (CEU) and the Draughtsmen and Allied Technicians Association (DATA) to form the AUEW. This amalgamation produced a trade group structure more akin to a federation than to an amalgamated union. The engineering section continues to work under the constitution of the AEU.

The current constitution of the engineering section of the union thus embodies many of the anti-bureaucratic elements retained from the days of the Old Mechanics and the ASE. However, at the time of writing, discussions are taking place to explore the possibility of a further amalgamation between the AUEW and the Electrical Electronic/Telecommunication and Plumbing Union (EETPU) to form a larger craft organization in the engineering industry. As a move towards industrial unionism many would applaud the logic of the proposed amalgamation but several points need to be noted about the implications for internal bureaucratic control in the new union. Among the initial suggestions for the form which the new union should take it was proposed that the policy-making national committee be enlarged from 52 to 2,000 members, and that officials be appointed rather than elected (at the EETPU Conference of 1970 the rules were changed from selection of

officers based on election to appointment based on technical qualifications). Negotiations between the national leaderships of the two unions have led to modification of these proposals. Suggestions now include a policy-making body of about 500 members to meet biennially, and it has been agreed that the joint union would have elected, rather than appointed, officials.

The first proposal would mean an important change in the character of the National Committee. Though more representative, its role as a deliberative body would be considerably reduced. Whether on balance this change would strengthen or weaken the control of the Executive Council is difficult to suggest, a priori, though several writers, most notably Allen (1954) would argue that the larger conference would be less able to formulate policy. Though the suggestion of appointed officials appears to have been shelved, it is interesting to consider what its impact would be in terms of the growth of bureaucracy in the union. The Webbs, Michels and Gramsci adopted a uniformly pessimistic view of the growth of bureaucracy in trade unions. Eldridge notes of Michels work, for example, that:

> "In discussing trade union organization Michels emphasises the increasing need for a bureaucratic organization staffed with technically competent men who become better educated, and separate in life-style, from those they represent". (1971: 176)

On the other hand, Weber, to whom much of the discussion of the nature of bureaucracy can be traced, stressed that the election of officials is incompatible with bureaucracy. He argued:

> "Bureaucratic authority is carried out in its purest form where it is most clearly dominated by the principle of appointment. There is no such thing as a hierarchy of elected officials in the same sense as there is a hierarchical organization of appointed officials. In the first place, elections makes it impossible to attain a stringency of discipline even approaching that in the appointed type. For it is open to a subordinate official to compete for elective honors on the same terms as his superiors, and his prospects are not dependent on the superior's judgement" (1969: 30),

and

> "Elective officials whose legitimacy is derived from the confidence of those subject to their authority and to

> recall if confidence ceases to exist, are typical of certain types of democracies, for instance in the United States. They are not 'bureaucratic' types. Because they have an independent source of legitimacy, they are not strongly integrated into a hierarchical order". (1964: 387)

Donaldson and Warner's (1974) study of the relationship between dimensions of bureaucracy and the presence of elected officials strongly supports Weber's hypothesis that the two would tend to be incompatible features of organizational life.

Though Weber probably overstates the evenness of the competition between encumbent and challenger, his view of election versus appointment must be placed in context of his political sociology. He saw the development of bureaucracy as profoundly depressing, referring at one point to "the dictatorship of the official" (Mommsen, 1974: 58) and arguing that:

> "In combination with the dead machine it (the bureaucracy) is at work to set up the iron cage of bondage of the future to which perhaps some day men like the fellaheen in ancient Egypt will helplessly be forced to submit".

Elections he saw as a means whereby charismatic authority could be introduced into the government process, not as a means of democratic control. Thus the arguments whereby Weber came to his conclusion that elected officials were fundamentally anti-bureaucratic were quite different from those of the early craft unionists. Nevertheless their conclusions were the same, and this study has shown not only that the electoral principle is an important source of legitimacy but more importantly that the membership can exercise an arbitral role in decision-making through the electoral process. Edelstein and Warner (1975), and Donaldson and Warner (1974) attribute even greater explanatory power to the role of the electoral process in the government in the AUEW than I have in this study. They would therefore interpret the replacement of elected with appointed officials as of even greater importance than I have, since I have tried to show that political structure, though important, is not the sole determinant of the distribution of power in a union. Nevertheless, such a proposal could only be interpreted as a move towards greater bureaucracy in the

union, a move which would occur much later than the Webbs or Michels might have anticipated but which might yet change the character of the AUEW from polyarchy towards oligarchy.

STRATEGIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

Though the discussion of the present research is now complete, it remains to consider a number of possibilities for further research that this study has suggested. Not all of the proposals carry equal weight, nor is it suggested that each proposal has been given the attention in terms of detailed empirical strategies that an actual research programme would entail. Rather, the purpose of this final chapter is to indicate the directions in which the present study can be developed, both in theoretical and empirical content.

The following sketches are the outcome of an awareness (common to most social science research) that much remains to be done before a comprehensive theory of the internal power and control relations in trade unions can be constructed.

The Comparative Method

The task of developing a comprehensive theory will require a great deal of research. Several chapters have remarked on how little is known about the actual workings of trade union political systems, particularly at the local level. One of the first tasks in the development of the theory would be to examine some of the propositions by the comparative method. I have argued that one of the weaknesses of the case study approach lies in the danger of over-generalisation from unique cases, and though I have attempted to minimise this danger in this study, it is nevertheless true that a broader empirical base would create greater confidence in the validity of the theoretical propositions.

This broader base could consist of other districts in the AUEW, or of other trade unions.[1] The evidence that does exist on district organization

[1] Clegg (1976), Carew (1976) and Edelstein and Warner (1975) have extended the comparative method to consider trade union differences between countries.

in the AUEW strongly supports the propositions of this study. The work of Boraston et al (1975) has been quoted on several occasions, particularly as it pertains to the relationships between district committees and workshop organizations. Of equal interest in terms of the broader polyarchic model is their observation that whereas in one district (South Marlshire) the committee generally approved the District Secretary's actions after the event, in the other (Leachester), the committee "had intervened in plant affairs with some success, and had done so in spite of the district secretary rather than with him" (1975: 163). This draws attention to the proposition that the balance of power and control between any two elements in a trade union polyarchy is variable, and thus Boraston et al's concentration on full-time officer (district organization) relationships with plant organizations unnecessarily constrains the theoretical potency of their analysis. They argue that some workplaces are more independent because of greater accumulation of resources such as time, skill and experience; those resources being generally (though not entirely) related to the plant's size. These structural factors may be important, and I have indicated as much in my analysis, but what then accounts for the greater independence of some full-time officers from their district committees? I would agree that the same factors may again be relevant, in terms of the respective 'resources' of skill, experience and time possessed by the committee and the officers. But more importantly, the perceptions of such control over resources, the collectivity orientations, and the contingent legitimacy which skill and experience might engender from the instrumental membership are perhaps equally as strong explanatory variables.

I have already noted that the Leachester district was actually Birmingham East, and it was in this district that Boraston et al found control over district policy-making balanced in favour of the committee rather than the full-time officers. Derber (1955) also studied the Birmingham district (before division into East and West) and he too found the "full-time officers dominated by the district committee" (1955: 86)

a feature which he generalised to the AEU as a whole. Boraston et al's evidence of the officer-dominant district committee in the South Marlshire district serves to indicate that such generalisations are invalid.

It must be recognised that Boraston et al's findings on independence and resources were based on an analysis of many different types of union in the public and private sectors, including not only the Engineers' and Electrician's Unions, but also the two main general unions (TGWU and GMWU). In this respect their findings have greater validity, considering as they do those variations in trade union policy and structure (number of full-time officers) and in bargaining scope, which might have been expected to have an important impact on workshop independence. That these features appear not to exert an independent influence is significant, though they note that trade union policy can act as an important encouragement or inhibitor of workshop independence, if this policy is translated into structural conditions.

Chapter Five briefly considered some of the structural features of other unions which make their polyarchic government different from that of the AUEW (if, indeed, polyarchic atall). A distinction was drawn between those unions that have descended from the "New Model" unions (such as the AUEW) and those that have descended from the "New Unionism" (such as the general unions), particular emphasis being placed on the varying degress of 'centralisation' in the two types. A comprehensive theory of trade union government would need to consider both types of union as the minimum stage of comparative analysis.

This method of comparative analysis (as often employed by Hugh Clegg, for example) generally relates to causal explanations of social action, in that a search is made for variability across cases and for the factors which are believed to have given rise to (caused) those variations. The problems associated with this method are the fairly general one of observational

bias (in which degrees of variance are ascribed to cases as a partial result of the prior categorisation of expected variance), and the more difficult problem that occurs where the variance across cases is nil. Where two or more cases yield approximately identical measures of control based on a decision-making model, then it is difficult to explain the bases of control in terms of the presence or absence of hypothesised causal factors. For example, if a comparative study yielded the (unlikely) conclusion that all district committees in the AUEW exercised complete control over decision-making in their districts, then it would be difficult to define which factors made such control possible. In a rather different context, Abell (1977) has suggested that teleological explanation is probably of greater value than causal explanation where there is insufficient variance across cases to attribute causality to key variables.

For the purposes of teleological explanation, it is argued that actor B does something for actor A because A can provide something which B values, and thus evidence is needed on B's intent, his beliefs about A, his beliefs about relevant forms of action, and his belief that A's behaviour was because he (B) acted as he did (that is, some confirmation of the 'correctness' of the action). Such explanations, though closely related to the'control over resources' approach to the explanation of power capacity, also embody the notion of perceptions, central to the power realisation element of my model. The distinction which Abell draws between manipulation and influence in terms of B's cognitive premises (A changing B's mind) is similar in approach to the grounds of my distinction between power and authority (though I would stress that it is the use of the recipient's cognitive basis for the distinction which is similar, not the distinctions themselves).

But as Abell points out:

> "Admittedly, there may be rather acute problems in ascertaining the 'truth' about peoples intentions, beliefs and so on". (1977: 18)

This problem relates to the second area in which further development of the model would be useful.

Orientations and Perceptions

The action frame of reference stresses the actors' interpretations of social situations as important determinants of behaviour, these interpretations being conditioned in turn by the actors' orientations to and perceptions of the institutions and relationships which make up the arena of social behaviour. The theory of a socially constructed reality tends to emphasise that orientations and perceptions are to be treated as interrelated (though not co-terminous) explanatory variables. The relationship is implied by Silverman when he argues:

> "Adequate analysis of the orientations of members of organizations would require attention to the specific ways of perceiving situations which they bring from extra-organizational experiences". (1970: 123)

Considering orientations first of all, the typology of orientations towards the trade union which was adopted for this study is rather crude in that it distinguishes only between active and passive members. A further assumption was made that the passive membership would be primarily, though not entirely, instrumentally oriented both to their work and to the trade union. Such consistency in orientations may not be present, and part of the further study would need to examine the relationships between sets of orientations. The 'Affluent Worker' studies tended to assume that orientations would be consistent, an assumption strongly contested by Daniel (1969) and by Nichols (1976, 1977). Writing with Armstrong, Nichols argues that attitudes, ideologies and orientations are not logically coherent but are "inchoate". For example, an instrumental orientation to work, they argue, is not necessarily associated with a lack of class consciousness. Nevertheless, they conclude (though reluctantly) that the predominant orientation to work which they found was instrumental. Writing with Beynon about the same workers' orientations to their trade

union, Nichols notes: "The union, they felt, gave them some sort of protection" (1977: 161), and

> "Crucially, these men experienced the union as a service organization: a deductor of taxes and a provider of facilities". (1977: 161).[1]

Van de Vall (1970) has also stressed that the 'insurance' function was the most often quoted reason for union membership in his study, and Sayles and Strauss (1967) found that while the inactive majority showed little interest in their union's internal political life, they supported its economic activities.

It was on the basis of studies such as these that it was felt that an assumption of consistency in the orientations of the passive membership was not unreasonable for the purposes of my study. Rather more problematic are the orientations to the trade union held by the 'activist' members. These are less easily described. Fox, for example, has suggested that one of the 'emergent properties' of a collectivity is the part played by activists in the maintenance of the organization:

> "Those taking up leadership roles in the collectivity soon realise that their responsibility for maintaining and enhancing its strength obliges them to think in terms of its 'institutional' interests". (Fox 1971: 117)

It is with the activists that the assumption of a consistency between orientations to work and orientations to the trade union is most likely to break down, though even here writers such as Hinton (1973) have noted that the anti-bureaucratic character of the craft ideology created a consistency of orientations towards work and union (dislike of hierarchical control) that was compatible with union activism.

In Chapter Three it was noted that attempts to consider the problem of orientations to trade unions have generally involved consideration of

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[1] It should be noted that workers experienced frustration because of this limited role of the trade union: they felt that the union should be something more.

'types' of worker, and mention was made of the typologies of Seidman et al (1958), and Child et al (1973). My study has stressed that there are variations in orientations according to collectivity, and it is apparent that considerable research is necessary in order to extend our understanding of the nature and bases of these differential orientations.

Such research is particularly difficult. The most common form of methodology for the assessment of orientations is the type of combination of attitude survey and interviews which was characteristic of the 'Affluent Worker' studies. Such methodology is reasonably adequate where orientations are believed to be stable over time and independent of context, but needs to be treated with caution where orientations may be 'inchoate'. Fox remarks on the use of attitude surveys to uncover orientations to trade union collectivities:

> "The whole question of the interaction between the individual and the collectivity reminds us that, as in all other social contexts, the individual-in-society, may figuratively be said to have two selves, the 'private' self and the 'social' self, which are sometimes in tension. The perspectives and interests of the private man may diverge from the perspectives and interests of the social man. This may pose methodological difficulties when attitude surveys are conducted within work organizations. Some respondents may reply to questions from a purely individual standpoint and others with group norms and values in mind. Others may move from one stance to the other without being aware of it. It is important to know which pattern of responses is being tapped". (1971: 120)

Similarly, Nichols and Armstrong argue:

> "the construction of typologies out of workers' 'attitudes', usually as ascertained from one-off interviews, and sometimes from standardised forced-choice questionnaires, is as likely to obscure as it is to clarify". (1976: 127)

Though Nichols and Armstrong perhaps undervalue unnecessarily the methodologies available for uncovering orientations the point is valid. In his criticism of the 'Affluent Worker' studies Daniel notes the danger and difficulties inherent in making central to an investigation something which is as elusive and intangible as the actors' subjective definitions of work, and even Silverman, whilst arguing in favour of the

social action approach, is obliged to recognise that:

> "Its critics would suggest that analysis at the level of human motivations is at worst highly subjective, at best non-sociological". (1968: 22)

Yet teleological explanations of power require that those motivations be revealed, and if attitude surveys and interviews are suspect, what alternative methodologies are available? The approach taken by Nichols et al is to combine detailed non-participant observation over a lengthy period of time with analysis of statements and conservations with the actors. Clegg (1975) goes further in this direction by combining participant observation with an analysis of conversations in terms of both the 'deep structure' of the language used and also the 'surface structure' revealed by taking statements at face value. Useful as these approaches may be they still require a certain degree of interpretation on the part of the investigator which, unless treated cautionsly, may merely result in an analysis of the subjective by the subjective.

The alternative to a deep immersion in the social situation on the part of the investigator is to take a view of orientations which is sufficiently limited to be amenable to questionnaire or interview methodologies. Rather than attempt to derive a total picture of the actors' orientations to all situations (work, family, leisure, class and so on), this approach focuses on those orientations which are believed to be relevant in the restricted context under investigation. For example, Poole (1976) has analysed the distribution of power in four Sheffield factories in terms of latent power (numbers, bases and resources, which in my study has been referred to as structural power capacity) and values (role expectations and attitudes to managerial authority, which approximate to my use of the term orientations). Values were assessed by asking the shop stewards in each workplace to define their own duties and then interpreting the answers in terms of the number of stewards who desired greater influence in decision-making and who had non-harmonious conceptions of their role vis-a-vis management. These values are then encapsulated into a more general dichotomy between militancy and non-militancy. No attempt is made to relate these orientations

to any wider context, nor to account for them. Nevertheless, Poole is able to show how neither the structural bases of power nor an orientation to militancy is in itself a sufficient explanation of the power process, but that it is "the interplay between aspects of social structure and of consciousness, between objective and subjective variables and between latent power and values which is clearly so crucial to understanding satisfactorily the particular patterns of labour relations which obtain at workplace level" (1976: 39).

If Poole's analysis of the subjective dimensions of power relationships does not go far enough, it is notso much in its deliberately restricted view of orientations but in its limited attempt to deal with perceptions. Certainly, orientations may be thought of as "ways of seeing" but this is conceptually different from the narrower idea of perceptions. For example, Poole refers to 'weaker' and 'stronger' bases of power, but does not examine how the participants themselves perceive weakness and strength, except to mention the 'rule of anticipated reactions'. Nor does he consider the complex relationship between orientations as general approaches to social situations and the actors' perceptions of those situations. In terms of teleological explanation, orientations relate to the problem of motives or intent whereas perceptions relate to the appropriateness of actions to achieve that intent. In my model the concept of perceptions is embodied not only in the idea of power realisation, that is, the actors' assessment of relative power in a competitive (bargaining or non-bargaining) arena, but also in the ideas of perceived congruence and legitimation. Poole regards a militant orientation as equivalent to the questioning of managerial legitimacy across a range of issues. I would argue that the relationship between orientations and perceptions is more complex, in that even given a militant orientation some managerial decisions will be perceived as legitimate while others are not, and further, that the non-militants may not accept the legitimacy of managerial decisions that fall outside the scope of the 'negotiated order'. The definitions

of what is and what is not legitimate and therefore of what is and what is not militant are the outcome of this negotiation of order.

Edwards (1978) has suggested a fairly straightforward way in which to analyse the impact of perceptions on power and control in a competitive arena. She distinguishes between bargaining power, the measure of which is based on an analysis of disputed decisions, and control, the measurement of which is based on managers' and union representatives' perceptions of their own and each other's control over a uniform set of decisions. These perceptions were gauged by asking both sides to put forward a list of important decisions (twenty-eight in all) and then for each decision asking: who made the decision, how important it was to influence the decision, how much influence they had, and how much influence the other side had.[1]

In this way it was hoped to achieve a measure of control over outcomes which would be complementary to a measure derived from overt conflicts (bargaining power). Of the four strategies to determine outcomes, bargaining power would only be in evidence when objectives were not self-modified in advance (as in the law of anticipated reactions), when they could not be modified by persuasion and when they were not seen to be of mutual interest (congruent). Edwards notes that:

> "The measure based on participant's own estimates of control covered all four processes to some extent, but the accuracy of this coverage could be expected to vary between individual respondents, depending on their degree of insight into their own situations". (1978: 13)

But

> "Perceptual measures can also be expected to show a high degree of accuracy in situations where issues and outcomes are clearly defined". (1978: 13)

Again, if there is a weakness in Edwards' analysis it derives from an over-concentration on perceptions, to the virtual exclusion of orientations (the reverse of Poole's emphasis). For example, she found significant

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[1] This may be compared with Poole's assessment of militancy based on how much influence the shop stewards felt they ought to have.

and positive correlations between the perceived right to make a decision in the first place and the importance attached to controlling the decision . In view of the managers' recognised right (that is, perceived legitimation) to make most of the decisions, she suggests that either the lower importance which the union attaches to these decisions is a rationalisation, or is because the union considers these decisions irrelevant to their members' interests. "In either case", she argues, "the situation reflects a normative system which operates very much to the advantage of the manager" (1978: 9). The basis for this normative system, I would argue, lies in the orientations of the trade union representatives to the decision-making process, orientations which Poole has dichotomised as militant or non-militant, but which would surely be worthy of deeper investigation. At its simplest, all that is required is to combine Edwards' questionnaire on perceptions (for example, "how much influence do you have?") with Poole's questionnaire on orientations (for example, "how much influence do you feel you ought to have?") An intermediate methodology between total immersion in the research context and externally administered questionnaires and interviews was adopted by Batstone et al (1977). They spent four months as non-participant observers in one plant, and combined the data from informal interviews or conversations with that from structured interviews and questionnaires to develop a typology of shop steward orientations (leaders and populists) and to examine workshop member orientations (primarily instrumental).

In Batstone et al's study there is again a tendency to equate generalised "ways of seeing" (orientations) with the more limited idea of perceptions of particular structures or events. Nevertheless, this methodology provides a much richer source of data on subjective variables which might be extended to consider 'activist' orientations and perceptions at collectivity levels other than the domestic organization.

A cybernetic development of the structural model

Cybernetics is concerned with a unifying theory of control and hence it might be expected to have something to contribute to the analysis of social control. Wiener, widely regarded as the founder of the science, defined cybernetics as the science of "control of communication in the animal and the machine" (1948) but its applicability to social control has been emphasised more recently by Beer, redefining cybernetics as "the science of effective organization" (1974: 13). In Mouzelis' description of cybernetic analysis of organizations as "a system of loops within loops, or rather as a hierarchy of interlocking loops at the bottom of which the loopsbecome smaller and more numerous" (1975: 133) it is possible to recognise the crude cybernetic basis of the structural model presented in Chapter Six.

Yet cybernetics has not made the impact on sociological theory that its proponents might have wished, and the reasons for this can be found in the writings of the chief exponents of cybernetic theory. Ashby, for example argues that:

> "Many workers in the biological sciences - physiologists, psychologists, sociologists - are interested in cybernetics". (1961: V)

This view is echoed by Beer who writes of "systems wherever they occur":

> "They may be psychological, or physiological, or sociological, and so on: in a word biological". (1967: 105)

In short, the cybernetic model seems to be arrested at an elementary stage of sociological systems theory, putting greatest emphasis on functional teleology as the explanation of systemic behaviour. The systems models as described by cyberneticians are incapable of incorporating such things as values and status, or group struggles.

Nevertheless, at the structural level, cybernetics can offer some useful insights, provided that its analogies between machines, organisms and organizations are not accepted uncritically. Chapter Eight, for

instance, examined the control relationships between the district committee and the workshop organizations in terms of the communication network and the information flows that tend to make control more or less feasible. It is at this level that cybernetic analysis can play its greatest part.

Central to the cybernetic model is the concept of variety, or the total number of behavioural configurations possible in any system. As Beer (1975) notes, variety in social systems is so great that institutions and organizations are developed in order to reduce this variety in the system by setting up hierarchies and sets of rules. The task of effective organizations is to cope successfully with variety and this can only be done where the variety of the input to the decision-making (controlling) unit is matched by the capability of that unit to receive and deal with that variety. The decision-making unit thus requires equal variety to its input. This is termed Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety, popularised by Beer as "only variety can absorb variety".[1] Since the input normally has greater variety than the decision-making unit some form of attenuation is required (such as the 'gatekeeper' in Easton's (1965) political systems model). Similarly, in order for control to be effective, some form of amplification of the output is necessary. Thus in successful systems, systemic variety is attenuated and regulative variety is amplified.

The second aspect of a successful system is that it can accommodate disruptions to the system via an automatic process of feedback and 'course correction'. The system is thus self regulating and will tend towards an entropic state (a uniform distribution of energy) of homeostatic ultra-stability (a stability against all perturbations). A system that is disturbed will pass through a number of states (transformations) which can be analysed by the stochastic processes of ergodic theory (the ways in which a probability system settles into predictable forms) before reaching its new equilibrium, the total time taken for this to occur being known as

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1 Beer uses the phrase in most of his books. It should be noted that what Ashby actually said was "only variety can destroy variety". (1961: 207).

the relaxation period (Beer) or transient (Ashby).

These characteristics of requisite variety and ultrastability are common to all successful systems, the systems themselves nesting one within the other at different levels of recursion (society, institution, organization, department and so on) so that

> "We shall gradually be able to devise a more complicated model, redolent with feedback loops, which is of practical value. In doing all this we pass from the notion of a straightforward feedback mechanism to the notion of multiple loop systems". (1975: 107)

Success is defined in terms of the system's survival, and though Beer generally regards ultrastability as desirable,[1] he is clearly as uneasy about the implications of such a definition as most sociologists would be. Writing of bureaucracies, for example, he argues that "their systemic organization is directed not primarily at our welfare, but to their own survival" (1974: 78). It is this problem of values with which cybernetic models have failed to come to terms. Though Beer disclaims the functional teleology of cybernetics ("Much of the language of cybernetics involves teleological shorthand" (1967: 205)) he nevertheless writes:

> "What matters about the institution is not its set of dependencies but its performance". (1974: 8)

Though internal tension may exist, it can be turned to constructive use since Beer argues, "I continue with the hypothesis that everyone is well intentioned" (1974: 79).

Though still within the systems framework, the most comprehensive attempt to reconcile cybernetics with sociology has been made by Buckley (1967). Rejecting the idea of homeostasis Buckley concentrates on the ideas of variety (for example, as in deviance), communication and feedback, and an adaptive decision-making system. Power is here defined as control or influence against the will (with or without knowledge) and is distinguished from authority which is defined as informed, voluntary compliance. Enough

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[1] He remarks, for example, "We are now well on the track of that desirable systemic property, ultrastability". (1972: 50).

has been said in previous chapters to indicate that I would not regard either of these definitions, nor the distinction, as valid, since I have argued that "voluntarism" is a rather tenuous base on which to rest the analysis of authority. Martin, who follows Buckley's scheme to some extent, argues that:

> "The cybernetic model remains a highly elaborate analogy rather than an explanation for what happens in the social world". (1977: 17)

The principle value of the cybernetic model lies in the sophisticated elaboration of the role of communication and information in terms of variety, amplification and attenuation, rather than the functional analysis of homeostasis and system survival. As such, cybernetics represents an important development in that structural analysis which I have argued is an integral part of the model of control processes.

Competition, Bargaining and Costs

Discussion of the competitions between collectivities may be filled out by reference to the costs involved in both bargaining and non-bargaining power. Several writers have discussed bargaining power in terms of the costs incurred by the bargaining parties. For example, Chamberlain (1951) has argued that the bargaining power of A is equal to the ratio of the costs to B of disagreeing with A's terms to the costs to B of agreeing with A's terms, while the bargaining power of B is equal to the ratio of the costs to A of disagreeing with B's terms to the costs of A of agreeing with B's terms.

Similarly, Harsanyi (1971) has argued that the quantitative character of power relations must include the opportunity costs of A's power over B, and the opportunity costs to B of refusing what A wants him to do (A's strength of power). Harsanyi argues that A can manipulate the opportunity costs to B of refusing, by providing new advantages or disadvantages (with or without conditions attached), by supplying B with additional information on the advantages and disadvantages, or by creating legitimate

authority or personal affection (B attaches disutility to disobeying A). In Harsanyi's model, the opportunity costs of A's power are defined as objectively measurable, whereas opportunity costs of B's refusal are defined subjectively in terms of B's perceptions. Though Harsanyi introduces the notions of legitimate authority and perceptions these become subsumed in the general discussion of bargaining costs in terms of 'control over resources' (time, money, etc). Power is discussed in the schedule sense of a production function which describes how an individual can transform these resources into social power, but additionally, suggests Harsanyi, we need to know how much resources an individual is prepared to use (that is, his utility function).

Bilateral or reciprocal power situations are then analysed in terms of two-person bargaining games, in which willingness to use sanctions (rewards and penalties) on the part of A is combined with the opportunity costs of compliance on the part of B.

These analyses tend to assume that all types of power may be regarded as identical with regard to costs, regardless of the context in which the analysis is applied. Whereas Harsanyi has concentrated on sanctions, Abell (1975) has made a useful distinction between power and influence so that persuasion (without sanction) can be introduced into the model. This distinction can be elaborated to indicate the relative costs of using different forms of power in different contexts and comparing these costs with the efficiency of different forms of power across contexts. Thus it will be possible to include both bargaining and non-bargaining costs in the model.

In Abell's model of bargaining and influence the production of certain outcomes is a prerequisite in any actor's (A) ability to 'control' another actor (B), though B may also comply with A's objectives because of what Abell terms 'residual compliance'. Total compliance is thus made up of control and residual compliance. Power is seen as the means whereby control is

secured and influence is one means whereby residual compliance is raised (influence is said to exist where B changes his objectives because of A). In his discussion of control loss, Abell seems to argue that residual compliance is cost-free, whereas securing control involves a cost element.

However, I would argue that in a trade union an important means of creating residual compliance is through the legitimation of authority by the representative system. This legitimation may be derived either from the impersonal rules attached to specific offices (the Weberian sense) or from the representative system via an acceptance of the democratic ideology. The time expended on creating influence or the conditions for normative consensus and legitimacy does involve some costs. Influence generally involves information transmission costs (Pondy, 1970: 282) and the time consumed by the representative system involves costs not only in terms of the foregone opportunities for officers to be engaged elsewhere, but also in terms of any time lost between the need for a decision arising and its eventual implementation.

The problem may be interpreted as one of achieving a given level of compliance in the organization for the minimum outlay of control costs plus residual compliance costs, and we may solve this problem conceptually by a consideration of the relative costs of using power (control costs) and influence/legitimacy (residual compliance costs) compared with the relative efficiency of power and influence for producing compliance. It is helpful to assume that to produce compliance requires some combination of control and residual compliance even though this assumption excludes the possibility of a completely consensual organization or an organization dominated by control. In addition we may assume that both power and influence are subject to decreasing returns in their production of compliance. The application of each additional unit of either, while the other is fixed, produces a less than proportionate increase in compliance. Abell suggests this when he argues that the function $\Delta qXB = f(W_A)$ may be expected to be non-linear.

In this function, ΔqXB is the compliance co-efficient of X (outcomes produced by A) on B (actor B) expressed as a probability, and W_A are the control costs incurred by A in attempting to control B. A non-linear function indicates the reduced probability of compliance as $qXB \neq 1$ (Abell, 1975).

Compliance is a function of control and residual compliance

$$C = f(a.b)$$

where C = compliance
a = power (control)
b = influence /legitimacy (residual compliance)

The marginal rate at which the organization can substitute between power and influence for any given level of compliance may be found by differentiation:

$$fada + fbdb = dC = 0$$

$$-\frac{db}{da} = \frac{fa}{fb} = MRSab$$

The partial derivatives fa and fb are the marginal outputs of compliance (M.O.C.) of power and influence respectively.

Here we are concerned with the marginal efficiencies of power and influence which may well depend upon the type of organization and the expectations (orientations) that members bring to the organization. With reference to the nested contingency of power in organizations we might expect the efficiency of power in a trade union to be low relative to the efficiency of influence and normative consensus.

Lerner (1971: 190) notes that, "while the rank and file may outwardly be held in check by the formal aspects of institutional control, unless their varied and sometimes conflicting needs and interests are met they eventually revolt", the result sometimes being the secession of the dissident factor. The group disaffection may arise because the union fails to 'maintain sufficient administrative elasticity to meet the diverse interests of their heterogeneous memberships" and because the representative system may leave some groups unrepresented or unable to affect the union's decisions (1971: 187).

However, such 'administrative elasticity' does not come free to the organization. The relative costs of using power ('formal aspects of institutional control', in Lerner's terms) and creating legitimacy can be conceptualised in the form of prices paid, where the price per unit of power is given by:

$$\frac{\text{total costs of using power}}{\text{power units used}}$$

and the price per unit of legitimacy by:

$$\frac{\text{total costs of creating legitimacy}}{\text{units used}}$$

Any given level of resources can be divided between power and legitimacy such that:

$$T = ap_a + bp_b$$

where T = total resources (costs)

a = power

b = legitimacy

p_a = price of power

p_b = price of legitimacy

Cost minimisation may be presented as

$$T = ap_a + bp_b$$

for a given level of compliance

$$C = f(a.b)$$

By differentiation and substitution we find the minimum cost conditions where:

$$\frac{pa}{pb} = \frac{fa}{fb}$$

or $$MRSab = \frac{pa}{pb}$$

or $$\frac{MOCa}{MOCb} = \frac{pa}{pb}$$

or $$\frac{MOCa}{pa} = \frac{MOCb}{pb}$$ [1]

---

[1] Where the assumption of diminishing returns to the inputs does not hold, the tangency solution is not the cost minimising solution. Increasing returns to the input will produce a corner solution in which the cheaper resource is used entirely; constant returns (where the MRSab has a constant slope) may also produce a corner solution except where $MRSab = \frac{pa}{pb}$

Thus the decision on the part of any organization whether to use power or residual compliance will be based on the interaction between their relative efficiencies (ability to produce required levels of compliance) and their relative costs. Although the cost per unit of building normative consensus might be high relative to the cost per unit of power, normative consensus may be employed in a trade union because of its greater efficiency. Conversely, the failure to build sufficient normative consensus and create sufficient legitimacy will leave control over outcomes (power) as the chief means of ensuring compliance and thus bargaining over outcomes becomes an important area of activity in the trade union. Hemingway (1978) argues similarly that in a trade union 'persuasive' or 'manipulative' strategies for control will be used first, since these entail lower costs, but that if these strategies fail, higher cost 'coercive' strategies will be employed.

As with all models that rely on the analysis of costs in this way, problems of knowledge and rationality are posed. The role of information as a strategic resource becomes critical, Chapter Six having indicated the ways in which limits on information restrict a party's power (ability to control). The acquisition of information (where possible) must be regarded as an additional control cost, along with the costs of positive or negative sanctions.

Boulding (1962) has attempted to introduce the notion of 'rationality' into the analysis of bargaining and conflict resolution. He argues:

> "The irrational person has a view of the relevant universe which is partial and incomplete, or false in the sense that behaviour according to this view leads to unexpected results, but which also may be rigid, not subject to modification by information received, and valued by inconsistent and constantly shifting orderings, so that one state is preferred at one moment and a contrary state at another". (1962: 151).

Conclusions

These four sketches have indicated some directions in which further

research would be useful. A project which tried to cover all four areas would be rather broad, but at the same time it should be recognised that these are not four discrete areas of study. A better knowledge of orientations and perceptions would provide an essential underpinning to the measure of control costs. Do orientations and thus control costs vary between trade unions and between different groups of workers? Etzioni's (1961) typology of compliance would suggest that they do. The more 'calculative' the orientation to the trade union the greater would be the response to 'remunerative power'. The more 'moral' the orientation, the greater the response to 'normative power'. To what extent do different trade union structures facilitate or impede control, either up or down, because of varying efficiencies in the communications network and information flows? The discussion of the internal processes of power and control in a trade union must return to questions such as these before any comprehensive theory can be advanced.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE - Sources and types of issue considered by the sub-committees 1945-70

As an indication of the work of the sub-committees the following table shows the sources of information and type of issue as they appear in the committee minutes at five yearly periods from 1945 to 1970. As each of the five standing sub-committees covers similar business the table does not differentiate between them individually.

	Source	Issue
January 1945	member	wages
	convenor	piecework, non-unionisation, dilution
	branch	dilution
	convenor	overtime redundancy dilution
	convenor	wages
	convenor	setting up of joint works council
	management	shop stewards appointments
	branch	shop stewards (voting)
	branch	shop stewards (withdrawal of credentials)
	member	dismissal
	-	dilution
	-	shop stewards credentials
14 items	branch	exclusions
	shop steward	education pamphlets
June 1945	convenor	piecework
	branch	dilution
	shop stewards	wages
	convenor	wages

Source	Issue
branch	accuracy of district committee minutes
shop stewards	wages
-	shiftwork
-	membership
member	degrading
branch	redundancy
member	expulsion from branch
branch	section of membership
branch	wages
member	piecework
convenor	piecework
convenor	piecework
convenor	wages
shop steward	demarcation dispute
convenor	section of membership
branch	dispute between members
convenor	demarcation dispute
branch	wages
-	overtime
Ministry of Labour	disablement committees
shop stewards	complaint against member
-	inter-union dispute
firm	complaint against shop steward
-	piecework
convenor	foreman working
convenor	shop stewards' credentials
member	sickness benefit
branch	wages
shop stewards	joint industrial council wages
branch	wages, recruitment

28 items

January 1950

	Source	Issue
	branch	victimisation
	shop steward	inter-union dispute (ETU)
	-	inter-union dispute (G+M)
	-	inter-union dispute (NSBMA)
	shop steward	dismissal
	shop steward	wages
	shop steward	wages
	branch	redundancy
	branch	membership
	convenor	recognition of Engineering and Allied Trades shop stewards council
	British China Federation Association	affiliation
	firm	wages
	shop stewards	joint production council
	-	overtime
	-	shiftwork
	branch	superannuation
	shop stewards	wages
	branch	section of membership
27 items	executive council	recruitment posters
	tenants association	evictions
June 1950	branch	parliamentary candidates
	convenor	wages
	-	dismissal
	convenor	dilution
	convenor	refusal to implement district committee decisions
	shop stewards	maintenance work

	Source	Issue
	convenor	overtime
	divisional organiser	-
	-	dismissal
	advisory committee	report
	-	wages
	-	redundancy
	-	election of stewards
	shop steward	redundancy
	-	dismissal
	branch	redundancy
	-	overtime
	convenor	redundancy
	-	dilution
	Liverpool district secretary	wages
	branch	wages
	British-China Friendship Association	circular
	League of Democracy in Greece	circular
25 items	Union of Jewish ex-servicemen	-
January 1955	shop stewards	German re-armament
	convenor	working conditions
	Confederation railway sub-committee	minutes
	branch	outing
	-	shop stewards (appointment)
	-	inter-union dispute (ASSET)
	-	inter-union dispute (ETU)

	Source	Issue
	member	conditions of work
	branch	attacks on trade unions
	-	dispute between shop stewards and convenor
	-	EC refusal to give Full Wage Benefit
	member	resigning DC
	convenor	wages
	convenor	items for agenda of consultant committee
	Sale town clerk	council houses
	branch	women members
	convenor	holidays
	joint meeting AEU/NSMM/ETU	dilution
	convenor	lieu notice
25 items	convenor	wages
	convenor	holiday pay
June 1955	shop stewards	wages
	branch	holidays
	-	status
	-	overtime
	convenor	outworking agreement
	convenor	mid-day break
	convenor	works council
	convenor	dilution
	shop steward	working conditions
	convenor	overtime
	convenor	allowances
	shop steward	inter-union dispute (ASSET)
	-	work study

	Source	Issue
	ASLEF	differentials
	member	complaint against convenor
	JSSC	request for booklet
	firm	incentive schemes
18 items	-	status
January 1960	-	demarcation dispute
	shop steward	working week
	shop steward	work study
	convenor	non-union labour
	convenor	inter-union dispute
	branch	inter-union dispute
	branch	militant activity
	branch	wages and working conditions
	City of Salford Companionship Circle for the Elderly	appeal for funds
	Mayor of Salford	appeal for funds
	League of Democracy in Greece	arrests of unionists in Greece
	-	shop steward resignation
	branch	status
	branch	piecework
	convenor	working arrangements
	convenor	shop steward
	Unity Theatre	appeal for support
	branch	wages
	convenor	dilution
	branch	redundancy
	convenor	dilution
	convenor	redundancy
	executive council	holidays

	Source	Issue
25 items	Lancashire and Merseyside Industrial Development Association	report
June 1960	members	wages
	executive council	membership campaign competition
	convenor	overtime
	branch	dismissal
	member	pensions
	shop stewards	overtime
	branch	foremen working
	convenor	bonus agreement
	branch	shiftwork
	divisional organiser	merit pay
	branch	wages
	branch	Local Employment Committee
	convenor	bonus scheme
	convenor	holiday arrangements
	member and branch	victimisation
	K Brett	Assistant General Secretary
	shop stewards	Lord Carron
	-	dismissal, workshop organization
	branch	dilution
20 items	divisional organiser	-
January 1965	convenor	shop stewards (election) regrading
	shop stewards	holiday pay
	shop stewards	wages
	convenor	wages
	convenor	dilution
	convenor	bonuses

Source	Issue
convenor	dilution
shop steward	wages
branch	apprentices
Confederation executive	"package deal"
-	apprentices
shop stewards	wages
shop stewards	foreman working
member	showing card for inspection
-	foreman working
convenor	application for credentials
shop stewards	working conditions
convenor	wages
convenor	wages
shop steward	status
-	piecework
-	redundancy
convenor	working week
convenor	members complaints
shop steward	holiday pay
convenor	bonus scheme
Watford district committee	dispute
convenor	dilution
-	wages
convenor	working week
convenor	working week
branch	-
convenor	adult training centre
convenor	wages, request for strike approval

29 items

June 1965

	Source	Issue
	convenor	working week
	-	status
	convenor	holidays
	shop stewards	bonus
	convenor	working arrangements
	shop stewards	request for wages information
	-	merit money
	branch	status
	convenor	request for wages advice
	convenor	apprentices
	shop stewards	working week
	-	shop steward resignation
	divisional organiser	wages
	divisional organiser	incentive schemes
	executive council	Economic Development Committee
	firms	dilution
24 items	convenor	bonus scheme
	shop stewards	wages
January 1970	-	disagreement between shop stewards
	convenor	overtime, holidays
	-	shop stewards (credentials)
	convenor	wages
	convenor	productivity agreement (request for advice)
	convenor	expenses for a meeting
	convenor	request for overtime
	branch	members' complaint
	branch	wages
	convenor	dilution

Source	Issue
branch	dismissal
convenor	membership
branch	demarcation
shop stewards	strike
branch	status
-	agreement
divisional organiser	-
branch	resolution for executive council
Ashton District Committee	members' claim
convenor	advice on wages
convenor	advice on wages
branch	information on dispute
shop stewards	seeking advice
branch	another district
-	shop stewards (credentials)
convenor	seeking advice
shop stewards	wages
National joint committee	minutes
-	disagreement between shop stewards and convenor
shop stewards	request information on wages
convenor	production of card
branch	wages
branch	members complaint
shop stewards	management proposals
shop stewards	working week
branch	members employment
-	dismissal

	Source	Issue
	-	dismissal
	divisional organiser	incentive scheme
	branch	non-union worker
	convenor	giving information
	branch	non-union worker
	convenor	giving information
	branch	members complaint about shop stewards
	convenor	requesting information on wages
45 items	branch	overtime and redundancy
	convenor	dilution
June 1970	convenor	retiring
	shop steward	dispute report
	convenor	seeking advice
	convenor	redundancy
	Tribune	general election
	shop stewards	wages
	convenor	election of convenor
	shop stewards	dilution
	shop stewards	foremen working
	firm	dilution
	shop stewards	request for information
	shop stewards	shop steward (credentials)
	shop stewards	transfer of members to AEF
	shop stewards	agreement on wages
	shop stewards	wages during sickness
	shop stewards	Prices and Incomes Board report
	Confederation convenor	bonus rates
	District Secretary	wages

Source	Issue
branch	inter-union dispute (USDAW)
convenor	BBC series
branch	overtime
branch	wages
convenor	dilution
convenor	wages
divisional organiser	wages
convenor	resolution of dispute
-	shop stewards (problems)
convenor	member wishing to join DATA
branch	outing
convenor	national conference
branch	status
convenor	transfer to NUGMW
divisional organiser	outworking allowances
convenor	request for information
Oldham District Secretary	members complaint
convenor	wages
branch	redundancy
shop stewards	wages agreement
branch	holiday pay
shop stewards	wages
convenor	seeking advice on pay
convenor	election of committee
branch	representation of members
branch	redundancy
branch	interpretation of agreement
convenor	seeking advice on training

Source	Issue
convenor	copy of agreement
shop stewards	dilution
shop stewards	foremen working
convenor	dilution
convenor	seeking advice
shop stewards	wages
convenor	wages
divisional organiser	productivity agreement
Ashton District	bonus payments
convenor	wages
shop stewards	wages
shop stewards	foremen working
convenor	foremen working

59 items

Where the source of information is not specified in this table then either the source was not available in the minutes, or the discussion took the form of an enquiry into an issue which had previously been drawn to the sub-committee's attention (so that the source was, in a sense, the sub-committee itself).

APPENDIX TWO - LEGITIMACY AND THE SOLIDARITY PRINCIPLE

14th January 1972

To all Conveners and Shop Stewards

Dear Sir and Brother,

On Tuesday 7th December 1971, the Manchester District Committee adopted the following policy on the current employment situation:-

> "Overtime policy - Whilst recognising that there may be certain difficulties in particular establishments, we nevertheless recognise that we must establish a common policy for all Engineering workers in the Manchester District, irrespective of the type of industry in which they are employed.
>
> We, therefore, resolve that:
>
> a) All overtime will cease on the 1st February 1972.
>
> b) That no requests for overtime working will be considered by the District Committee, for whatever reasons, until the effects of this policy can be fully assessed, and in any case, not before 1st March, 1972. Such requests will then be considered on their own merits, in strict rotation, and at all times, will only be considered relative to their effect on the employment situation.
>
> The above decisions are all in strict compliance with Rule 13".

On Thursday 6th January 1972, nearly 500 Conveners and Shop Stewards, at a specially summoned meeting at the Houldsworth Hall, overwhelmingly voted in support of this policy with fewer than 30 voting against.

The District Committee policy decisions have been fully approved by Executive Council and the District Committee, therefore issues the following instructions:-

1) All A.U.E.W. (Engineering Section) members will cease working overtime in the Manchester District from 1st February for one month.
There are no exceptions, irrespective of the Industry or current agreements, except for safety purposes, and permission to do so must be requested in writing to the District Committee.

2) Overtime will not automatically resume on 1st March but will be subject to a written application to the District Committee stating all relevant details, and overtime will not be worked without the written authority of the District Committee.

3) The District Committee requests Conveners and Stewards to regularly report their factory position.

Confederation Policy. At its December meeting, the No 29 District Committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions adopted the following resolution:-

> "The Committee welcome the initiative taken by the Manchester A.U.E.W. District Committee, and agrees in principle with the overtime policy. Further the Secretary to circulate to all Affiliated Organizations the proposals, for the consideration of the Organizations concerned".

In the light of this decision, A.U.E.W. Conveners and Stewards, in establishments where there is joint membership, are asked to seek the full support of the other Unions.

Mass Meetings. Conveners and Stewards are advised that it is the intention of the District Committee to ensure that the total membership should fully understand its policy and the reasons for it. Therefore, mass meetings should be arranged at which the District Secretary or a member of the District Committee would be prepared to speak, if required.

Yours fraternally,

B. Panter

District Secretary

APPENDIX THREE - Dilution and the craft ideology

Introduction: the meaning of dilution

Dilution has been defined by Cole as:

> "the introduction of less skilled workers to undertake the whole or part of the work previously done by workers of greater skill or experience, often but not always, accompanied by simplification of machinery, or the breaking up of a job into a number of simpler operations". (1973: 48)

However, as Turner (1962) has argued skill is not something which is independent of collective bargaining. The sharp demarcation between skilled and unskilled workers in engineering is, according to Turner, partly a product of the apprenticeship system. That is, the AUEW categorise workers as skilled or unskilled according to whether or not they have satisfied the union's apprenticeship system. Further, by 'custom' certain jobs become established as the preserve of those union members who have served an apprenticeship. Dilution may be said to occur when a job[1] which has customarily been done by an apprenticeship-served union member is performed by a worker who has not served an apprenticeship. Unless, as Cole suggests, the machinery or the job is simplified, then, apart from individual differences in ability, the worker who takes over the job must be as skilled (at least as perceived by the employer) as the union member from whom he takes over.

There are several distinct, but related questions, in any analysis of the meaning of dilution in the context of a union with a large 'craft' section such as the AUEW.

Firstly, it may be argued that the craft ideology embodies the principle of collective property rights in jobs (Barkin, 1954). According to this principle, the union 'owns' the jobs and can thus allocate them as it wishes, either collectively to a section of the membership, or at the workshop level to particular members. The manifestations of this principle include

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[1] The range of activities embraced by the term 'job' varies. It may refer to a particular occupation, to the operation of a machine, or, under piecework, to just the single task being carried out at the time. Normally, in the context of dilution, the term 'job' refers to a set of operations associated with a particular identified machine.

not only rules on apprenticeship and dilution but also on the closed shop, demarcation and manning levels. Marsh says of the early craft unions:

> "the claims of the unions were simply but fundamental. Firms were to pay the union rate; they were to accept that the unions should control the supply of skilled labour through limitations of numbers of apprentices; they were to concede that unions had the right to establish when piecework should be introduced, to determine what grade of worker should be employed upon a machine and, in the interests of equity between workers, what overtime should be worked". (1965: 14)

In order to attain control over (or property rights in) jobs, the union must establish that certain categories of work are the preserve of its members alone. In the British engineering industry this control has historically taken on added importance because the employers, for their part, have asserted their own right to allocate labour. Attempts by both parties (the employers and the unions) to allocate labour unilaterally, rather than by joint consultation, have played an important part in employer/union relationships from the formation of the union. The concept of 'managerial functions' held by the employers, but bitterly contested in the lockouts of 1897-8 and 1922 is well expressed in the term "The Employers have the right to manage their establishments" at the beginning of the National Procedural Agreement. Marsh noted in 1965:

> "While the nineteenth century clamour over craft control and managerial functions which was so compelling a factor in the original structure (of industrial relations in engineering) has become muted the more fundamental problem still remains". (1965: 19)

One element in the dispute between the principles of 'property rights in jobs' and 'managerial functions' is sometimes known as 'the machine question'; that is, the question of which party shall determine the worker or class of workers to operate a particular machine or type of machine.

The Terms of Settlement after the lockout of 1898 contain the following paragraph:

> "Employers are responsible for the work turned out by their machine tools, and shall have full discretion to appoint the man they consider suitable to work them, and determine the conditions under which such machine tools shall be worked.

> The employers consider it their duty to encourage ability wherever they find it, and shall have the right to select, train and employ those whom they consider best adapted to the various operations carried on in their workshops, and will pay them according to their ability as workmen". (Marsh 1965: 254)

These provisions were also written into the Carlisle Agreement of 1907, and although the union (at that time the Amalgamated Society of Engineers), withdrew from this agreement in favour of the York Memorandum in April 1914 (Provisions for the Avoidance of Disputes) those parts of the Agreement relating to the managerial functions remained in force and were reiterated in 1922 by the managerial functions clause quoted above.

The union's claim to determine the allocation of labour to jobs on the basis of classes of workers is not upheld in any agreements with the employers. Such 'rights' as there are, and which may be defended when dilution is opposed, are those arrived at by 'custom and practice'. Those sections of the National Agreements which relate to dilution during and after the Second World War thus refer to the "Temporary Relaxation of Existing Customs".

Though autonomy and job control form one important part of the craft ideology it is impossible to ignore the wage related aspects of the ideology. Reder, for example, argues that a union's concern with job control is simply the obverse side of its attempt to set wages in excess of competitive equilibrium levels, and that to assign priority to either job control or wage setting as a union objective is arbitrary and misleading. Reder (1968) suggests that the craft ideology may be interpreted in terms of the "ethic of the queue":

> "the ethics of the queue state that newcomers shall not usurp the places of those already having them, or more generally that scarce and desired things shall be rationed first come first served". (1968: 126)

Though the principle of the ethics of the queue involves some control over jobs, it does not correspond to the mechanisms of craft control in the engineering industry. Here, whole classes of worker are claimed to have

not merely priority, but the sole right, to perform designated jobs. The apprenticeship-served members (section one) of the AUEW are not obliged to compete with other sections of the union membership on a first come first served basis. In so far as the union permits dilution (other sections of the membership to perform these designated jobs) during periods of labour shortage then the ethics of the queue may be said to be operating in an amended form. The skilled (section one) members are placed at the front of the queue for these classes of work.

Nevertheless, Reder's more general point concerning the intimate relationship between job control and wage setting is an important one. In terms of the 'primitive' economics of the labour market, the wages of existing workers depend upon the demand for and supply of, that class of labour. Given a demand falling slower than supply, or rising faster than supply, or remaining constant as supply falls, then the wages of existing workers can be raised. Restrictions on entry are thus used by many groups of workers for the maintenance or increase of wage levels.

Dilution during the First World War

Though the craft ideology in general had played an important role in industrial relations in engineering from the formation of the craft unions, it was during the First World War that the specific issue of dilution (upgrading of unskilled workers to the 'skilled' jobs) came into prominence. The Committee on Production, appointed by the Government in February 1915 to maximise war output, was strongly in favour of dilution as a means of relieving the relative shortage of skilled manpower created by recruitment to the armed forces and by the rising demand for munitions. A measure of dilution was introduced on 5 March 1915, with the Shells and Fuses Agreement, but the more important agreements between the government and the leaderships of the engineering unions were reached later that month with the signing of the "Treasury Agreement". Though the other unions signed the agreement on the 19 March, the leadership of the ASE refused to sign

until the 25 March, after receiving assurances from the Government. In particular, the Government undertook

a) to limit any increased profits that might arise from dilution;

b) to make further guarantees of the temporary nature of the change;

c) to confine dilution to war work; and

d) that dilutees would be paid the rate for the job.

The leaderships thus confined their conditions to the economic aspects of dilution, the Treasury Agreement embodying only the most rudimentary provisions for consultation between employers and workers. There was strong opposition to dilution from the workers themselves, but even when compulsory powers for the introduction of dilution were granted to the employers under the Munitions of War Act in July 1915, provisions for consultation were not greatly enhanced. Schedule II of this act, embodying most of the clauses of the Treasury Agreement, contained the following paragraph:

> "Due notice shall be given to the workmen concerned, wherever practicable, of any changes of working conditions which it is desired to introduce as a result of an establishment becoming a controlled establishment (that is, under the Act) and opportunity for local consultation with workmen or their representatives shall be given if desired". (Cole 1973: 67)

There was no mention of whether consultation should taken place in the workshop, or between the employer and the district trade union organization. According to Cole, the employers usually contended that the procedure to be followed was that of the 'Provisions for the Avoidance of Disputes', the procedural agreement laid down in 1914. Under this agreement, it was the district official who was responsible for the first stage of negotiations rather than a workshop representative.

Jefferys relates that the workshop resistance to dilution was fierce and prolonged. The dilution clause in the 1915 Munitions Act was opposed because it did not give the workers enough say in how it was to be operated. On the Clyde, where much of the opposition was focussed, the Workers Committee wrote in their broadsheet "The Worker":

> "We regard it as progressive from the point of view that it simplified the labour process, makes labour more mobile and tends to increase output. In short it is a step in the direct line of industrial evolution".

But they went on:

> "this scheme of dilution must be carried out under the control of the workers ..... unless this demand was granted they would fight the scheme to the death".
> (Jefferys 1946: 178)

The 'scheme' referred to was the 'Dilution Scheme' drafted by the Central Labour Supply Committee (appointed in September 1914 as an advisory body to the Ministry of Munitions). Associated with the scheme was the issue of circulars (known as "L" circulars), of which the most important, according to Cole, was circular L6 (issued in October 1915) which defined the forms of consultation with the trade unions to be followed in carrying out the provisions of the Treasury Agreement and Schedule II of the Munitions of War Act. The principle clauses in the circular were:

1 The workmen in the shop in which a change is to be made should be requested by the employer to appoint a deputation of their number, together with their local Trade Union representative if they desire, to whom particulars of the proposed change should be explained.

2 At the interview the employer, after explaining the change proposed and giving the date when it is to come into operation, should give the deputation full opportunity of raising any point they desire in connexion therewith, so that if possible the introduction may be made with the consent of all parties.

3 Should the deputation be unable at the interview to concur in the change, opportunity should be given for further consultation, when representatives of the Trade Union concerned might be present.

4 It is not intended that the introduction of the change should be delayed until concurrence of the workpeople is obtained. The change should be introduced after a reasonable time, and if the workpeople or their representatives desire to bring forward any questions

relating thereto, they should follow the procedure laid down in Part I of the (Munitions of War) Act.

It is not desirable that formal announcement of the proposed change should be put on the noticeboard of the shop until intimation has been given as above to the men concerned, or their Trade Union representative.

While this is so, the Minister is of opinion that it would be consistent with prudence that every endeavour should be made by employers to secure the co-operation of their workpeople in matters of this description" (Cole 1973: 68).

Though representing a substantial advance for the principle of workshop consultation, circular L6 contained several weaknesses from a trade union viewpoint. In common with the principles laid down in the "Provisions for the Avoidance of Disputes" the employers had the right to implement any change while negotiations ensued. Even after these negotiations neither the workshop organizations nor the trade union officials had any formal method of preventing dilution taking place. More importantly, circular L6 was only a recommendation, not having the legal force of the Munitions Act. According to Cole, many employers disregarded the circular, causing a good deal of friction by attempts to introduce dilution without workshop consultation. From the end of 1915 onwards trade union efforts were directed towards making circular L6 compulsory on all employers who introduced any measure of dilution, through their aim was never achieved.

Mainly as a result of the lack of progress on dilution during 1915 special Dilution Commissions for the Clyde and Tyne were appointed in January 1916. The most notable feature of these Commissions was that they concentrated their attentions on the workshops, negotiating with both official and unofficial shop stewards. The schemes which they drew up contained provision for workshop negotiations, including the establishment of Shop Committees to confer with managements. The work of these

Commissions was replicated in various forms in most other engineering centres as it became recognised that "even the most water-tight scheme of dilution could in practice be rendered useless by workshop organization".[1]

However, even with circular L6 and the special commissions it was not until the end of 1916 that dilution was introduced in all the main engineering districts, and there were constant disputes over the failure of employers to consult workers.

The Treasury Agreement restricted dilution to work carried out on government contracts, but by the beginning of 1916 some employers were attempting to extend dilution into non-government, non-munitions work. In April 1917 the Government attempted to legalise this extension with a Dilution Bill. The introduction if this bill brought protests from both the membership and the Executive Council of the ASE. Cole notes that there were protracted disputes on the question of extending dilution to non-government work, but that it was only a serious problem in most of the workshops for a few months. That the issue remained a problem for such a short time may be attributed to the strength of trade union opposition. For example, at the beginning of May 1917 a Rochdale firm, having completed a shell contract, put women dilutees to work on grinding machines to grind cotton spindles. When the men refused to instruct them the men were dismissed. On 3rd May workers throughout Rochdale left work and by 5th May 60,000 had stopped work in Lancashire. The strike spread quickly and within a few days the only two areas not affected were the Clyde and Tyne (ironically, where the initial resistance to dilution had been greatest).[2]

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[1] Cole (1973: 51). Hinton (1973) suggests that Cole overstated the conciliatory aspect of the Commissions' work. On the Clyde their role was to break the Workers Committee.

[2] Though on the Clyde the workers' leadership had not recovered from the trial and deportation of some of its members after the 1916 strike. On the Tyne, Hinton (1973) suggests, generous terms from the Dilution Commissioners plus the failure of a workshop movement to develop, contributed to this inaction.

The Dilution Bill was withdrawn and discussions opened with the ASE. Although the Government refused to withdraw the clause extending dilution to 'private' work, amendments were made which the ASE Executive Council considered would be satisfactory to the membership. However, when the amended terms were put to a vote of the membership they were rejected by 46,851 votes to 8,945. By August 1917, when a new Munitions Bill was introduced, the Government appeared to have revised its intention to legalise the extension of dilution to private work, the new bill containing only minor revisions to existing arrangements. (For example, the employer was required to give twenty-one days notice of dilution and produce a certificate from the Ministry of Munitions to prove that it was necessary).

At the end of the war nearly all of the dilutees returned to their former jobs. With the lapsing of the Munitions of War Act the industry reverted to the 'custom and practice' of the pre-war period.

The opposition to dilution during the First World War can only be fully understood by reference to the growing shop stewards movement and the parallel movement for workers' control. Cole notes:

> "From 1915 to 1917 at least, the introduction and extension of dilution were certainly the most powerful factors in promoting the development of the shop stewards movement, and in securing for the stewards, and for the Works and Workshop Committees, a degree of recognition from the Employers and from the Government which they would otherwise have found it very difficult to achieve". (1973: 52)

At the end of the war the Employers permitted the pre-war customs and practices to be reasserted, a move which would appear contrary to the principles of 'managerial functions', and to throw away the advantages that dilution would bring via the more flexible use of labour. The Employers' strategy is more easily understood, however, as a successful attempt to undermine the increasingly politically-oriented shop stewards movement.[1] As Pribecivic says:

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[1] The growth of the socialist and related movements at this time was further accentuated by the revolution in Russia in 1917. See, for example, K. Coates and T. Topham (1970).

> "The movement suffered a grave set-back early in 1919. The unexpectedly smooth process of 'restoration' of pre-war industrial practices greatly reduced the need for workshop bargaining. This cut at the very roots of the workshop organizations. The trade unions, with their rights fully restored, resumed the initiative in trade matters and took up many claims originally formulated by the shop stewards and workers control movement. Moreover, there were in many districts large-scale dismissals of the leading shop stewards". (1957: 102)

The shop stewards were incorporated into the trade union movement, with their powers substantially reduced. Pribecevic again:

> "As far as the workshop organizations were concerned they tended to become official ..... The 1919 Shop Stewards Agreement worked in the same direction. A workshop organization with greatly reduced powers and functions was now recognised both by the union and by the employers. In the long run, only those workshop organizations which accepted the provisions of this agreement had any chance of survival". (1957: 104)

In any case, the Employers' concessions were short-lived. Unemployment in the early 1920's gave them the opportunity to reassume the offensive. A carefully-timed lock-out[1] drained the union (by now the AEU) of funds and in June 1922 the membership was forced to ask for work on the Employer's terms, these terms restating the 'managerial functions' clause and in addition that "the employers have the right to decide when overtime is necessary", the main issue in dispute.

The Second World War and after

With the possibility of war in early 1939 discussions took place between the union and the Ministry of Supply to reach a new dilution agreement. The new agreement, ("Temporary Relaxation of Existing Customs as to the employment of skilled men, members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, to provide for war conditions") was signed on the 28 August 1939 and amended slightly on the 11 September 1939. The Agreement provided that:

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[1] The union's funds were already low because of the large amount of unemployment benefits it had had to pay out.

"1. In order to supplement skilled manpower in a Ministry of Supply Establishment, where it can be shown that skilled men are not available and production is prejudiced it is agreed that an alternative class of worker may be employed on jobs hitherto done by such skilled men under reservations to be mutually agreed.

2. Supplementary to this, semi-skilled labour may be utilised for the purpose of working with skilled men or under their direction or performing such duties as may supplement the work of skilled men.

3. In the case of machinery, the employer shall be allowed to put men of a semi-skilled character on to machines previously operated by skilled men under reservations previously referred to.

4. These reservations shall include that a register of standard type shall be kept of changes made under this Agreement and an undertaking given by the Ministry of Supply Establishment that as and when skilled labour becomes available restoration to the pre-Agreement practice shall be made.

5. The procedure for operating this agreement shall be as follows:

a) An application for a change in practice shall be considered by a local joint Committee including representatives of the Ministry of Supply Establishment concerned and local representatives of the AEU whose agreement shall be effective, subject to confirmation at a later stage by a Central Committee at the Ministry of Supply consisting of representatives of the department and of the AEU.

b) Failing agreement by the local joint Committee the matter shall be referred for consideration by the Central Committee mentioned in (a) above.

c) Changes made under this agreement shall be registered by the Ministry of Supply on a standard form and a copy of such registration supplied to the worker or workers affected and to the local representative of the Union and the Executive Council of the AEU ."

The amendment of the 11 September provided that:

> "Under clause 5(a) of the main agreement it shall be understood that if any local joint Committee approve a change such change may be put into operation subject to confirmation by the Executive at a later date".

The 1939 agreement is notable for excluding workshop representatives from any role in the implementation, (though unlike the Treasury Agreement of the first war, there is no suggestion that a change be implemented while negotiations take place). Nevertheless, the 1939 agreement did not arouse the same degree of hostility as the earlier agreements. For one thing the shop stewards' movement, where it existed, was still in considerable disarray following the reverses of unemployment and the General Strike, and for another the rank and file leadership was broadly supportive of the war effort, particularly from 1941 with the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Coates and Topham remark of this period:

> "The call for Joint Production Committees might have produced derisory remarks from the leading shop stewards of 1914-18: but in the context of the Second World War, both because of the general suppression of independent trade unions by the Hitler regime, and because of the fact that the Soviet Union had been attacked, there were many Socialists, who were by no means at one with the Communist Party, who were prepared to join in advocating a 'truce' in the class struggle". (1970: 141)

This improvement in the relations between workers and management showed itself in the 1941 dilution agreement, signed, for the first time, between the AEU and the Engineering and Allied Employers National Federation (all previous agreements having been reached between the union and the Government). The 1941 agreement set out to simplify the dilution procedure and provided that:

"1 A change of practice, for which application has been made by an employer, shall be put into operation after the acquiscence of the shop steward or, where shop stewards have not been appointed, the appropriate representatives of the workman involved in the department concerned has been obtained, without the necessity of prior reference to the Local Joint Relaxation Committee.

2. The negotiation of a change in practice approved as in Clause 1 above shall be endorsed by an employers' representative and a union representative at the Local Joint Relaxation Committee. A meeting of the Local Joint Relaxation Committee shall not be deemed necessary for such endorsement unless discussion of the registration in question is desired by either party.

3. In the event of non-approval by the shop stewards or appropriate representatives concerned of an application it shall be referred to the Local Joint Relaxation Committee for decision if it is desired to proceed with the application. Alternatively, an application may be referred in the first instance direct to the Local Joint Relaxation Committee for decision.

4. Failing an agreement on any appropriate question considered by the Local Joint Relaxation Committee the matter shall be referred for consideration to the Executive bodies in the usual manner.

5. Henceforward, registration forms will not be signed by the Executive bodies. Approval will be recorded by an exchange of notes between the parties, embodying the serial numbers of the registration forms concerned or by some other agreed method.

Unlike the agreements of the First World War, the 1941 agreement did not lapse at the end of the war; neither did the extension of dilution to non-government work appear to arouse the same degree of hostility. Indeed, rather than being allowed to lapse, the 1941 agreement was amended in June 1954.

In the 1954 agreement "Ministry of Supply Establishments" was replaced by "Industry" in Clause 1 and "Ministry of Supply Establishment" by "Company" in Clause 4. A new clause was introduced as Clause 5:

> "It being the spirit and intention of this Agreement that steps shall be taken where found necessary to ensure that production is not restricted, the parties undertake to review the operation of this Agreement at necessary intervals for the purposes of ensuring that the Agreement is fulfilled. It is further agreed that the utmost expedition should be employed by all parties in dealing with applications made".

The procedural clause became Clause 6 and was amended to read:

"a) A change of practice, for which application has been made by an employer, shall be considered with the shop stewards, or where shop stewards have not been appointed, the appropriate representatives of the workmen involved in the department concerned. If, after any necessary enquiries, the parties are satisfied that relaxation of existing customs is necessary, having regard to domestic and local conditions, the change of practice shall be put into operation following endorsement by an employers' representative and a Union representative on the Local Joint Relaxation Committee, which shall be representative of the local Employers Association and local representatives of the AEU. A meeting of the Local Joint Relaxation Committee shall not be deemed necessary for such endorsement unless discussion of the registration is desired by either party.

b) In the event of non-approval by the shop stewards, or appropriate representatives concerned, of an application, it shall be referred to the Local Joint Relaxation Committee for decision if it is desired to proceed with the application. Alternatively, an application may be referred in the first instance direct to the Local Joint Relaxation Committee for decision.

c) Failing agreement on any appropriate question considered by the Local Joint Relaxation Committee, the matter shall be referred for consideration by the Executive Bodies, i.e. representatives of the Federation and the Executive Council of the AEU.

d) Changes made under this Agreement shall be registered by the employer on a standard form and a copy of such registration supplied to the worker or workers affected and to the local representative of the Union and the Executive Council of the AEU. Approval will be recorded by an exchange of notes between the Executive Bodies embodying the serial numbers of the registration forms concerned, or by some other agreed method.

e) Additional dilutees may be introduced on to a previously registered job but their introduction shall be the subject of prior consultation between the management and the shop stewards or, where shop stewards have not been appointed, the appropriate representative of the workmen involved in the department concerned.

Dated 10 June 1954 Reference 7.111

AGREED NOTES

1. When dilutees are registered, in addition to their name, brief particulars of their length of service and previous experience should be given.
2. Dilutees registered as alternative labour on any of the operations covered by the Agreement of 6 January 1942, relating to the wage conditions of certain classes of skilled timeworkers should receive the "make-up" of 8/- under that Agreement.
3. Dilutees registered as alternative labour on work customarily performed by men covered by the Agreement dated 4 June 1940, relating to the Condition of Employment of Skilled Toolroom Operatives, come within the ambit of that Agreement".

There is not a great deal of differents between the agreements concluded in 1939 and the agreement of 1954. It may be argued that the procedure of 1941 gave recognition and an increased role to the shop stewards, thus making a small inroad into 'managerial functions', but this should not be overstated. Marsh suggests that the Agreement maintained implicitly the principle that dilutees should not be introduced without the approval of shop stewards or trade union members in the establishment in which they are proposed, but this is not strictly true. The Agreements lay down that if stewards object, the employer can refer the application to a higher body (first a local, then a national, committee). If agreement is reached at either of these two higher levels and stewards would be obliged to accept that decision. Clause 6(b) of the 1954 Agreement (Clause 3 of the 1941 Agreement) not only limits the stewards role to acceptance or referral of the proposed dilution, but even provides for their exclusion altogether

by direct reference to the Local Joint Relaxation Committee.

In addition, the 1954 Agreement created a new class of jobs; that is, those which were registered under the agreement. On these jobs 'additional' dilutees could be introduced with only 'prior consultation' with the shop stewards (the agreement adding no detail of the form of consultation). All jobs registered between 1939 and 1954 came into this category as well as jobs registered after 1954.

The continuation of the Relaxation Agreements from war time to peace time may be attributed to a number of factors. For the trade unions, the agreement reduced the likelihood of the widespread introduction of dilution that had characterised the First World War and had caused such internal dissension. In addition, the employers agreed to pay 'the rate for the job' to upgraded workers. For the employers, the advantage lay with the right to propose dilution whenever they thought it necessary.

Marsh (1965: 107) estimates that since 1939 (to 1965) over 100,000 dilutees have been registered under the AEU agreements, at a rate of about one thousand registrations a year in the 1960s. These registrations are not evenly spread over the country but are highest, Marsh suggests, where craft traditions are strongest; in other areas upgrading to skilled rates has taken place without using the Relaxation procedure.

Conclusions

There is little justification for attempting to establish a monocausal explanation of craft ideology. Trade union attempts to establish property rights in jobs through the apprenticeship system, resistance to dilution and maintenance of demarcation lines, is inextricably related to the problems of job security and wage levels. To this extent the craft ideology may be considered as a "collective instrumental" ideology. Beyond this, however, there is little doubt that, at least during the disputes of the late nineteenth century, the craft ideology also embodied the craftsman's traditional dislike of supervision. Burgess relates that:

> "Millrights could have won much higher rates, at least during booms, if they had conceived the wage bargain in purely market terms. But custom remained important in the settlement of wages, reflecting the pre-industrial milieu of the first engineering workers. This emphasised non-economic satisfactions like mobility and freedom from supervision as much as monetary reward". (1975: 6)

Hinton goes further, and argues that the craft ideology embodied resistance not only to supervision by management, but also regulation of wages and conditions by national union negotiators. The anti-bureaucratic character of the craft tradition manifested itself in a desire for autonomy from both management and trade union hierarchy. Hinton argues:

> "In conditions of war collectivism, when the collaboration of employers, state and trade union officialdom presaged the growth of a bureaucratic regulation of every aspect of economic life, and the withering away of social and economic freedoms previously enjoyed, the specifically anti-bureaucratic character of the craft tradition could take on a revolutionary significance". (1973: 15)

That the exclusiveness and profound conservatism of the craftsmen could be mobilised into the vanguard of the shop stewards movement, Hinton ascribes to the shock to their privileged position caused by the widespread dilution of the First World War. The tradition of craft control became the basis for workers' control precisely because the craftsmen were less instrumentally oriented than the semi-skilled workers. Hinton argues in a similar vein to Burgess:

> "But the craftsman's attitude towards his work was not merely an instrumental one: despite capitalism, and in defiance of the arid logic of the cash nexus, work continued to have its spiritual rewards". (1973: 93)

As has been seen, however, the restoration of pre-war practices and the incorporation of shop stewards into the trade union hierarchy, signalled the end of the shop stewards movement. The craftsmen, with their exclusiveness and privileges restored, ceased to act as a revolutionary vanguard as "in the end craft conquered class goals among the rank and file of the movement" (Hinton, 1973: 16).

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