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Occupational Communities:
Culture and Control in Organizations

by

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November, 1982

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OCCUPATIONAL COMMUNITIES: CULTURE AND CONTROL IN ORGANIZATIONS¹

John Van Maanen & Stephen R. Barley

To the study of human behavior in organizations, a field already choking on assorted paradigms, hypotheses, methods, variables, and other objects of intellectual passion, we offer in this essay even more conceptual paraphernalia. Specifically, we shall argue the utility of viewing behavior in organizations through an occupational rather than organizational lens. Considerable lip service has been paid to such a perspective by organizational theorists but, for a variety of reasons, focused and conceptually-driven research based on such a perspective has been notably absent in the organization behavior literature. This neglect has consequence, not the least of which is that organization researchers largely disregard the phenomenological boundaries recognized by members of particular work worlds. Descriptions of these intersubjective boundaries and the shared activities, social interactions, and common understandings established by those who fall within these boundaries are found, however, in the growing ethnographic records of contemporary work worlds. Such empirical materials represent lively, rich accounts of occupational ways of life; accounts we believe must be reckoned with if organizational theories are to locate and explain more of the behavioral variability of the workplace than has been the case to date.²

Consider, for example, the contrast between ethnographic writings about a person's work and career and the writings on the same topics found in the organization behavior literature.³ The ethnographic

versions feature closely detailed narratives of everyday work activities, first-hand accounts of observed events (routine and otherwise), free-flowing, lengthy descriptions of the various belief systems that appear to inform a person's selection of career and, perhaps all too frequently, precious little attempt to generalize across occupations or careers. The particular and occasionally unique things people do for a living are matters uncovered by ethnographers as are the meanings such activities hold for the people who do them. In the equally stylized organization behavior literature, the specifics of work and careers are glossed over while the aggregate and occasionally general ways people believe and behave in occupational settings are emphasized.

Such divergence is, of course, hardly surprising since the two genres differ in purpose, audience, format, and language. Yet, the dissimilarities between the two approaches are not simply matters of contrasting form or style. Nor should the discrepancies be dismissed with the claim that variable-based research is somehow more objective or analytic than the context-sensitive ethnographic research and, therefore, less passionate, idiosyncratic, or biased. In our view, it remains noteworthy that "Charlie, the automobile repairman down at Joe's Garage" is, in the ethnographic writings, a "mechanic" and, in the organization behavior writings, an "employee."

We hold these genre disparities to be substantive, reflecting alternative and potentially conflicting models of how work is organized and interpreted. One perspective views a person's work from an organizational frame of reference and thus accentuates the meaning that such work has for others. The other approach employs an occupational

perspective and concentrates upon the meaning of work for those who do it (Berger, 1964). Both perspectives operate as templates to select, mold, and present the subject in ways which transcend the obvious conceits of the genres. Several contrasting assumptions are at work when either framework is utilized.

From an organizational standpoint, most people are seen to regard their work careers largely in terms of movement (or lack thereof) within a set sequence of hierarchically ascending positions, each position offering more or less prestige, power, money, and other rewards. Observers employing an occupational perspective imply that persons weave their perspectives on work and career from the existing social, moral, physical, and intellectual character of the work itself. Individual assessments of work and career are cast in terms of one's getting better (or worse) at what one does, getting support (or interference) from others, exerting more (or less) influence over the nature of one's work, and so on. The two perspectives also differ on the importance of "work" as a concept for explaining social order. From the organizational perspective, a person's work is but a small part of the larger problems of coordination, authority, workflow, production method, or service design. Work is a concept subsidiary to the more abstract (but logically intertwined) relationships that are thought to engender the economic and social order of an organization or the society at large. From the occupational perspective, work and the groups that are inspired or flattened by it are themselves focal concepts for explaining social structure because they provide the basis of an occupationally stratified organization or society.

Contrasts such as these arise from placing differential emphasis on what Weber (1968:40) called the rational (associational or organizational) and traditional (communal or occupational) aspects of modern economy and society. For the most part, rational aspects have dominated organizational research and interest has been persistently directed toward the brisk correlates of organizational performance rather than the substantive nature of the work people perform during their working lives. Similarly, conflicts of interest in organizational settings have been examined almost exclusively by reference to vertical cleavages of authority or friction between functional units rather than by reference to clashes between organizational authorities and occupational interest groups.⁴

In this paper, we develop the notion of an occupational community as an alternative to an organizational frame of reference for understanding why it is that people behave as they do in the workplace. In essence, we want to develop a perspective that will prove valuable when one regards our hypothetical auto repairman as a "mechanic" rather than an "employee." Several analytic aims are served by this approach.

First, a focus on occupations preserves some of the existential, everyday reality of the firsthand experience of work. The fact that one works the swing shift in a cattle slaughterhouse as a hind-toe-remover is a rather straightforward descriptive statement. But, it is a statement that we believe conveys considerably more information than that conveyed by organizationally designed job descriptions of the sort seized upon by organizational researchers in their search for generality, such as unskilled laborer, machine operator, or assembly line worker. Social worlds coalesce around the objects produced and the services rendered by people

at work. To focus on occupation, as the semantic tag tying together the bundle of tasks which constitute a given line of work, brings such social worlds and their many meanings to light.

Second, by examining the social worlds that coalesce around occupations we broaden our understanding of social control in organizations. We take as axiomatic that the fundamental problem of organization — or, more properly, the management of organizations — is the control of the labor process. Occupational matters are undeniably central to this problem since all positions have histories demarking their rise (and fall) in terms of the amount of self-control occupational members possess over the fruits and methods of their labors. The ongoing struggle of stable and shifting, formal and informal, large and small groups to develop and occupy some niche in the occupational structure of society is played out every day in organizations where rational or administrative principles of control (e.g., codification, standardization, hierarchical discipline, etc.) compete with traditional or communal principles of control (e.g., peer pressures, work ideologies, valued symbols, etc.).

Third, a focus upon work and occupation casts new light on problems of diversity and conflict in the workplace. From an administrative standpoint, "deviance" among organizational members is defined in terms of exceptions to managerial expectations. The sources of such deviance are typically ignored or muted since administrative solutions are sought in terms of correcting the "system" so that expectations can be met. That such deviance is willful is a point often made in organizational studies, but seldom is such a point elaborated upon beyond bland reference to the ubiquitous "informal" groups contained within organizations. Even when deviance is treated seriously and in some depth by organizational

theorists concerned with the individual orientations of organizational members toward their work, it is often treated as merely the result of non-work factors such as universal human needs ignored by the designers of work systems (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939); too rigorous, tight, punitive, or otherwise unenlightened management practices (McGregor, 1960; Argyris, 1964); narrow, standardized, efficiency-focused, mass production technologies (Blauner, 1964; Hackman and Oldman, 1979); subcultural, class-based norms imported into the workplace from outside (Katz, 1965; Dubin, 1956); situational opportunities seized upon by employees to improve earnings, thwart boredom, advance careers, or reduce risk (Dalton, 1969; Roy, 1960); and so on. While these sources of informal adjustments or member deviance are undoubtedly present in all organizations, willful violation of managerial expectations may also correspond to a pervasive logic embedded within the historically developed practices of occupational members doing what they feel they must. Rather than a reflection of class interests or a knee-jerk response to flawed managerial schemes, organizational deviance may be proactive, not reactive. More important, it may also reflect the way a given line of work has come to be defined and practiced relatively independent of technology, managerial mistakes, or organization structure (Silverman, 1970). What is deviant organizationally may be occupationally correct (and vice-versa).⁵ Aside from some of the early work conducted in the Tavistock sociotechnical traditions, organization theory rarely concerns itself with such contradictions (Trist and Bamforth, 1951; Rice, 1958).

Fourth, a focus on the common tasks, work schedules, job training, peer relations, career patterns, shared symbols, or any and all of the elements that comprise an occupation brings forth a concern regarding how

a given line of work can be said to influence one's social conduct and identity, both in and out of the workplace. Goffman (1961a: 87-88) makes this point nicely when he suggests: "A self (then) virtually awaits the individual entering a position; he needs only to conform to the pressures on him and he will find a 'me' ready-made for him being is doing." Although a position is organizationally created and sanctioned, the work that comprises such a position often has a history of its own and, therefore, a context that is not organizationally limited. Even rigidly defined positions are almost always more than most organization designers, authorities and, alas, researchers make them out to be (e.g., Roy, 1960). Some of these positions may offer an occupant far more than a job. Indeed, some may offer a rewarding and valued "me." The identity-bestowing characteristics of positions are, in short, frequently matters which are occupationally specific.

To develop an occupational perspective on concerns often considered organizational, we first identify and expand upon the notion of an "occupational community." Next, we suggest that occupational communities of all types are marked by distinctive work cultures promoting self control and collective autonomy for the membership. As a result, we take issue with the stance of many organization theorists who regard professional work as an occupational category clearly separable from other lines of work by describing, in comparative terms, some of the structural or external conditions that appear to foster self control. Following this discussion, we note how each of several long standing research domains within organizational studies -- careers, conflict, loyalty, and innovation -- can be enriched empirically and advanced conceptually by paying serious attention to the role occupational communities play within organizations.

On the Nature of Occupational Communities

To know what dentistry, firefighting, accounting, or photography consists of and means to those who pursue it is to know the cognitive, social, and moral contours of the occupation. Of course, not all occupations can be said to possess decipherable contours, since the degree to which knowledge, practices, and values are shared among practitioners varies across occupations, across time, and across settings. However, some occupations display a rather remarkable stability in social space and time and, hence, can be decoded. It is for them that the idea of an occupational community is most relevant since it draws attention to those occupations that transmit a shared culture from generation to generation of participants.

The notion of an occupational community derives from two classical sociological premises. First is the contention that people bound together by common values, interests, and a sense of tradition, share bonds of solidarity or mutual regard and partake of a communal way of life that contrasts in idyllic ways with the competition, individualism, and rational calculation of self-interest associated with persons organized on utilitarian principles. The distinction between communal and utilitarian forms of human association and the consequences of the transformation of the former into the latter are issues that preoccupied social theorists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Comte, Weber, Durkheim, Tonnies, and Marx each sensed that Western civilization was undergoing a social upheaval brought about by industrialization of the economy and bureaucratization of the state. While disagreeing over the meaning of the transformation, all concurred that a shift from "gemeinschaft" to "gesellschaft" was irrevocable.⁶

The central dilemma spawned by such a transformation lies in the nature of the social contract: How can human relationships remain socially integrated and rewarding in and of themselves when they are based on principles of utilitarianism and rational calculation of self-interest? One answer claims that rational associations are themselves meritorious. Thus, Weber, while acutely aware that rational organization generates its own problems (notably, rigidity and narrowness of scope), put forth more persuasively than any of his contemporaries the special virtues of rational organization in his depiction of ideal state bureaucracies. The attributes of Weberian bureaucracy are well known: division of labor by specialization, qualification by examination, coordination by impersonal rules, and authority legitimated by hierarchical office. In comparison to other forms of state organization, Weber thought bureaucracy superior insofar as it sought, through rationalization, to eliminate advancement by patrimony or special interest, to eradicate encrusted traditions, and to promise collective achievement through the use of member expertise.

Durkheim (1933) was also relatively optimistic about the potential benefits of rational organization (particularly in his early writings). He claimed that *gesellschaft* relationships engender their own peculiar devices for moral integration since rational contracts presume trust and negotiated reciprocity. However, Durkheim, much like Weber, tempered his optimism with the proposition that only *gemeinschaft*-like relationships could ameliorate the anomic side effects of rational organization and the division of labor. Durkheim's prescription for maintaining the social fabric of community amplified the very cleavages born of the division of labor: The formation of occupational groups to serve as political

entities as well as reference groups. We trace to Durkheim the second premise upon which the notion of occupational community rests: the idea that the work we do shapes the totality of our lives and, to a great extent, determines who we think we are.

"Besides the society of faith, of family, and of politics, there is one other that of all workers of the same sort, in association, all who cooperate in the same function; that is, the occupational group or corporation. Identity of origin, culture, and occupation makes occupational activity the richest sort of material for a common life."

Durkheim (1951: 578)

".... this character of corporative organization comes from very general causes When a certain number of individuals in the midst of a political society are found to have ideas, interests, sentiments, and occupations not shared by the rest of the population, it is inevitable that they will be attracted toward each other under the influence of these likenesses. They will seek each other out, enter into relations, associate, and thus little by little a restricted group, having its special characteristics, will be formed in the midst of the general society. But once the group is formed, a moral life appears naturally carrying the mark of the particular conditions in which it has developed. For it is impossible for men to live together, associating in industry, without acquiring a sentiment of the whole formed by their union, without attaching themselves to that whole, preoccupying themselves with its interests, and taking account of it in their conduct."

Durkheim (1933: 14)

The implication of Durkheim's remarks is that modern society is not only structured vertically by the rationality of industrial and state organization, but that it is also structured horizontally by occupational groupings. Although Durkheim proposed that occupations might provide the

moral fabric for society, the so-called Chicago school of sociology showed empirically the diversity of this moral fabric.⁷ For instance, the writings of Park and Burgess (1924), Hughes (1958, 1971), Becker (1963) and (especially) Becker et al. (1968), display the many moral, aesthetic, and social parameters of occupational groupings from the high status to low. In particular, Chicago School sociologists stress that the meaning of a line of work is socially constructed and validated in practice by members of an occupation; that an occupational career is decipherable only by reference to occupationally specific meanings; that occupations foster particular categorization schemes which structure work worlds as well as the larger social environment; and that work roles provide incumbents with a social identity and a code for conduct, both within and without the workplace.

The fusion of the community ideal, with the notion that one's work shapes one's life, finds expression in the vision of the artisan whose very being is inseparable from his means of livelihood and whose work suffuses every relationship with meaning. C. Wright Mills (1956:223) provides the example with his lyrical description of the craftsman.

"The craftsman's work is the mainspring of the only world he knows; he does not flee from work into a separate sphere of leisure he brings to his non-working hours the values and qualities developed and employed in his working time. His idle conversation is shop talk; his friends follow the same line of work as he, and share a kinship of feeling and thought."

This blurring of the distinction between work and leisure, and the idea that certain kinds of work bind people together and help shape the course of their existence lies at the core of research ventures into

occupational communities. For instance, working with high status occupations, Gertzl (1961:38) used the phrase "occupational community" to reflect the "pervasiveness of occupational identification and the convergence of informal friendship patterns and colleague relationships." Salaman (1974) elaborated upon the same theme when characterizing the work worlds of architects and railroaders. The term has also been used in the labor relations literature to describe relationships among union members or residents in towns where employment can be found in, or tightly bound to, only one line of work (Strauss, 1977; Hill, 1981).

The conception of occupational community developed here seeks to draw together much of this previous work. Our definition of an occupational community contains four elements. Each is separate analytically but interconnected empirically. By occupational community, we mean a group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; who identify (more or less positively) with their work; who share with one another a set of values, norms, and perspectives that apply to, but extend beyond, work related matters; and whose social relationships meld the realms of work and leisure.

Boundaries:

In his critique of the concept of community, Gusfield (1975: 31-32) cautions against operationally identifying communities on the basis of obvious or ascribed attributes of a group of individuals.⁸ Two popular criteria for defining communities, inhabitation of common territory and possession of similar backgrounds, are especially misleading. Not only may the inhabitants of a small village be decisively divided into smaller groups that compete among themselves for resources,

but persons with very diverse histories and traditions can attain a sense of solidarity (as did Jews of German and Russian origin who emigrated to the United States). Moreover, since human groups and relationships are multi-faceted, any number of attributes can be invented or discovered along which members can be compared and contrasted. Consequently, even if members are alike in some respect, there is no guarantee that the respect is relevant. More crucial parameters for identifying communities are the social dimensions used by members themselves for recognizing one another, the social limits of such bonds, and situational factors which amplify or diminish the perceived common identity. Gusfield (1975:33) writes that "the concept of community is part of a system of accounts used by members and observers as a way of explaining or justifying the member's behavior. It is the criteria of action rather than the physical arena within which action occurs it is the behavior governed by criteria of common belonging rather than mutual interest."

Following Gusfield's idea that "consciousness of kind" is the fundamental basis for a community, we submit that the relevant boundaries of an occupational community are those set by the members themselves. Hence, the first attribute of an occupational community is that it is composed of people who consider themselves "to be" members of the same occupation rather than people who "are" members of the same occupation. This distinction relies solely upon internal rather than external accounts and is of theoretical and methodological significance.⁹

The social organization of an occupation as seen by insiders is typically quite different from that seen by outsiders. Insiders may group themselves along connotative dimensions that escape the uninitiated and these connotative dimensions may lead some members to separate themselves

from others who do denotatively similar work. This point, well established in cognitive anthropology (Goodenough, 1970; Spradley, 1979), is crucial when empirical work turns toward intensive occupational study because official occupational titles provide only a dim suggestion of where community boundaries may lie. Occupational studies that rely on Census Bureau classifications are obviously well outside our definitional limits. "Professional, technical and kindred" covers authors, draftsmen, strip tease artists and accountants; "managers, officials and proprietors" embraces political appointees, bank officials, taco vendors and chief executive officers.

Nor are commonsensical and conventionally applied occupational labels particularly helpful. Conventional labels typically represent the theoretical limit of an occupational community. Within this boundary, socially significant types (i.e., of dentists, of firefighters, of accountants, etc.) are sure to exist which are, for all practical purposes, mutually exclusive and quite distinct in the minds of the insiders. When studying occupational communities, it is to the ethnographic record a researcher must go.

Commercial fishing provides a useful example because within its boundaries are found several rather distinct occupational communities. "Traditional fishermen" recognize differences between themselves and "non-traditional fishermen" such as "educated fishermen," "part-timers," and "outlaw fishermen" (Miller and Van Maanen, 1982). Even more important are distinctions made within types. Thus, in the port of Gloucester, Massachusetts, traditional fishermen divide themselves into two groups, Guineas and Greasers.¹⁰ Each group represents an identifiable and self-referential occupational community. Though members of both groups call

themselves fishermen and exemplify the traditional approach to the trade, the two groups neither work together nor associate with one another outside of work. Both the social idealization and the practical realization of a fishing career are quite different within each group.

More familiar examples are easily located within academic settings. Consider the sub-worlds to be discovered within scholarly disciplines as catalogued by Crane's (1971) insightful mapping of "invisible colleges." Consider also the two sociologies so elegantly portrayed by Dawe (1980). In the United States, social theorists of both symbolic interactionist and structural-functional bent certainly consider themselves sociologists. Yet, the members of each theory group rarely cite work done by members of the other group (except as targets for attack), almost never collaborate on joint research projects, and interact professionally only with some difficulty. When one considers the research programs advocated in each camp, the inescapable conclusion is that whatever a symbolic interactionist is, a structural functionalist is not.

The failure of well-known occupational labels to identify the bounds of an occupational community is also aggravated by the fact that many occupations are effectively hidden from public view. Given the indefinite number of jobs that exist and their respective distance from social researchers, superficial occupational descriptions are the norm in work studies, not the exception. Abstractions such as "unskilled labor," "semi-skilled labor," "manager," and even "engineer," are merely linguistic proxies for an uncharted population of distinct occupational pursuits. Few of us would guess that petroleum landmen share a particularly strong occupational community because few of us would even know that petroleum landmen exist, and we certainly would not know what they do (Bryant, 1972a).

Obscurity is not the only blinder. A greater myopia is the presumption that our categories are actually descriptive. The muddle of research on cosmopolitan and local orientations of so-called professionals is, in part, the outcome of inadequately specified occupational boundaries or limits. Not only have researchers in this domain confused "industrial scientist" with "industrial engineer" (Glaser, 1964; Ritti, 1968), they have also failed to recognize that worlds of engineering are differentiated by specialties as well as by differences in the scope, type, and intent of the work that passes as engineering in industry (Allen, 1977; Bailyn, 1980). Engineers themselves are often unable to say what engineers do except within the well defined setting of some company (Becker and Carper, 1956).

Abstract aggregation serves as ideology. It allows stereotypes to masquerade as knowledgeable descriptions. A classic example is the uncritical acceptance of the proposition that workers in "unskilled" and "semi-skilled" occupations lack careers or career ladders. Since some research has shown that some "unskilled" workers (in some occupations, in some periods, in some industries) are unlikely to follow or hope for an orderly progression of jobs (Chinoy, 1955; Wilensky, 1961; Beynon and Blackburn, 1972), researchers extend the attribute of "career-less-ness" to an undifferentiated mass of nominally unskilled workers. This uncritical generalizing of results proceeds by reducing a heterogeneous population to homogeneity and by discounting the probability that occupational life is shaped by specific contexts of work. More insidiously, generalizing across aggregates discourages particularistic research which might surface conditions under which the generalizations do not hold. Thus, so-called anomalies, such as the existence of career paths for laborers on pipeline

construction crews (Graves, 1958), for janitors in urban communities (Gold, 1964), for steelworkers in South Chicago (Kornblum, 1974), or for poker players in California gambling establishments (Hayano, 1982) are unlikely to be discovered, or, when discovered, discounted as mere exceptions to the general rule.

Adequate delineation of the boundaries of occupational communities requires research strategies open to the discovery of socially meaningful work groups and methodologies that resonate to the inner cleavages of work worlds. In lieu of sufficiently detailed and phenomenologically sensitive taxonomies of occupational groupings, researchers face a dual task: the actual discovery of existing occupational communities and the depiction of the dimensions along which they are formed. The two tasks must proceed simultaneously since delimiting boundaries entails knowing the social criteria that generate them.¹¹

One final point regarding boundaries concerns the territorial or geographic dispersion of the membership of an occupational community. Geographic proximity or common territory are, to many, natural indicators of community and, indeed, propinquity undergirds the use of the term "occupational community" by those researchers who employ it as a label for occupationally homogeneous towns or villages (Hill, 1981). Our use of the phrase, however, does not presume that members of an occupational community necessarily live or work near one another. Propinquity is then an attribute along which occupational communities vary. Certainly, propinquity may hasten and otherwise contribute to the development and maintenance of an occupational community, but it is not itself a definitional matter. Whether a particular community is geographically dispersed or clustered is an empirical question to be answered as communities are identified and analyzed.

Social Identity:

The second definitional feature of an occupational community is that members derive valued identities or self-images directly from their occupational roles. In brief, individuals, from our perspective, carry social selves, each constructed and reconstructed in daily interaction with others as people learn to view themselves from the point of view of others (Mead, 1930; Blumer, 1969; Van Maanen, 1979). To be sure, these social selves are contextually tied, but, as they are refined and confirmed as more or less impressive and serviceable across recurrent situations, they typically enable a person to present a reasonably comfortable, consistent, and, with occasional lapses, socially acceptable image to others (Goffman, 1959).

Some social selves are, of course, more central to one's sense of identity than others. The more central the social self, the less easily modified and the more omnipresent it is in everyday interaction (Schein, 1971). In occupational communities, the social identities assumed by most members include, in a prominent position, one based upon the kind of work they do and, as such, it is often quite central in their presentations of self to others (particularly to those outside the community) in everyday life. In this sense, a person may be, among other things, a guinea fisherman, a Catholic, and an employee for Peter Pan. Another may be a street cop, a jogger, and a mother. Individuals do not necessarily order the importance and value of such presentations (they are all important and valuable). Without question, social identities are sensitive to and reflective of the social situations to which an individual is party. But, for members of occupational communities at least, occupational identities are typically presented to others with some pride and are not

identities easily discarded for they are central to an individual's self-image (Van Maanen, 1979).

Indirect evidence of identification with an occupation is demonstrated by distinctive accouterments, costumes, and jargon. Members of fishing communities wear particular types of baseball caps to tell other fishermen what port they are from and what their involvement with fishing is likely to be (Miller and Van Maanen, 1982). Police officers carry courtesy cards, off-duty revolvers, and wallet badges. The unique properties of each convey significant clues to other officers as to where the owner stands in the community (Van Maanen, 1974; Rubinstein, 1973). Bawdy urban procurers are known to drive automobiles of distinctive style and color called "pimpmobiles" (James, 1972). Electricians recognize other electricians by the color of their overalls and by the shoes they wear (Reimer, 1977). And, one needs only catch snippets of conversation among members of an occupational community to appreciate the role special language plays (e.g., "We apprehended that dirtbag on a stand-up just next to my duck pond on 3rd and Main").

These visible identification devices serve as "tie-signs" establishing cognitive and socially verified links between person and occupation (Goffman, 1971: 194-5). More fundamentally, they represent only the most obvious of a multitude of signs that comprise a complex system of codes which enable the members of an occupation to communicate to one another an occupationally specific view of their work world. Although languages are the most versatile of all codes and may call attention to themselves when they take the form of jargon and argot, any object, event, or phenomenon becomes a part of a code, a sign, when it signifies something to someone (Pierce, 1958; Barthes, 1964). Since

signs and codes are established by the conventions of a particular group and are imparted by socialization practices, any given entity can potentially carry many connotations and denotations (Hawkes, 1977; Eco, 1976). The loose and arbitrary coupling between vehicle and content implies that a particular word, object, or event can signify differently for people who employ different codes.

We typically assume that specialists know more than laymen because of the knowledge presumably gained by extensive training. But, differences in understanding are qualitative as well as quantitative. Expertise arises, in part, because experts and laymen employ different codes for interpreting events. Where a frustrated parent sees only an incorrigible child, the psychotherapist sees vestiges of an unresolved Oedipal conflict. Where a puzzled automobile owner hears but a strange pattering, the mechanic recognizes a missing cylinder or worn points. Becoming a member of an occupation always entails learning a set of codes that can be used to construct meaningful interpretations of persons, events, and objects commonly encountered in the occupational world.

The more pervasive, esoteric and numerous the codes employed by members of an occupation, the more likely the occupation engenders identity because the confluence of codes overdetermines a perspective on reality and overrides the plausibility of naive interpretations of the same matters (Barley, forthcoming). Even when on vacation, police officers see cues of wrongdoing and danger in everyday settings. Funeral directors, when out on the town, continue to monitor their demeanor (Habenstein, 1962). Psychiatrists in training practice their trade by staying diagnostically alert to the emotional and mental states of their

friends and acquaintances (Light, 1980). When codes of an occupation generate such an all-embracing orientation, an occupational community is likely to be found.

The possession and use of pervasive and peculiar codes is but one factor that encourages positive identification with an occupation. Occupational identities are also fostered by high involvement in the work itself. In a study of the work worlds of graduate engineers, Lynch and Bailyn (1980) note that involvement in work implies something quite different than simply seeking or drawing satisfaction from work. Involvement implies, among other things, absorption in the symbolic nature of work so that work takes on a special significance and sets the involved apart from others who do not pursue the same livelihood in the same fashion. The sense of being apart and different underlies the development of a shared identity. Discussing the concept of community, Weber (1968: 42-43) insisted that "consciousness of kind" arises structurally and only in conjunction with "consciousness of difference."

"A common language, which arises from a similarity of tradition through the family and surrounding the social environment, facilitates mutual understanding but, taken by itself, it is not sufficient to constitute a communal relationship it is only with the emergence of a consciousness of difference from third persons who speak a different language that the fact that two persons speak the same language and, in that respect, share a common situation, can lead them to a feeling of community and to modes of social organization consciously based on the sharing of the common language."

Ethnographically detailed research on occupations describe several factors that appear to compel special involvement with work as well as a sense of commonality and uniqueness among the members of an occupation.

Danger ranks high on this list. For example, Haas (1977) documents the camaraderie, mutual regard, and intense involvement among high-steel ironworkers and attributes much of this to the constant, eminent peril that comes with working on open girders hundreds of feet above the ground. Danger also invites work involvement and a sense of fraternity among police officers and fishermen where the consequences of one simple mistake may be severe (Van Maanen, 1980b). Recognition that one's work entails danger heightens the contrast between one's own work and the safer work of others, and encourages comparison of self with those who share one's work situation. Attitudes, behavior, and self-images for coping physically and psychologically with threat become part of an occupational role appreciated best, it is thought, only by one's fellow workers. Danger spawns an insider-outsider dichotomy characteristic of communal identities (Becker, 1963; Gusfield, 1975).

A second factor encouraging involvement and identification with one's occupation occurs when members of an occupation possess (or, more properly, believe they possess) certain esoteric, scarce, socially valued, and unique abilities. Skilled tradesmen occupy separate subworlds in the construction industry because mastery of their craft licenses them (as does the state and the occupational association) to make autonomous, specialized, minute-by-minute decisions (Stinchcombe, 1959). Thus carpenters raise roofbeams and plumbers attend sinks and toilets in rather splendid isolation, despite the often frantic coordinating attempts of contractors.

The crafts and trades are often held forth as the last vestiges of occupations that encourage a sense of identity and community. But, according to the deskilling argument, technological innovations such as

the numerical machine tool (Braverman, 1974; Noble, 1977) and bureaucratic controls (Johnson, 1972; Edwards, 1979) increasingly promote and permit the encoding of the craftsman's expertise and the subsequent partitioning and rationalization of trade work. A careful and detailed look at the systematic and disturbingly unilateral dismantling of several occupational communities of craftsmen in the steel industry by cost-conscious managers is provided by Stone (1979) and given theoretical meaning by Marglin (1974).

While managerially-sponsored technology may deskill some occupations, technological innovation in other settings may generate occupational communities whose members possess new forms of esoteric skill. Pettigrew's (1973) study of the installation of computers into a Scottish firm underscores the power computer programmers and systems analysts derive from their knowledge of the machine and its language. For a number of years, the programmers in Pettigrew's firm were allowed to develop work identities, a community, and customs that clashed with the managerial, staff, and production cultures in the organization simply because the programmers controlled scarce and impenetrable knowledge. Similarly, new radiological technologies, such as ultrasound, create a community of radiologists and radiological technicians who are the only individuals in the hospital capable of interpreting the meaning of images that appear to be but noise to consulting physicians. Command of such expertise has led some radiologists to assert with more than a little enthusiasm that radiology has become a crucial link in the hospital's delivery of services (Barley, forthcoming^b).

Rather than claim progressive deskilling and the general demise of all occupational identities and communities, a theory of occupational

change modeled after the notion of speciation provides a more plausible view. As the technical expertise of some occupations becomes codified, disseminated, partitioned, grasped by outsiders, normalized and demystified, the occupational community wanes. But, at the same time, new forms of technical expertise and new occupations may arise in the wake of the old, thus creating new occupational communities. A population of occupations in a state of ebb and flow may more accurately depict historical experience. As the knowledge of computer programming becomes more widespread and uncoupled from knowledge of mathematics, programming becomes far less esoteric. At the same time, however, a new occupational identity arises to deal with the remaining indeterminacies programming entails, the systems analyst (Pettigrew, 1973). Consequently, to the degree that those pursuing a line of work manage to maintain control over a scarce set of abilities or to develop an expanded knowledge base which only they can apply, occupational identities are likely to be sustained over time, if not enhanced. These are topics we will return to in following sections for they bear directly on the definitional questions surrounding the nature of what is (and what is not) usually called professional work.

Claimed responsibility for others is a third factor promoting identification with and involvement in a line of work. The "hogsheads" (locomotive engineers) studied by Gamst (1980) believe they perform especially important work which sets them apart from other workers because the safety of the train, its passengers, and its cargo depend on their performance. Air traffic controllers, police officers, taxi drivers, nurses, and emergency medical technicians, all extoll the virtues of service as an occupational creed. In some cases, there

accrues a certain reverence, awe, and prestige for those in occupations granted life-and-death responsibilities over others. Even when responsibilities are not so weighty or visible in the public eye, members of the occupation may still attempt to manufacture and maintain a sense of occupational honor through doing the public good (Hughes, 1958). Garbage collectors develop an ideology around the public health functions of their work which, in turn, may (but usually does not) provide a respectable basis for adopting the identity of sanitation worker (Lasson, 1971). When one believes that one holds a symbolic trust, identification with an occupation is facilitated.

In essence, the confrontation of danger in one's work, the possession of esoteric skills, and the belief that one does special and socially significant work provide conditions which encourage the perception that oneself and one's colleagues are somehow different from the rest of the working population. Common skills, common risks, and common adventures form the basis for a communal identity by promoting interaction with those others who "know the score" and thereby increase the probability that members of such occupations will consider themselves to be unique.

Reference Group:

To maintain a social identity, support and confirmation from others is required (Mead, 1930; Goffman, 1959). The third defining feature of an occupational community is that members take other members as their primary reference group such that the membership comes to share a distinct pattern of values, beliefs, norms, and interpretations for judging the appropriateness of one another's actions and reactions.¹²

This would include moral standards surrounding what work is to be considered good and bad, what work is "real work" and, therefore, in contrast to "shit work," what formal and contextual rules of conduct are to be enforced, what linguistic categories are to be used in partitioning the world, and so forth. To say an occupational community provides members with a value system is to say that members make use of a collective perspective in everyday matters, that they evaluate themselves in its light, and that such a perspective carries over to matters falling outside the realm of work itself.

Several conditions appear to foster the adoption of shared occupational values. First, when an occupation is stigmatized or viewed by outsiders as marginal in society, members will turn to one another for aid and comfort and, through such interaction, sustain a view of the world that justifies and vindicates itself as a defense against outsiders. Street sweepers in India are avoided by members of higher castes because the work they do is considered polluting. Yet, sweepers who live together in closed communities in Benares share a value system that partially compensates for the low social status of their work by positing that the very attributes feared by higher castes are, in fact, qualities to be appreciated (Searle-Chatterjee, 1979). Sweepers are likely to flaunt their untouchable status and wield it as a collective political and social weapon for securing autonomy and other occupational rewards incommensurate with their caste's status.

The solidarity of marginal or stigmatized occupations is by no means confined to societies with rigid caste systems. Becker's (1951) jazz musicians come to respect only the judgements, tastes, and perspectives of like-minded musicians. These values are predicated upon,

and, at the same time create, the musicians' view of themselves as different from the "square" majority. Such aloofness and self-sealing interaction loops are also found in the high status occupations whose members are celebrated rather than stigmatized. In some cases, outsiders may even consider the occupation to be inspirational as seems to be the case with medicine and the clergy. However, we must note that the celebrated status of such occupations is contingent upon more than the presumed social problems addressed or socially valued work performed by occupational members since the celebration is both cultivated and protected by occupational members. Physicians have long sought, for example, to build and maintain a view of themselves as knights in the battle against pestilence. The current attack upon medical prestige and practice takes shape through the attempted destruction of the "myth of the healer" as promulgated by medical interest groups (e.g., Illich, 1976).

Occupations that penetrate multiple aspects of a person's life also create conditions favorable to taking members of the occupation as one's primary reference group. To maintain a career in some occupations requires adopting a particular style of life. For example, funeral directors with neighborhood-based practices understand that their work dictates the modeling of certain community and religious standards. Since advertising is considered inappropriate by local funeral directors, they rely upon their community involvement and reputation to attract clientele. Under the theory that certain kinds of behavior might offend potential clients, funeral directors present themselves with heightened personal reserve and the sort of social conservatism respectful of local traditions (Habenstein, 1962). Consequently, certain forms of public

behavior, for instance, drunkenness, boisterousness, or even the relative luxury of not attending religious services regularly, are taboo not only for the funeral director but often also for his family. Moreover, the practices of providing twenty-four hour availability and living in the funeral home are widespread across the membership of the occupation. These features act as common denominators that foster a shared world view for interpreting the occupational experience (Barley, 1980). Such social conditions suggest funeral directing's similarity to other occupations whose members are required to be constantly "on" (e.g., entertainers, priests, presidents, and, arguably, college professors in small towns). Only others who face the same demands can constitute a reference group able to bolster performances and sustain the centrality of the role to the membership (Messinger et al., 1962).

Rigorous socialization is a third condition that influences members to adopt the standards of the occupational group. The ordeal-like atmosphere of the police academy draws individuals together for mutual support and creates a recruit culture within which novice police officers can interpret their experiences in ways shared by others (Van Maanen, 1973). Various occupations utilize different socialization practices, but, in general, the more harsh, formal, lengthy, and isolated the process, the more uncertain the outcome, and, the more controlled the aspirant by the social pressure of peers, the more similar the values adopted by those who pass into the occupation (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Elite professional schools are obvious exemplars in this regard.

Social Relations:

The fourth and final attribute of an occupational community to be singled out is the blurring of the distinction between work and leisure activities within occupational communities. The melding of work and leisure may come about when leisure activities are connected to one's work or when there is extensive overlap between work and social relationships. In some occupational communities, specific leisure pursuits themselves are linked to the occupation. The connection may either be simple and intuitively obvious, or unexpected but nonetheless regular. Both Salaman (1974) and Gamst (1980) provide examples of unsurprising links when they note that many railroaders include among their hobbies the building of model trains which are displayed to one another during recreational hours. An unexpected link is found in the case of early nineteenth century loom-weavers in London who were also widely known as botanists and entomologists, and who established a number of floricultural, historical, and mathematical societies (Braverman, 1974).

The point here lies not in the substantive nature of the tie between work and leisure, but rather in the tight network of social relations created when members of an occupation seek, for whatever reasons (e.g., pleasure, anxiety reduction, opportunistic advantage, etc.), close relationships with one another outside the workplace. As with the other defining characteristics, several conditions appear to favor the overlapping of work and social relations.

First is the degree to which members of an occupation are geographically or organizationally clustered. While physical proximity is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for the formation of an occupational community, proximity nevertheless promotes and eases social

interaction. Fishermen, police officers, prison guards and lumberjacks, for example, must work closely together and temporal considerations require them to live relatively near where they work. Neiderhoffer and Neiderhoffer (1968) report that the residences of members of some police departments are so geographically congregated that certain neighborhoods gain reputations for attracting only the police as homeowners. When the materials and resources with which an occupation operates are localized or when the majority of the residents of a vicinity are employed in the same line of work, overlap between work and social relationships becomes almost inevitable as is the case for coal miners in West Virginia or dockers in Hull, England (Hill, 1981). A similar phenomenon is apparently found among computer engineers in California's Silicon Valley and in the Boston suburbs along Route 128 (Los Angeles Times, July 12, 1982).

The melding of work and social relationships is also encouraged by occupations whose characteristics restrict their members' social relations. Shift work, night work, extensive travel, isolated postings, long periods of work-induced isolation followed by extended periods of leisure, all tend to mitigate opportunities for establishing friendships outside of work. Such restrictions alter time schedules so that members of the occupation are out of sync with the rhythm of a "normal" work week and must structure leisure time in ways that are at odds with the repose times of the majority of other employed persons. Cottrell (1938) and Salaman (1974) document how the enslavement of railroaders to precise time schedules, federal regulations on work hours, and variable shift work precludes the possibility of their participation in typical community and family activities. Another example of how work shapes social relations is found among New York City firefighters, many of whom

frequently spend large portions of their off-duty time at station houses chatting with on-duty colleagues (Smith, 1972).

Third, occupations that are kin-based and entered by virtue of birth lead to an extensive overlap among social and work relations. Commercial fishing is an occupation where sons typically follow fathers into the line of work and all family members are, to a large degree, caught in its net (Miller and Van Maanen, 1982). One New England fisherman, when asked how he decided to enter the occupation, replied quite succinctly (and with some bemusement), "I'm a fisherman until I prove that I'm not." Funeral directing is another occupation sharing this kin-based recruitment pattern (Barley, 1980.)

A final condition favorable to an overlap between work and social relationships arises through a sort of occupational intrusion into all aspects of a person's life. To paraphrase Goffman (1961), some occupations are "total work institutions." The lives of fighter pilots, submariners, intelligence officers, as well as most military personnel and their spouses come immediately to mind. Stationed on bases and encouraged to socialize only with other colleagues (of similar rank and function), occupational communities are created almost by fiat (Janowitz, 1960). But, the military is not the only example of the total work institution. Bryant (1972b) notes that carnival personnel are likely to work, eat, sleep, relax, fight, and travel with one another. Carnival people are also quite likely to intermarry and to provide collectively for on-the-road education of their children. Less exotic examples are trained counselors who hold full time, live-in positions in college residence halls. In situations where the college provides the counselors with room, board, and recreation as well as work, the counselors are most likely to

establish social relations mainly with fellow counselors (Barley, 1979). In short, those who live within an occupational embrace find their work and leisure pursuits mixed in many ways and mixed so that where one ends and the other begins is a matter of some ambiguity (Kanter, 1977).

Occupational Communities as Work Cultures

Any outsider who observes naturally occurring conversation among self-defined members of an occupational community would quickly discover that members who have not previously met and who are of different ages, geographic regions, sexes, ethnic origins, or educational backgrounds are able to converse over a wide range of topics indecipherable by outsiders. Such is the manifestation of a shared culture. When, for example, a police officer remarks to another officer, "We didn't do any police work tonight, wrote a couple of movers and watched Stripes jump another one of our fucking calls," that officer makes substantial use of cultural materials which a listener who is familiar with such materials must make use of when assigning meaning to the remark. A description of the knowledge necessary to understand such an interaction would represent, then, a partial description of the culture. Such knowledge can never be fully explicated, in part, because it is inextricably tied to the context which gives rise to its use and, in part, because even the most astute of cultural members know that such knowledge is continually in flux and thus more than an occasional problem for cultural members themselves. From this standpoint, culture is as much a dynamic, evolving way of thinking and doing as it is a stable set of thoughts and actions.

This is not to say, however, that culture is just another variable. Culture is not something a group possesses more or less of at any given time; it is something it is. When cultures are described, meanings are central, not frequencies.¹³ This is a cognitive, ideational view of culture emphasizing, by definition, "the things a person must know to be a member of a given group" (Goodenough, 1970; 41). In occupational communities these "things" include decoding schemes for assigning meaning to the various practical routines which members engage in during the workday, as well as the typical objects, persons, places, times, and relations members encounter at work (and, often, beyond). At a deeper, interpretive level, these surface manifestations of culture reflect integrative themes or ordering assumptions held by the membership which provide for some commonality and connection across specific domains of thought and action (Geertz, 1973). In the police world, for example, an "asshole" is a technical term used by officers to signify those citizens believed to be out to provoke and embarrass the police in routine social interaction (Van Maanen, 1978). The use of such a term (and others of like ilk) is premised upon the police officers' taken-for-granted assumptions regarding just what is and is not proper and orderly social interaction with members of the public (i.e., an interaction initiated, directed, and terminated by the police, not the citizen). Cultures vary, therefore, on the basis of differing meaning systems. To compare cultures is to compare codes and assumptions which give rise to behavioral and cognitive diversity.

Occupational communities, as we have suggested, transmit to new members shared occupational practices, values, vocabularies, and identities. More to the point, such cultural transmission transcends

specific organizational settings since members who are widely dispersed and unfamiliar with one another display similar understandings and attitudes toward the work they do. Although, as we will discuss, occupational communities penetrate and are certainly penetrated in various ways by employing organizations, they are to be sharply distinguished from other work cultures -- such as the much discussed organizational ones -- on several grounds.¹⁴

Members of occupational communities are favorably oriented toward their jobs and careers. To them, work is more than merely "making a living;" it is a source of meaning and value. The secretaries and office workers studied by Benet (1972) certainly possess both an identity and a distinct work culture within the confines of their employing organization, but neither do they value the identity nor is the culture much more than a set of responses to specific managerial practices of the office. It is a "culture of resistance" based upon opposition to subordinate position and status within a given organization. Our hypothetical "hind-toe-removers" presumably check their social identities and cultures of reference at the gate when entering the slaughterhouse in the morning and pick them up again when leaving in the evening. While they may partake of a work or organizational culture while on the job, the centrality of that culture to their life outside the workplace is minimal. There are social identities (held at a distance) involved here, but the flow of identities and interests is from outside into the workplace. For those in occupational communities, the flow is reversed.¹⁵

Individual status within occupational communities is, in the abstract, based on displayed skill and performance of those tasks most members consider essential to the occupation. Member judgements on

such matters are based on historically developed standards which represent definitions of proper (and, by implication, improper) occupational practice. In this sense, a "culture of achievement" exists in occupational communities, not a "culture of advancement" so often reported in studies of organizations and their managers (e.g. Dalton, 1959). Segmentation and specialization are, to be sure, found in occupational communities, as are hierarchies, but whatever segmentation, specialization, or hierarchical distinctions are to be found have origins within, not without, the community and, therefore, reflect the performance standards of the membership. In the ideal, only the members dictate how their labor is to be organized.

To the extent that the occupation and the bundle of tasks and interactions it involves are matters held in high regard by members of occupational communities, one would expect the membership to lay claim to control the work they do. In essence, occupational communities are premised upon the belief that only the membership possesses the proper knowledge, skills, and orientations necessary to make decisions as to how the work is to be performed and evaluated. Here lies the core of the matter, for it is obvious some occupational communities (notably the so-called free professions and, to a lesser extent, the established trade associations and unions) have been more successful than others in creating, maintaining, and protecting a distinctive and relatively autonomous culture. Self-control of occupational matters is then the key variable upon which distinctions among occupational communities are to be made. Self-control refers to the occupational community's ability to dictate who will and will not be a member, as well as how the content and conduct of a member's work will be assessed. The grounds upon which such

self-control is based are numerous, complicated, and constantly problematic for the membership. Four particularly crucial (yet relatively general) obstacles to occupational self-control are evident.¹⁶

Service to Management

If service to organizational officials who are not occupational community members is a condition of employment, occupational self control decreases. Self-employment or employment within an occupationally-based organization such as is found in certain legal practices, trade unions, public service agencies, and medical groups increase occupational self-control. The matter is not, however, quite so straightforward. For example, many studies have noted that management goals are not necessarily exclusive of those rooted in an occupation (e.g., Montagna, 1973; Schreisheim, et al., 1977). To wit, certain kinds of engineers often discover that their collective aims and identities can be satisfied only within large, heteronomous organizations where sufficient resources to pursue occupationally-valued ends are to be found (Scott, 1965; Harlow, 1973; Brown, 1981). Many public service organizations, such as hospitals, maintain separate administrative and occupational hierarchies thus allowing occupational values to be served alongside organizational ones (Freidson, 1970). In both cases, members of the respective occupational communities retain substantial self control over their work, even though many of them are located well down the formal chain of command in the organization.

From this perspective, self control is problematic to members of an occupational community only when organizational officials seek to impose certain "outsider" standards, goals, work tasks, evaluative

schemes, and so forth upon the membership. In and of itself, hierarchy is not an issue. It is the use of hierarchical authority to direct member activities in ways the membership considers untoward that presents the problem and threat to self control. Such a threat and its realization may vary, of course, by the organizational position held by an occupational community member. For example, there is apparently substantial autonomy for many senior accountants in business corporations. For these highly placed accountants, occupational values and standards play a large role in their everyday activities (and may influence even the direction of the firm itself). But, much less autonomy exists for accountants at the junior and lower levels of the same corporations who may, to their chagrin, find themselves performing organizationally dictated, highly regimented bookkeeping functions which provide little opportunity to exercise valued occupational skills (Montagna, 1973). Such tasks are held in low regard, perhaps contempt, by community members, even though, within an administrative frame of reference, the performance of such tasks provides an important service to management.

More generally, self control for employees within any organization varies by employment opportunities elsewhere (Hirschman, 1970). For members of occupational communities, opportunities to engage in solo practice or in highly specialized organizations promoting occupational interests are no doubt important conditions that help sustain the very norms and identities which constitute the community. Such opportunities provide an exit option to members who are displeased with the way their skills are being utilized by an organization. The more limited such opportunities, the more community members must bend their occupational standards to organizational interests and whims.

Finally, we must note that loyalty and tenure considerations may dampen the value of self control for members of organizational communities who remain in a given organization for long periods of time. External labor value typically decreases with age (e.g Bloch and Kuskin, 1978). Thus occupational mobility of the sort requiring organizational shifts may be restricted to younger, more recently trained, and (perhaps most crucially) cheaper members of the community (Pfeffer, forthcoming). The so-called "golden handcuffs" associated with many long tenure organizational careers represent telling examples in this regard. The point here is that such handcuffs signify ties to an organization and its managerially-designed reward systems rather than ties to an occupation and its member-designed reward systems. To the degree that service to management provides unique and valued rewards that are believed to surpass those obtainable through service to the occupation, the importance of self control to occupational members will undoubtedly lessen.

Theory and Procedure in Occupational Practice:

If an occupational community is able to maintain a relative monopoly over its theory and procedures, self control will be maintained. If other groups secure access to such knowledge, self control is reduced (Child and Fulk, 1982). Both theory and procedure have explicit (i.e., cognitive) and implicit (i.e., skill) components. These components and their interaction are vital elements when accounting for the mandate occupational communities are able to manufacture and sustain within a society as well as within an organization.

The cognitive base of an occupation represents declarative sorts of knowledge such as facts, descriptions, and technologies. Since

declarative knowledge is rule-based, it can be transmitted by word of mouth or by print. Although it may be complex, scientific in origin, and take years to master, it is, in principle, subject to codification. In contrast, skill is fluid and, to outsiders at least, mysterious. Skill is akin to what is called "know-how" and is represented by what acknowledged experts in all fields are demonstrably able to do but are often unable or unwilling to precisely describe (Roberts et al., 1966). For example, cab drivers in Boston know that direct traffic has the right of way over vehicles making left-hand turns in an intersection. This is a cognitive or declarative matter. But, these cab drivers also know when there is just enough time for them to "safely" make left-hand turns before the next approaching car enters the collision zone. That cab drivers skirt collisions in most instances is a result of perceptual understanding, aggressive motor behaviors, and probably sheer nerve, all of which are learned by experience. Such skill defies description by general rule. To build on Polanyi's (1966:4) much quoted line, cab drivers "know more than they can (or will) tell."¹⁷

This distinction is helpful when considering how occupational self-control is amplified or reduced. On one hand, the larger the cognitive component and the more rapid the rate at which it grows, the more likely occupational self-control will be sustained. On the other hand, the cognitive component is, in the ideal, available to others since it can be codified (Child and Fulk, 1982). The recent spate of books on do-it-yourself divorce, the at-home pregnancy test, the design-your-own home handbook, or complete-idiot's-guide to television repair are all mundane examples of domains in which occupational communities have potentially lost a degree of self-control. Perhaps more seriously,

Oppenheimer (1973) and Haug (1975, 1977) have claimed that computer technology is hastening the "proletarianization of the professions" since it enables non-experts to utilize expert techniques by virtue of electronic storage and retrieval of professional routines. Hence, the central question in terms of self-control over the cognitive component of occupational practice concerns the pace at which new knowledge is being acquired and monopolized by community members relative to the rate at which old knowledge is being standardized and dispersed.

Regarding the procedural knowledge contained within an occupational community, self-control can be threatened by damaging public disclosures which reveal practices most members would prefer to keep private. Boston taxi drivers notwithstanding, demystification of certain occupational practices is always possible and various forms of muckraking can be of serious consequence. The threat is even more serious when an occupation is shown to have claimed skill when, in fact, little skill has been exercised (or, perhaps, even needed). For example, proposals for Civilian Review Boards seem to follow police scandals, and political intrusions into welfare agencies are apparently generated whenever documented claims reveal a large number of "welfare cheats." To the degree an occupational community is able to conduct its business in private, train and license its members relatively free from the scrutiny of audiences not of its choosing, and maintain the strong loyalties of its members so that even the disenchanted are unlikely to speak publicly, its sacred procedural knowledge is relatively secure. But, like Toto pulling on the Wizard of Oz's curtain, when "know-how" is made public, the show may be damaged. All occupational communities rely on ill-defined procedures and techniques as the sort of mystical heart of the practice, a heart that to keep beating must remain protected.

The two knowledge forms of an occupational community are linked together in intriguing ways. Typically, the greater the cognitive base, the more skill required to put such cognitive matters into practice and the more distant both become to lay actors outside the community. Thus, even if non-members become users of well developed occupational practices, they may still turn to a community member at some point, if only for simple assurance that their use has been proper and in accord with community standards. Thus, even when not legally required to do so, some highly skilled do-it-yourself home builders turn to professional contractors to inspect the results of their work (Glaser, 1972). In this sense, the demand for cognitive or technical knowledge may decrease, but the occupational community remains unaffected because the demand for skill and the judgemental prerogatives associated with recognized procedural knowledge remain fixed. Transactions in such instances are based on the provision of sanctioning evaluations rather than the provision of direct labor. In this manner, the uncertainty and indeterminacy surrounding "know-how" protects occupational self-control.

Market Structure:

All else being equal (certainly the exception in social life), the more visible, organized, and homogeneous the market to which an occupational community is linked, the less self-control will be held by that community. The more isolated, individualized, and heterogeneous the market, the greater the self-control. Submissiveness of client or consumer groups is a central characteristic of many occupational communities which have developed strong self-control mandates. The patient vis-a-vis the doctor (Freidson, 1970), the accused vis-a-vis the public

defender (Sudnow, 1965), the bereaved vis-a-vis the funeral director (Mitford, 1969) all stand as good examples. Far less self-control is found among commercial fishermen operating within monopsonistic markets comprised of a few large fish buyers (Van Maanen, et al., 1982). Teachers possess relatively less self-control when employed by homogeneous rather than heterogeneous school districts (Lortie, 1974).

There are, of course, some ironies involved with this relationship. One concerns the asymmetry of authority between an occupation and its marketplace. The more direct and transparent the occupational community's effect on consumers or clients, the more likely those consumers or clients will themselves organize as a means of mediating such effects (Child and Fulk, 1982). The growing movement for socialized medicine and legislation establishing health service organizations represent good examples in this regard, for both developments attempt to limit the autonomy of physicians and hospitals. The dialectic is also amplified because as client submissiveness declines members of an occupational community may further solidify behind a common front. A sort of "us-versus-them" stance is one result and a struggle for control ensues. Again, medicine provides the case in point. Where consumers or clients have no alternatives to highly valued products or services, the struggle is likely to be lengthy and highly charged.

State Control:

Occupational self-control varies directly with the degree to which the state sanctions such control. Self-control of an occupation is sought in part because members deem it just, and in part because it serves the cause of upward social mobility for the occupational community

as a whole. Occupational communities lobby directly and indirectly to gain control of relevant market segments via state intervention. The state intervenes in matters of vital interest to an occupation. Consider the funding of training programs, the limitations set upon the size of an occupational community, work and safety standards, the providing of direct employment in the public sector, the setting (or not setting) of cost and price guidelines for products and services, the provision of payments for occupational work, and numerous other interventions as examples of state-directed activities that significantly influence the amount of self-control available to members of an occupational community. Mystique may erode, clients may revolt, cognitive dimensions of practice may be codified and widely distributed, and organizational managers and owners may be the prime beneficiaries of occupationally-produced goods or services, but if the state chooses to protect an occupational community by granting it, in effect, a legal monopoly on practice, self-control will stubbornly persist. The traditional professions of law and medicine are reminders of just how crucial a role the state plays in providing for occupational self-control (Johnson, 1972). In effect, the distinction of having an occupation rather than having a job or position is that those with an occupation potentially can call on sources of legitimacy for their work performances other than those offered by the employing organization. When these sources are backed up and certified by the state, legitimacy and self-control are virtually synonymous.

Careers of Occupational Communities

We have argued thus far that occupational communities represent bounded work cultures populated by people who share similar identities and values that transcend specific organizational settings. Moreover, self-control is a prominent cultural theme in all occupational communities, although its realization is highly problematic. Occupational communities vary with respect to how much self-control they have been able to carve out. The more self-control possessed by an occupational community, the more distinct and self-perpetuating its culture. Although occupational communities hermetically sealed off from a society would be impossible to find, occupational communities can be arrayed on a continuum of self-control. The differing values, practices, ideologies, and selected identities associated with each represent strategic choices exercised within a community as to how best to present itself and exert occupational control.

Much historical and sociological work documents the rise and fall of occupations, the sources of prestige and status among occupations, and changes in the occupational structure within a society.¹⁸ Much of this work highlights how occupations have gained varying degrees of self-control. Unionization and professionalization are prominent strategies in this regard since each presumably promotes the interests of the collective over time. Unionization and professionalization are bootstrapping tactics used by some occupational communities (sometimes simultaneously, sometimes separately) to enhance the collective career of the membership (Van Maanen, 1976).

Unionization is a means of modifying and reducing the degree to which members of an occupation employed in organizational contexts are directed and controlled by the non-occupational members of an organization. Although unionization is frequently associated with an ideology stressing occupational control over the work its members perform, this ideology must not be accepted uncritically. For example, in the United States at least, the trend has been toward consolidated unions, such as the United Auto Workers, which claim to speak for a diversity of occupational groups. Such diversity may well interfere with the interests of distinct occupational communities contained within umbrella-like unions. On the other hand, some unions, such as the International Typographical Union or the United Mine Workers, appear to be organized as occupational associations whose members share similar occupational interests. Thus, the more similar the tasks performed by union members, the more likely the union itself promotes the special concerns of an occupational community, including self-control. To paraphrase Hirschman's (1971) catchy terms, such unions offer to members of occupational communities "voice" rather than "exit" as a way of influencing where, when, how, for whom, and for what rewards their work is to be provided. Once unionization is itself achieved, it may become the means by which the community can monopolize and protect areas of expertise, control its labor market, and attain upward social mobility. This is, at least, the promise, if not the reality, of most single-occupation unionization campaigns.

More generally, the primary mission of unions concerns the well-being of its membership. As institutionalized through collective bargaining in the United States, unions are involved in determining the

terms and conditions of employment which bear on job satisfaction (Dunlop, 1958). When these terms are defined to include policies governing the content and quality of products and services provided by the members of an occupational community as well as the more traditional bread-and-butter issues, then the union is essentially involved in promoting the occupational norms and mission within the society. When successful, the career of the community is itself furthered. Consider, for example, the potential status and position of American auto workers were they able to bargain with management over the poor quality of American cars. Hence, we are suggesting, along with Haug and Sussman (1973), that the presumed antithesis between normative commitments to service or quality and the so-called bread-and-butter functions of labor unions are largely a fiction (even though, in practice, the bread-and-butter concerns are often traded off against normative concerns).

Professionalization is a process serving goals similar to those of unionization. The traditional, and what Turner and Hodge (1970) have called the "formal organization" approach to the study of the professions, holds that professions are somehow quite different from other occupations.¹⁹ Typically, advocates of this approach propose a set of attributes or traits which define the difference (Carr-Sanders and Wilson, 1933; Greenwood, 1957; Vollmer and Mills, 1966). Though the trait lists vary by author, four attributes found on all lists are: (1) possession of a substantive body of knowledge imparted to novices through systematic training; (2) formation of an occupational association which certifies practitioners; (3) societal recognition of the occupation's authority; and (4) a service orientation articulated by a code of ethics.

The critique of a separate sociology of the professions has been intensified of late and it is a critique of some strength (Johnson, 1972; Roth, 1974; Larson, 1977; Klegon, 1979). In essence, the trait approach to the professions has been examined closely and comes up wanting. From the vantage point of the critique, professions are not distinct because of the sterling personal qualities of their membership or the attributes of the work their members perform, but because of the success self-defined professionals have had in claiming occupational self-control. For example, Johnson (1972) holds that the professions represent a peculiar form of social control in which the producers define the needs of the consumers. Larson (1977) argues that a profession is merely the end state in a process of upward social mobility for a collective wherein the producers eventually come to monopolize the market for their expertise. Freidson (1970) bluntly suggests that a profession contrasts to other occupations only in that it has been given the right by the state to control its own work. Moreover, the critics note that trait approaches to the professions must take for granted the separate and distinct status of a particular line of work since, by definition, such approaches seek to uncover features of the work (or its membership) which will justify the ascribed, yet unquestioned, status. Wittingly or unwittingly, such approaches and the self-referential tropes they employ provide symbolic support for professional uniqueness, an argument which clearly furthers the self-interest of any line of work called professional (Roth, 1974; Whittington, 1982).

Even more crucially, the list of traits which comprise the ideal type of profession have been shown to be empirically suspect. For example, even in the most revered of professions, medicine, recent

research questions the effectiveness and even existence of collegial control (Millman, 1979; Bosk, 1979). Other studies suggest that the attributed characteristics of the clientele are at least as significant in terms of treatment as any universalistic or scientific methods of diagnosis and therapy (Freidson, 1970; Bucher and Strauss, 1961). And, altruistic norms of public service have been severely questioned when examinations of pay schedules, geographical distribution of licensed physicians, or medical review practices dealing with surgical mistakes have been undertaken (Glaser, 1970; Garfield, 1970; Millman, 1979). At best, trait theories such as those surrounding the definition of medicine as a profession suggest not what the profession is, but what it pretends to be (Hughes, 1951).

When researchers examine what professionals actually do in everyday life to negotiate and sustain their special positions, a rather different perspective emerges. We find that the normative attributes are important to professional practice and practitioners, but they are important because they are used (with more or less success) as arguments and accounts to legitimize professional self-control.²⁰ Like members of many other occupations, those considered professionals have sought to free themselves from administrative control, to secure the sanctity of their theory and procedures, and to control the market structure they face so as to secure occupational autonomy. If the professions can be set apart from other occupational groups it is because their vaunted autonomy is ultimately secured by the grace of the state, a grace which requires massive and continual nurturing and monitoring through legal and political processes. From this standpoint, professions exercise self-control largely because of their state-protected monopoly concerning

conditions of practice, the knowledge upon which such practice rests, and the right to control entrance to and exit from the profession.

Even with state support, the maintenance of market control is not to be blindly assumed. For example, demand itself must be generated and sustained. Further challenges may arise when the consumers of the service attempt to counterbalance monopolistic authority over the delivery of services. Moreover, when a profession's performance no longer meets the values and needs of the society that suffers it, the demise of that profession is but a matter of time (Bledstein, 1976). This is merely to say that social change has numerous implications, some of them of enormous impact, upon professional status and practice within a society. Successful revolutionaries who initiate their regimes by exporting (or worse) the lawyers of the old order provide a pointed reminder of just how dependent the professions are upon the good will and tolerance of the society of which they are a part.

Even within the professions, challenges to occupational self-control will appear as new specialties are created alongside the old. As Freidson (1970) points out, there is a continuous process of occupational differentiation within all professions. At any given time, wide discrepancies of status and rewards exist such that any one profession (even with its institutional support systems, its self-administered code of ethics, and its professional schools and associations) is a mix of many occupations and occupational communities. As new technologies and approaches evolve, new groups of practitioners who understand and promote the innovations arise to challenge the authority and control of the communities within whose domain the service previously lay. Again, medicine provides an example with its enormous number of specialties and keen

competition among them for clients and intra-professional status. Bucher and Strauss (1961) provide the key words: "Professions are loose amalgamations of diverse segments pursuing different manners, and more or less held together under a common name in a particular period of history."

Three points are to be drawn from our discussion thus far. First, a profession is not an occupational community per se, although some of its subdivisional units or specialties may be. Second, and far more important, the professions are not to be considered as a class apart from other occupations. The notion of a profession is one of those seemingly natural concepts fraught with unexamined ideological baggage that has penetrated much organizational and occupational research. Too often researchers simply accept a profession's own definition and image of itself without examining what uses are to be found behind such definitions and images. Third and finally, the process of professionalization must be understood as but one path by which occupational communities may gain self-control. There are no fundamental distinctions to be found between a profession and an occupation which are inherent in the work itself.

These points suggest that both professionalization and unionization can be considered strategies for advancing the collective career of an occupational community (or a collection of related communities). The difference between unionization and professionalization is, therefore, one of means, not ends. The distinction between the two strategies hinges, first, upon the degree to which an occupation attempts to trade on its special knowledge and, second, the degree to which an occupation faces organized opposition when attempting to assert its independence and establish the legitimacy of self-control. The values and ideologies

supporting each process reflect choices about how occupational self-control can best be gained and guarded rather than any deep discontinuities of purpose.

An example of the similarities and the differences between these two processes is provided by the so-called "New Unionism" or "Professional Unions" (Jessup, 1978). Such hybrid associations have developed in the wake of what Mechanic (1976) calls the "bureaucratization of the professional." Particularly in public services, members of relatively high-status occupational communities have tried to unionize as a way of confronting managerial decrees seen to violate member standards of proper conduct (Fielding and Portman, 1980). While relatively narrow economic self interests are most certainly relevant, control over the work itself is nonetheless also a prominent objective for members of professional unions. For example, after citing the slogan "social work, not paper-work," one nationally prominent arbitrator observed in a somewhat shocked, if not outraged fashion: "What is really happening in public service is that the sovereignty argument has now been transferred to the scope of bargaining questions" (Rock, 1968, quoted in Mendes, 1982).²¹

Unionization or professionalization are, of course, not always achieved. As the bloody history of organized labor in the United States makes clear, the processes are political and full of uncertainty and strife. Professionalization, when realized, is perhaps the more powerful and convincing form of self-control in this country since groups opposing professionalization tend (historically) to be relatively unorganized and of lesser status than those comprising the occupational community seeking the professional label and its symbolic protection. Professionalization may also be a somewhat cleaner, less visible struggle, fought mainly by

mannered proxies on the floors of courtrooms and government agencies rather than by angry members of an occupation on the docks or in the mines. Moreover, conventional use of the professional label in the United States usually connotes "sacred" attributes such as rationality, public service, and disinterest rather than "profane" attributes such as economic expediency, corruption, and self-interest often associated with the term "union" in this society (Hill, 1981).²²

In this regard, it is interesting to examine strategies utilized by some occupational communities currently attempting to convince relevant audiences that its members should be accorded professional status. As we have previously argued, the so-called traits of a profession provide resources for such purposes. However, it appears new traits are also being added to the old list. One new trait, stress, is worth considering in some detail since it currently seems to be achieving some notoriety as a mark of occupational status and, therefore, serves nicely as an example of how any given trait can be used to further occupational ends.

The notion of job stress, particularly when used in the context of public service jobs, is something of the perfect vehicle to convey the symbolic virtues of an occupation not yet recognized as professional. Good examples of occupations that have strategically embraced stress include: police service, nursing, air traffic controlling, public school teaching, firefighting, and social work. While Merton's (1949) notion of "sociological ambivalence" and Goode's (1960) idea of "role strain" are of some merit in understanding the sociological sources of stress, they are less valuable in understanding the occupational practice of making stress claims. Terry (1981b), in an examination of selected occupational literatures, found nearly ten times the number of articles dealing with

job stress in police and nursing periodicals than in comparative periodicals of law and medicine.²³ Since stress in all these occupations is said to arise largely from the responsibility occupational members carry for alleviating other people's misery, the question must be raised as to why the nurses and the police are claiming stress and the doctors and lawyers are not. Both occupational pairs work in similar domains with similar clients. If anything, doctors and lawyers carry more of a burden for the fate of their clients than do nurses or police officers. Were stress keyed only to the work performed by occupational members, a reversal of such claims would be expected. It appears then, that stress is relatively more important (and useful) to the bootstrapping occupations than to those occupations already established at the top of the reward and recognition ladder.

Empirical investigations of claims of occupational stress lend credence to its largely symbolic nature for one finds little systematic evidence to document the alleged consequences of stress. For example, in the police world, the results of stress are thought to be job dissatisfaction, chronic alcoholism, high divorce rates, suicide, and a veritable laundry list of mild to serious physiological ailments. But, as Terry (1981a) shows, these claims have been highly exaggerated. Turnover in police agencies is quite low and police officers do not display high levels of job dissatisfaction; cardiovascular disease is high, but lower than the incidence rate among music teachers, transportation workers, cooks, and firefighters; divorce is lower than the national average, as is (in most cities) police suicide; alcoholism does not seem to be out of line with other occupational groups of comparable economic and social standing. Most important perhaps is the fact that any and all stress claims made by the police are notoriously difficult to document.

Whether or not stress (and its consequences) is an objective condition of the work in these ambitious occupational communities is, for our purposes, less important than its presence or absence in public discourse and its conscious employment as a means of achieving occupational goals including greater self-control. We are not suggesting, however, that by emphasizing stress an occupation will magically be granted greater reward, recognition, and self-control. Stress may, in fact, be more important internally as a way of sharing common problems and increasing the sense of fellowship among members. Externally, stress stands as an indicator of a larger family of occupational claims (e.g. service goals, responsibility for other people's problems, personal sacrifice, bureaucratic interference or indifference) residing under the sacred canopy of "being called to a set of higher ideals."

Such a canopy cannot be conjured up on claims alone. As Hughes (1958) and many others have pointed out, there needs also to be widespread agreement among the public regarding the importance of the occupational service, some consensus surrounding the validity of the occupation's claim to be able to provide such a service, and, perhaps most importantly, no real or perceived alternative sources for the performance of the service. These are indeed powerful constraints and, as the police and other public servants such as those who once served in the now-defunct Association of Air Traffic Controllers have discovered, they are not easily bypassed.

Careers in Occupational Communities

Although the careers of individual members of occupational communities are clearly affected by the fortunes of the community within the larger occupational structure of society, individual careers are also based upon processes of attainment existing within the communities themselves. In this section, we are concerned with individual careers as they are played out within specific occupational boundaries, holding at bay, for the moment, the question of just how occupational communities themselves fare within organizational marketplaces.

The idea of a career necessarily imputes coherence and order to a sequence of experiences, roles, statuses, or jobs. Attributions of coherence underlie every formal definition of a career that makes of it something more than a job history (e.g., Becker and Strauss, 1956:253; Glaser, 1968:1; Wilensky, 1961:251; Goffman, 1961b:128; Slocum, 1966:5; Hall, 1976:3). But, since work careers are constructed from contextual and historical particulars, the particulars attain coherence only when viewed against some backdrop or setting. Beyond the conspicuous setting of an organization, careers can be played out against such backdrops as an occupation (Hughes, 1958), a family life cycle (Schein, 1978), a social category or label (Goffman, 1961; Becker, 1963), an internal standard such as a "career anchor" (Schein, 1978), and so forth. These backdrops not only direct and constrain the visible path of a person's "external" career, they also provide tasks, colleagues, symbols, and ideologies that influence the individual's subjective construction of an "internal" career -- the meaning a person attributes to the sequence of work-related experiences that comprise the career.²⁴

The indispensability of understanding the context within which a person's career is played out is underscored by two frequently-made academic points (academic in the sense that they are points alarmingly overlooked when career research is undertaken). First, the career setting noticed by the observer may not be the one used by the person in the career. It is not, for example, readily apparent that all who work in an organization consider their careers in organizational terms. Industrial scientists are certainly employed in organizational contexts, but they may well measure their careers against the backdrop of their specialties (Marcson, 1960; Kornhauser, 1962; Ritti, 1968). Academics, too, belong to organizations, but evidence suggests that some see themselves in the context of their scholarly fields (Caplow and McGee, 1958; Gouldner, 1957). Second, when constructing careers, people may make use of several backdrops, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes sequentially (Van Maanen, 1980a; Kanter, 1979).

Recent career research and theory is tied to the experiences of people occupying a relatively small set of organizationally-defined positions (Sonnenfeld and Kotter, 1982). In particular, managers and administrators receive most of the attention. These positions carry career lines defined largely in terms of hierarchical advancement. In fact, many current terms and descriptive cliches found in discussions of careers only make sense when the relevance of an organization's hierarchy is presumed. "Plateauing," "up or out," "demotion," "lateral move," "fast track," and "career ladder" are understandable only when juxtaposed to the vertical dimension of organizations. But, if one is to regard U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (1980) as an authoritative source, only 12 percent of the labor force is counted as currently occupying managerial or administrative posts.

What is troubling about considering vertical mobility within an organization to be the centerpiece of career research is the accompanying tendency to deny careers to a substantial portion of the working population. Consider the following examples:

"With reference to occupational careers in organizations, the theoretical model involves entry into a position that requires the performance of occupational duties at the lowest rung of the occupational ladder. This is followed by a sequence of promotions into higher-level positions within an organization, leading eventually to the pinnacle and finally to retirement. Although this generalized model calls for upward progression from the bottom to the top, we know that not every entrant moves through all these steps. There are thus varying degrees of conformity to the model"
(Slocum, 1966:5)

"Occupational careers that conform reasonably well to the model are restricted to professionals, managers, skilled craftsmen and a few others this does not mean that the concept of career has no relevance for the study of other occupations. However, it has little utility for the study of unskilled occupations or others that do not provide differentiated steps or grades."
(Slocum, 1966:226)

"Individuals may work at a series of activities during their lives, but with no perception that they follow a career path. We might speak of the careers of a dentist or an accountant, but we would hardly speak of the career of a dishwasher or a hospital orderly. Unless the person and the containing social structure see some relation between the activities, there is no career."
(Braude, 1975:112)

One wonders if it would not be more appropriate for Slocum and Braude to question their models than to default an unknown but obviously large percentage of the working population from the universe of career holders.²⁵ A key to how career theorists circumscribe career's domain

of reference lies in what Braude calls the "containing social structure." We suppose what is meant by this term is something akin to an organization or a set of reasonably high(er) status actors (managers) who are deemed fit to "see some relation between the activities" and "the career." If we accept an upwardly mobile, white collar, organizational model of the career, then it is true that few people will have careers simply because most people work at the base of organizational pyramids. Given that positions decrease as one ascends a pyramid, even if we are willing to grant the liberal assumption that promotions are handed out randomly, the probability of a person being promoted decreases rapidly the closer that person is to the pyramid's base. Rosenbaum (1979) estimates the probability that non-management personnel will be promoted in a large utility company peaks at age 35 at one in five. Afterwards, the probability of promotion decreases exponentially.

An organizational model of career may simply be inappropriate for the majority of the labor force. An alternative model would be to consider the "containing social structure" of a career to be the social context which the worker considers most proximal. Hence, a career's backdrop is the standard by which the career holder measures the career, not the standard of the observer. Although potential contexts for constructing a career are probably numerous and certainly particularistic, consider how careers might be constructed within the context of an occupational community.

One striking feature associated with the work-specific illustrations we have thus far emphasized as more or less meeting the definitional requirements of an occupational community is that for many of them there are few hierarchical levels or offices of authority to

which members might aspire. Although crew members may specialize in particular tasks, traditional fishermen are, with the exception of the captain of a boat and perhaps his eldest son, of essentially equal status (Miller and Van Maanen, 1982).²⁶ Musicians in orchestras may change chairs or join a major symphony, but their movement is across lines of skill and prestige and does not entail the formal accrual of power and authority over others in the occupational line (Faulkner, 1974). The careers of police officers are relatively flat. Only a very few patrol officers reach the rank of sergeant during their police careers, and those who do find themselves distrusted and considered outside the occupational community comprised of their former colleagues (Van Maanen, forthcoming). The tag "steady state" career used by Driver (1981:9-10) nicely captures some key elements of work careers in occupational communities:

"The steady state concept refers to a view of careers in which one makes an early commitment to a field and holds it for life. There may be minor changes and inner growth of competence in one's field leading to some upward movement, but the essential thing is a fixed identity within a field."

Schein's (1971, 1978) model of an organization provides a dimension of particular interest when careers in occupational communities are examined. Though originally applied to the task of describing organizational careers, the model is applicable to many social settings (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). The model uses three dimensions to describe a person's location in an organization. The three dimensions are hierarchy, function, and inclusion.²⁷ When considering occupational communities, of most interest is the third dimension, inclusion.²⁶

Persons who move toward greater inclusion gain centrality within the network of community members. They may attain special privileges, increased rewards, become privy to secrets about "how things really work," and gain heightened respect from community members. Individuals who have achieved visible centrality in the community are often identified by the labels or folk types used by members to note occupational wisdom. The "sage," "pro," "guru," "old hand," and legendary "old timer" are stereotypes in this regard. As these social types suggest, centrality can carry prestige, honor, knowledge, and power.

Penetration toward a more central position in an occupation involves one or more of what Glaser and Strauss (1971) call "status passages." All occupations provide for a period of training and testing during which neophytes are taught (and usually learn) the "rules of the game" while their willingness to play by these rules is scrutinized by their more experienced workmates (Van Maanen, 1980a). For example, newcomers may be assigned "dirty work" as a way of having their mettle tested to reveal any character flaws, or as a way of testing their commitment to the occupation or work group. The period of testing and training may be informal and unplanned or highly structured and formalized. Both can be rigorous. Haas (1977) offers a witty account of how high-steel workers are informally taught to maintain a front of fearlessness while remaining keenly aware of the danger of the work. The testing process includes "binging," a barrage of barbed and crude insults slung at recruits by veteran ironworkers as a way of ascertaining the emotional calm and physical dexterity of novices on high steel. During the early phases of training, Light (1980) observes that psychiatrists are assigned the so-called hopeless cases as a way of "socializing them

to failure." Other apprenticeship periods may compel the green recruit to do distasteful service as the butt of community pranks or as the unwitting scapegoat for mistakes made by others. Whenever special skills and complex role behaviors are central components of occupational responsibility, relatively intense induction programs are likely to be present (whether by design or accident). It makes little difference how special and complex such role behaviors are relative to others or how central such behaviors are in the actual occupational scheme of things; what is crucial is that members consider them to be special, complex, and central.

Beyond the status passages that occur during the early periods of occupational learning, we find ourselves in poorly charted domains.²⁸ Precisely what steps lead to more or less centrality in occupational communities are unclear. Some occupational communities such as certain medical specialties, legal practices, and craft associations, have well formulated boundaries through which members pass as they move toward the inner circles. Some occupational communities are premised on a sort of downward slide where members enter (or achieve at a very early phase) centerstage, obtaining a more central position in the occupation than they will ever again occupy. Modeling, prostitution, and professional athletics provide worthy examples in this regard. In other occupational communities, the transitions in or out may be smooth, occurring in nearly invisible ways.

Since any of these alternatives are feasible, the pattern holding for a given occupational community is an empirical matter on which data are scarce. It is possible, however, to extract from the literature on work and occupations at least three domains of involvement through which

members of an occupational community conceivably attain centrality as seniority and work experience accumulate. The three domains are: the work itself; the setting(s) in which the work is performed; and the network of social relations which surround the work. Consider each in turn.

Members of some occupational communities attain centrality by acquiring reputations for expertise. Such recognition may accompany the invention or mastery of more advanced technique, knowledge, and skill; the accumulation of experience with a variety of work situations and the acquisition of a repository of occupational wisdom; or, the development of finesse, flair, or style in one's work. Renowned craftsmen are known for their subtlety and refinement of technique. Police detectives acquire centrality among fellow sleuths as they build widespread informant networks, develop interrogation tactics and theories, and, to a much smaller degree, master fingerprinting and ballistics testing (Saunders, 1977). Academics gain recognition by accumulating lists of publications and achieve acclaim when they are seen to advance technique or pose new paths of inquiry (Crane, 1972). Senior electricians carry devices and tools which signify their ability to handle jobs seldom entrusted to more inexperienced colleagues (Reimer, 1977).

Within some occupational communities, centrality may be attached to working in particular settings. Gold (1964) notes that janitors gain recognition from peers by becoming custodians in upper-middle class apartment buildings where the pay is only slightly higher, but the probability of servicing "good tenants" is greater. Hockey players move to the center of their occupation when they move from the minors to the majors (Faulkner, 1974) and jazz musicians have made it when they find

gigs before more appreciative audiences (Becker, 1951). The notion of the "big leagues" underlies this sort of movement, as when a newspaper reporter working on a small, insignificant, local paper yearns to become a reporter for the New York Times. Deep sea fishermen, like bears that go over mountains, long to work better waters where more lucrative fishing holes are thought to be found (Zulaida, 1981). One should note that in each case the work remains essentially the same, but the characteristics of the setting change.

Finally, centrality may be gained by strategic expansion or revision in one's network of acquaintances. With whom one works and who one knows become dimensions upon which careers may rest. Any doctoral student will verify that the reputation of the faculty represents a special catapult for launching a career in academia. To be allowed to stand on the bridge with the captain during a fishing trip taps a fisherman for initiation into the intricate and well-guarded secrets of captain's work and signals to the crew the fisherman's probable succession to the helm. Faulkner (1982) provides a most useful example of an occupational career highly dependent upon one's position in a given social network. The context is the movie business and Faulkner's analysis shows that film composers move to the inner core of their occupation (where work is plentiful and prestigious) only as they become connected to certain film producers, directors, and agents. The network that counts in Hollywood is the one linking high status members across occupational communities since only a few members of each community handle most of the industry's work. The vast majority of members in a given community compete among themselves for the little work that remains. The career rule is simple: Central and successful producers work only with central

and successful film composers. Career opportunities in other occupational communities may be similar if they are constructed on the sort of project-by-project (or job-by-job) basis as typified by film composers. Unlike organizational careers based on promotions which create opportunities for others in the organization, an "opening" for a film composer has little effect on other film composers outside the charmed circle. Only by entering the circle can skill and talent be displayed.

In occupational communities where the work is spread more evenly across the membership, the opportunity to move toward a more central position is enhanced. Of importance always is the chance to exhibit skills highly valued by colleagues and these chances may have their own distribution of occurrence, little affected by the membership. For example, to maintain one's calm and mannered indifference while handling the wheel of a prowl car in a high speed chase serves to increase a street cop's prestige among his colleagues, many of whom are listening intently to the communication stream occurring between dispatch and the involved officer. Any hint of terror or the losing of one's cool are sure to be noted by others. The killing of the proverbial "fleeing felon" can also enhance the patrol officer's reputation (Van Maanen, 1980b). Among tradesmen and construction workers, those with quick situational wit are often at the hub of the work group (Riemer, 1977). Such displays of situational talent and the stories that become associated with them can ennoble (or embarrass) occupational members, moving them toward the center (or periphery) of their fellow workers.

The observation that occupational careers may be tied to collegial relations, the settings, or the work itself is primarily an analytic convenience. The three spheres are closely interconnected and

relative success in one usually brings success in the others. But, by considering each sphere in turn, we have tried to emphasize the importance of performance when considering career movement in occupational communities. Whereas organizational careers of the sort premised on what White (1970) calls "vacancy chains" (openings move down as people move up) continually shuffle people across varied work roles, occupational careers contain far less role variability across moves. Moreover, individual moves by a member within the community may have little or no effect on other members except to the extent that such moves increase or diminish the status of the collective as a whole, vis-a-vis outsiders. In essence, careers in occupational communities are based upon what any given member's activities say to other members. Role performances (in both the theatrical and accomplishment senses) in occupational communities have strong communicative powers by which members, through their daily actions, carve out and display a central or peripheral (but unique) position within the membership. Three domains of role performance in occupational communities deserve comment for they reflect directly upon the knowledge base of the occupation discussed previously in the context of occupational self-control.

First, for a would-be member contemplating membership in an occupational community, knowledge must be acquired. Learning, socialization, practicing, training, feedback, testing, memorizing, and so forth are all involved, but the nature of these acquisition and transmission mechanisms varies across communities. What doesn't vary is the fact that recruits must master the substantive core of the occupation. Police officers must learn the laws they are charged with enforcing, dentists must learn the procedures they will use, pilots must

learn how to read instrument panels and communicate with control towers. Such learning constitutes the dues to be paid before one earns the right to claim membership in an occupational community. By and large, such learning serves only to distinguish the initiated from the uninitiated.

The second crucial aspect of role performance is the application of basic knowledge and skill to the continuously varying work members must, in an everyday sense, perform. To know the law is not to know when its use will be considered appropriate or inappropriate by other members. Situational features of the work become important and the initiated must begin learning routine and contextual applications. Skill and knowledge acquisition give way to the learning of task rituals where particular practices for getting the job done become taken for granted. Members of occupational communities utilize conventionalized, practical methods to accomplish much of what they do, and it is on the use of such rituals that members can assess one another in terms of proper role performance. Police officers have practical methods to issue tickets and make departmentally-defined quotas (Van Maanen, 1974). Welfare workers possess informal techniques for satisfying formal record-keeping demands (Zimmerman, 1969). Public defenders have collective rules of thumb to guide their handling of individual cases (Sudnow, 1965). The point here is that these learned rituals are applied to tasks viewed as important because in the work world they are unavoidable and frequent. Such activity can be and is organized routinely with a purpose and significance for occupational members that transcends externally imposed standards such as managerial notions of efficiency or productivity and internally valued claims such as quality service or humane treatment. The routine properties of the gynecological exam by which doctors and

nurses defuse their potentially embarrassing probes into the body of a patient by use of strategically placed garments, ritualized humor, speedy procedures, and a most restricted sociability with the probed provide another superb exhibit of such task rituals (Emerson, 1969).²⁹

The third role performance feature of concern to occupational members involves the discarding of set skills and practical routines. Testing or breaking rules may secure a central position in the community for members who can accomplish valued occupational goals in new and untried ways. Schein (1971) uses the phrase "content innovations" to distinguish such actions. Working at the margin on different, perhaps difficult ventures, using resources in innovative ways, dealing smoothly with crises, pushing performance successfully to the limits of personal safety are the matters by which reputations are made. Members who work by design or accident at these margins, and who avoid failure where neither traditional occupational skills nor task rituals offer any predictable formulas for success, are quite likely to be the heroes of the occupation (Klapp, 1962). Such performances become displays of the "right stuff" of which stories are told and legends are made. The potential for stylish, episodic rule-breaking available to the membership transforms mundane, typically uneventful occupational life into a source of passion and drive. Simply to listen to carpenters talking about the successful completion of tough jobs, to cops on the raw details of how they handled a family fight, or to fishermen on the nature of storms endured, is to hear vivid testimony on what is, and what is not, central in their respective communities.

Individual careers in occupational communities are matters measured by centrality and work performance. Centrality may be achieved

in a variety of ways, of course, but the more spectacular careers will almost invariably entail the violation of social conventions, accepted knowledge, or the received wisdoms of the trade. Such violations also have the potential to transform the occupational community itself in certain ways through the vivid demonstration of new ways of seeing and doing things. When such transformations occur, "role innovation" is achieved and occupational goals themselves are altered (Schein, 1971). In such a fashion, an occupational community itself may gain (or lose) status.

It is true, too, that in other occupational communities the technical, social, or moral innovators may never achieve centrality. The central positions may be reserved only for those members who best exhibit and articulate the community's traditional values, norms, and perspectives. Innovators may be widely recognized and perhaps consulted by core members, but they may not be accorded great honor, respect, or position. Nor is centrality, when achieved, necessarily enduring or obvious. There are no doubt many members who are, in fact, central in occupational communities but who do not feel special, rewarded, or even successful within their individual lines of work. Caplow and McGee (1956) report on a number of academics who, even though widely cited within their disciplines, consider their work and careers to be "trivial," "unrecognized," "stalled," "cannibalized," and so forth. This seems indeed to be a major problem for those seeking careers in occupational communities generally since the basis upon which one can assess the "success" of one's career is multidimensional, shifting, uncertain, and, more often than not, tied to the career of the occupation itself.

Finally, we must again note that individual careers in occupational communities are premised on the existence of some niche carved out in the occupational structure of society that is more or less controlled by fellow occupational members. Clearly, such a niche is not always to be found, nor is such a niche always secure since there are other social processes at work in occupational settings which attempt to deny or strip away such self-control. Organization, technological change, bureaucratization, standardization, formalization, are all processes of concern to those who seek to follow an occupational career. These processes potentially subject members to authority and discipline coming from outside the community boundaries. Braverman's (1974) analysis of deskilling is useful in this regard for it provides considerable insight into the demise of some occupational communities (and, perhaps, some not-too-subtle indicators as to why some occupational communities never emerge). In brief, Braverman shows how occupational members lose control of the labor process as job skills and knowledge become codified and standardized. By gathering, formulating, and systematizing the skills and traditions of certain crafts, managers of organizations are able to separate the conception and execution of work projects under their authority. No longer in sole possession of technique, occupational communities subjected to substantial rationalization lose their basis for market control and power (Giddens, 1973).³⁰ Such processes potentially affect the careers of all members of occupational communities, particularly those whose skills are employed exclusively in organizational contexts. It is to selected aspects of these organizational matters that we now turn.

Occupational Communities and Organization

Three generic types of interlocking relationships between occupational communities and organizations are possible. First, an occupational community may itself be organized to promote member interests and self-control. Typically, such organizations do not employ but rather enroll practitioners of a given occupation. Occupations organize in voluntary or compulsory associations in order to secure more favorable conditions for the membership (e.g., to secure useful legislation, to control entrance to the occupation, to set standards of work, etc.). Of course, forms of occupational organization vary across a broad range, from unions to professional societies, from informal coalitions to formal interest groups employing many lobbyists, and so on. Forms of association within an occupation differ also. For example, fishermen in several New England ports have organized cooperatives to obtain supplies more cheaply and market fish more effectively than they were previously able to do. Fishermen in other ports have organized unions in an effort to mediate the influence of large, powerful fishbuyers (Van Maanen, Miller, and Johnson, 1982). While the formation of an association of some type is usually the first step toward legal control of work through professionalization or unionization (Caplow, 1954; Bledstein, 1976), the motive for formation need not always be economic. As many academic specialties have done, geographically dispersed occupational communities may develop societies simply to foster communication among members. Although the formation of an association entails the creation of positions to which members may aspire, these offices are sometimes best construed as

structured paths for attaining centrality or for bestowing prestige on central members within the community since they may not provide much in the way of material rewards or grant much power (other than symbolic) to direct, supervise or dictate members' occupational endeavors. In other cases, these offices carry considerable authority and provide rewards that go well beyond the purely symbolic. Careers for aspiring or designated leaders in these occupational communities are then available (although they are usually few in number).

Second, an organization may employ only members of a given occupational community so that the organization itself provides a locale for the activities of an occupation. Some medical research laboratories, law firms, consulting firms, fire departments, and academic departments exemplify such confluence of organizational and occupational interests. Glaser (1964) notes that within research and development laboratories where recognition for scientific achievement is the primary means of career advancement, the achievements and perspectives that lead scientists to greater centrality in their occupational communities also lead to vertically-ascending organizational careers. Bailyn (1982) has recently commented upon the ironies and contradictions of such careers since considerable personal ambivalence and role strain seem to be associated with hierarchically-graded occupational careers. Research-centered universities encourage professors' deep involvement in occupational communities, but such involvement does not preclude organizational advancement and, in fact, may encourage it, to the possible distress of the professors who no longer profess (Schein, 1978). For many people in these settings, the organization may be of only secondary importance, but, nonetheless, its value (and its demands)

cannot be ignored because it provides scarce resources necessary for pursuing occupational interests; resources which may not be available elsewhere.

Bureaucratic growth, in particular, seems to create problems for occupationally-based organizations. Administrative concerns such as efficiency, quality control, specialization, and productivity tend to increase in salience, thus potentially driving out occupationally-based traditions and interests. Displacement of goals is the classic phrase used to describe situations where fundamental occupational objectives appear thwarted by administrative demands (Merton, 1949; Blau, 1955). In welfare agencies, for instance, occupational members at the bottom of the organization often believe that members at the top prohibit or at least divert them from accomplishing their "real work," the work which presumably led all of them into the occupation in the first place. From the caseworker's perspective, managerial demands for "people processing" and properly documenting the eligibility of welfare clients eliminate any opportunity to really help people in need (Lipsky, 1979). Even though most administrators began their careers as welfare workers and may well continue to consider themselves members of the occupational community, the practical demands of general administration eclipse occupationally-relevant goals. Thus, even in single service organizations, where all members at least nominally share membership in the same occupational community, across-rank conflict is seldom absent.

Third and finally are those settings where organizations employ members of existing occupational communities, (or, through employment, create an occupational community) but where the membership in the community and the organization are not co-extensive. Incomplete overlap

between an occupational community and an employing organization is, without question, the most frequent form of relationship between the two and represents the critical intersection of potentially competing work systems. As we noted earlier, when occupational communities are nested within heteronomous organizations, it is generally more difficult for the local membership to maintain occupational standards of work and also more difficult for the membership to prevent non-occupational members from performing work which lies within the occupation's traditional domain. From this perspective, understanding organizations very much involves understanding how members of occupational communities cope with, negotiate, and otherwise deal with organizational demands (i.e., Schein, 1972). How organizations are, in part, shaped by virtue of the occupational communities employed within them is the subject of the following discussion as we examine some rather familiar streams of organization theory in light of the occupational community framework presented in this paper.

Organizational Complexity and Managerial Control:

Organization theory offers two complementary structural explanations for the complexity of organizations and for conflict within them. On one hand, an organization grows complex as tiers of subordination multiply, lengthening the chain of command. The greater the number of levels in a hierarchy, the more likely it is that messages will be distorted as they pass from stratum to stratum. To the degree that each level evolves its own peculiar tasks and sets of problems, the probability of conflicts of interest between levels increases since each may project different objectives for the organization. On the other

hand, organizational complexity also increases as the number of departments and divisions within the organization multiply. Since each functional area tends to develop its own language, norms, time-horizons, and perspectives on the organization's mission, when forced to compete for resources or to cooperate on joint ventures, departments are likely to vie for the privilege of defining the situation (e.g., Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967).

The problem with using horizontal and vertical differentiation to describe complexity is not that they are inaccurate, but rather that they do not go far enough. Ironically, their limitations arise from their virtues. Hierarchical and functional lines of demarcation are both theoretically parsimonious and methodologically elegant and they both correspond to the ways organizations formally depict themselves (Bittner, 1965). Consequently, researchers can identify presumably conflicting groups and perspectives by quick reference to the table of organization. They can construct simple empirical indices of structural complexity by counting hierarchical levels or functionally distinct groups, measuring spans of supervisory control, calculating staff-to-line ratios, and so forth. But, as descriptions of an organization's social structure, hierarchy and function as detailed by the official table underestimate the extent and ambiguity of an organization's complexity along several lines.

First, departmental or divisional demarcations entail a level of analysis that hides potential interest groups and unrealistically homogenizes functional areas. Departments are often composed of smaller groups which may or may not be formally designated, but whose interests nevertheless clash. Divisions of student affairs in universities are

typically composed of several departments such as counseling services, student unions, and housing or residence life. On some issues, budgeting for example, each department acts as a unified interest group. On other issues, segmentation within departments is quite visible. Housing departments, for instance, employ some personnel who are oriented primarily toward maintenance of the physical plant and others who view themselves as student personnel workers. While the two are grouped together in an administrative unit, those concerned with the physical plant are often at odds with their student personnel colleagues on specific issues such as how to handle students who damage university property, or over what constitutes an adequate room painting policy (Barley, 1979). Functional areas often contain a plurality of interest groups who coalesce as a unified entity only on rare occasions.

Second, relevant groupings in organizations crosscut both divisional and hierarchical lines. To again take Barley's (1979) example, because student personnel workers are trained as counselors, they often align themselves with counseling service personnel, thereby forming a coalition of peers that blurs, if not erases, functional boundaries. Nor are hierarchical lines of demarcation sacrosanct. Even in the quasi-military context of police agencies, supervisory personnel frequently side with the supervised rather than with each other or with higher officials in the agency on matters such as work pacing, scheduling, discipline, and productivity (Van Maanen, forthcoming).³¹

Finally, as our lengthy discussion of occupational communities suggests, some members of an organization align themselves with groups external to the organization and thereby possess a potentially useful resource to both support and oppose specific organizational policies and

practices. Organizational development personnel, for example, marshal forth the wisdom of their occupational peers when recommending to decision makers of the firms for which they work particular actions to take (Klein, 1976). More familiar perhaps is the potential conflict existing when organizations employ individuals with even stronger occupational identities. Clinicians in university medical clinics emphasize the confidential nature of therapist-client relations as do therapists in other settings. Although the clinical value system generally coexists peacefully with the interests of other groups in the university, on occasion the clinician's vow of confidentiality conflicts with the demands of administrative personnel. For example, when a client has been referred for disruptive behavior, the clinician may become privy to information of interest to administrators who might prefer to take punitive or legal action against the student. In such cases, administrators and clinicians are thrown into conflict because the latter's insistence upon inviolate confidentiality thwarts speedy disciplinary action on the part of the former (Barley, 1979).

Such altogether transparent observations bring us back to the view that organizations are most accurately viewed as complicated sets of sometimes issue-specific coalitions, each exhibiting varying degrees of stability and overlapping memberships (March and Simon, 1962; Bacharach and Lawler, 1980). Formal indices of potential coalitions, such as hierarchical and functional differentiation, may provide clues to the relevant lines of conflict, but from an insider's point of view they portray only the tip of the iceberg. A more veridical approach would be to identify groups based upon the distinctions organizational members make among themselves. Member-relevant distinctions would be based upon

dimensions of perceived commonality as well as upon the particular circumstances that make perceived commonality salient by setting one group against another. Since specific members of an organization can draw upon numerous social statuses and roles for referencing and identifying themselves, a plurality of overlapping groups is possible. Within organizations, potential bases for forming coalitions include proximity of work station, shift, perceived career potential, gender, education, friendship, and similarity of work. When this last factor — similarity of work — is descriptively relevant and the observed coalition formed in its shadow demonstrates a unity of purpose and structural stability over time and across a wide range of potentially divisive organizational controversies, the coalition represents a local manifestation of an occupational community. Such coalitions will be tenacious and, as we have suggested, not easily managed by those who fall outside its membership boundaries.

Occupational communities promote self-serving interpretations of the nature and relevance of their work in the organization as a means of generating control over that work. Moreover, occupational communities represent relatively well integrated social systems. To the extent occupational communities succeed in convincing themselves and others that they solely command the expertise necessary to execute and evaluate their work, they gain autonomy and discretion. Hence, internally, occupational communities are tightly coupled systems but may be only loosely coupled to the larger organization (Weick, 1976, 1979).³²

From this standpoint, many organizations more closely resemble tribal federations or fiefdoms than they do computing machines. Such organization has value even through the links between any two subsystems

are highly problematic. Weick (1979) in particular has been persuasive when pointing to the virtues of increased complexity (caused, in part, by loose-coupling) such as a reduced responsiveness to external pressures or uncertainties and the greater variability of an organization's output. Several conditions relevant to our concern with occupational communities appear to foster loose-coupling in organizations.

First, geographically dispersed occupational communities that enjoy social and legal recognition and whose skills are in high demand can, with some impunity, resist managerial requests. The occupational community need not be a large component of the organization or be seen as particularly crucial to the organization's mandate to secure and protect its relative autonomy. In some cases, such communities exercise considerable influence over the direction of the organization itself as its members assume high positions in the organization. Second, the numerical strength of an occupational community in an organization may promote loose-coupling since relative numerical superiority provides a political base in the organization for resisting administrative control. Third, an occupational community located at a critical juncture in the flow of an organization's work may foster loose-coupling. The mechanics studied by Crozier (1964) countered both managerial and production worker appeals to alter their occupational habits largely because their ever-reluctant services were considered by management and worker alike to be too vital to organizational functioning to risk confrontations. Fourth, scarcity of expertise, maintained in part by an occupational community through its monopoly of technique and knowledge, promotes loose-coupling in organizations. Since alternative sources of expertise are not readily available, management must take care not to offend the source it has, and

thus may grant to them relatively high amounts of autonomy. Organizations highly dependent upon new knowledge and proprietary technologies may find they are more successful buying such knowledge and granting its holders much liberty than by trying to develop it internally under managerial direction.

These sources of complexity and loose-coupling are, by and large, structural matters. Complexity, however, also arises and is sustained by the very practices that make an occupational community distinct no matter what structural supports are to be located within the organization. Consider the role codes and languages play in an organizational life. When occupational members employ community-based codes for interpreting and communicating the meaning of work-related events, it is difficult for outsiders to penetrate the codes in order to know what is really going on. Since codes allow their users to segment a flow of events, they provide members of an occupational community with more than a degree of freedom to reconstruct the meaning of events. Such transformations loosen the theoretical bonds between stimulus and response and allow members of occupational communities to perform their work relatively free from the influence of outsider demands (Manning, 1979). Moreover, since occupational codes appear mysterious, esoteric, and vaguely intimidating to those not well versed and practiced in their use, the understanding of certain phenomena may appear to be impenetrable to those outside the occupation. Certainly, in the past and, to a lesser extent, currently, computer programmers and systems analysts have been able to secure a certain amount of occupational autonomy within some organizations because, in part, their languages are indecipherable by those not introduced to the mysteries of the occupational community and because,

in further part, the codes blind members to the realities of other work groups (Haug, 1973).

All of this is not to say that complexity and conflicting sources of authority are welcomed by organizational managers. Loose-coupling is hardly embraced enthusiastically by administrators and others who must worry about coordination and control across their organization. The image and its referents are in high contrast to the ideal managerial organization whose well-lubricated parts are interdependent and mutually responsive. From this standpoint, it is easy to understand why so many organizational intervention techniques (e.g., participatory management, team building, goal setting, management-by-objectives, project and matrix supervision, etc.) aim to bolster the lagging integration and responsiveness among groups within an organization. More to the point, however, the decline of many occupational communities suggests that organizational principles of control are hardly on the defensive although, as we have tried to point out by emphasizing the diverse orientations of organizational members toward their work, the use of such principles is far more problematic than commonly conveyed. Two very general strategies for tightening organizations merit discussion. Each directly influences the very existence of an occupational community.

Fragmentation of work through its subdivision into component parts represents the most powerful method of increasing managerial control of the labor process and, by implication, of occupational communities. The celebrated robot is, of course, the perfect employee for it entails no mystery, possesses no loyalties, and seeks no exclusiveness. It is the ideal command-based work system. The application of tacit skill and judgement in the performance of work tasks is obviously ruled out. But

the tasks that are programmed will be accomplished without ritual or exception. In the absence of robots, highly rationalized, minutely designed and carefully monitored work processes serve the same goals. Since control by fragmentation and standardization has been a centerpiece of organizational writings since Frederick Taylor established his devilish pact with Schmidt, the pig-iron loader, we will not comment further except to note the occasional irony presented by control systems that become so complex themselves that they increase the very problems they were designed to prevent. Gouldner's (1954) justly famous "vicious cycle of rules" is a case in point.³³

Hierarchical control is the second managerial strategy of relevance to this discussion. To the degree that coercive authority and the application of discipline in the workplace is required, hierarchical control can quickly get out of hand since strong cultures of resistance can be expected to develop (Etzioni, 1964). Authority, in all its guises, is most effective when those to whom it is directed are favorably disposed to obey. When the orientation of organizational members is to the organization as represented by higher authorities in the workplace rather than to the occupation as represented by skillful practitioners who may or may not be higher authorities in the organization, control and direction of the labor process is eased. The Weberian solution to this problem is to provide careers for employees in such a way that their loyalty and effort become tied to organizational matters, not occupational ones. Edwards (1979:134) offers some thought-provoking evidence regarding the degree to which such a strategy has been employed in some organizations.

"With eighteen different job families, three hundred job titles and fourteen different pay grades, not to mention the dichotomy between salaried and hourly workers, it might appear that Polaroid had gone far enough in dividing and redividing its workers. Not so. Each job is now further positioned along the pay scale so that for any given job seven distinct pay steps are possible, from entry level through 5 percent increments to top pay for the job.... taking just the job titles and pay steps and ignoring the job families classification, Polaroid has created roughly 2,100 (300 times 7) individual slots for its 6,397 hourly workers."

One must pause for a moment at such categorization. Finely graded job structures represent the stuff of which organizational careers are made. The differences in positional characteristics hardly noticeable to the outsider often provide enormous incentive value to employees eager for advancement (Kanter, 1979). An "Assistant Professor, Step Two" may not appear different than an "Associate Professor, Step Three" to the outsider, but, to insiders, the differences are sure to be noticed and felt. Such tightening creates internally contrived images of mobility and, at times, prevents organizational participants from seeing the similarity of their position to others both inside and outside the organization (Jermier, 1982). Organizational careers, when used by employees as the measure of vocational success, serve to break up occupational communities and, in general, to increase compliance with managerial directives. One study suggests that in the higher circles of management the fundamental criteria used in the promotion of subordinates is their "orientation to advancement" as read by superiors (Sofer, 1970).³⁴

In sum, complexity can be seen to be furthered both by the presence of occupational communities in organizations and by the efforts

of management to drive them out or, at least, reduce their influence. Managerial control, however, is always problematic. Its effectiveness waxes and wanes over historical periods and varies across organizational and occupational contexts. We do not propose any general formula by which complexity can be predicted or control fully understood. These are highly uncertain issues. But we can say that to examine complexity and control in organizations as if the orientations of the membership to their work and occupation were unimportant would be folly. It is to these orientations we now move.

Organizational Loyalty and Work Careers:

For members of occupational communities, employment in heteronomous organizations involves concomitant membership in two social systems of work. Such dual membership may generate an ever-present tension as an employee attempts to pursue simultaneously both an organizational and an occupational career, each of which may proceed in quite different directions and demand different loyalties. The issue for the person, the occupational community, and the organization as well, is which of the two social systems (if either) will achieve relative ascendancy in the person's vocational scheme of things.

Loyalty splits between an occupation and an organization and the dilemma of choosing between an occupational or organizational career resemble issues addressed by research on the "local" and "cosmopolitan" orientations of organizational members. Despite the fact that the local-cosmopolitan literature intends to illuminate the sources and consequences of the conflict between occupational and organizational loyalty, this literature has historically lacked coherence, displayed a

rather shoddy methodology, failed to clarify its concepts, and, over the years, generated a muddle of contradictions (Grimes and Berger, 1970).³⁵ A good part of the problem is that the concept of "professional" undergirds research conceptualizations of the occupations thus far studied. By framing the debate in terms of an individual's orientation to occupational communities and to employing organizations, some of the pitfalls may be avoided while retaining the basic insights of the original theory.

Gouldner (1957, 1958) adopted the terms "local" and "cosmopolitan" from Merton (1949) who originally used them to differentiate between community leaders whose influence arises from contacts and accomplishments within the community (locals) and those whose influence arises from contacts and accomplishments beyond the community (cosmopolitans). Gouldner's intent was to distinguish between individuals whose loyalty and careers were tied to their employing organization and those whose careers and loyalty were focused on their occupational groups (Gouldner, 1957:288-89). Since Gouldner studied college faculty and administrators, the correspondence between local and organizational orientations and between cosmopolitan and occupational (or disciplinary) orientations was more or less acceptable, at least for academics in disciplines given to publication and research. Yet, once the concepts were extended beyond the academic setting to other occupational groups, discrepancies between predictions and results began to accumulate.

Consider several telling examples. In the Bennis et al. (1958) study of an outpatient clinic, "cosmopolitan nurses" were defined as those who sought professional careers by remaining tied to nursing work and "local nurses" were defined as those who sought administrative

careers within the hospital by rising in the ranks of the nursing hierarchy. The researchers found, to their apparent surprise, cosmopolitan nurses were more loyal to their work groups than local nurses. The results were contrary to the predictions flowing from the theory that guided the research. Similarly, studies of engineers employed in heteronomous organizations suggest that most engineers are local in orientation, yet local engineers, like their cosmopolitan colleagues, personify the values of technical excellence. Research on engineering occupations has yet to demonstrate any consistent differences between the two orientations in terms of work values, technical knowledge, commitment to keeping abreast of the field, conference attendance, or even journals that (presumably) are read (Kornhauser, 1962; Ritti, 1968; Goldberg, 1976).

Currently there are no general results to be found in the empirical literature devoted to exploring the local-cosmopolitan distinction (as defined operationally by the administrative-professional career orientations of organizational participants). The research indicates only that conflict is not always indicated by the findings and there is high variability in the types of relationships that exist between different occupational groups and the organizations in which they are employed (e.g., Hall and Lawler, 1970; Satow, 1975; Tuma and Grimes, 1981). Yet, since these studies are not comparative, the systematic basis for such variability has not been pursued and what is being "discovered" (and rediscovered) is that in specific circumstances members of this-or-that occupational group will adapt to organizational life and not experience the presumed inevitable conflict. The conceptual underpinnings of the theory are then left in place while, paradoxically, empirical work raises fundamental questions about the usefulness of the theory.

One problem with using the local-cosmopolitan or administrative-professional distinctions to differentiate the occupationally and the organizationally loyal is the assumption that an occupational orientation is based on a reference group external to the employing organization.³⁶ Although external reference groups may exist for members of some occupations such as tradesmen, academics, or industrial scientists, people in many lines of work do not know people who do denotatively similar work in other settings. Police officers, teachers, and fishermen know there are other police officers, teachers, and fishermen in other work settings, but they may not personally know them or interact with them on more than a sporadic or episodic basis. In many lines of work there are no annual meetings to attend, trade journals to read, or frequent opportunities available to meet colleagues outside the workplace who are not also members of one's employing organization.

What is crucial for the development of an occupational community is not, however, the presence of an extended work group, but rather that, through socialization, an occupation's value system comes to shape a person's work perspectives and self concepts — work perspectives and self-concepts that are supported over time in a person's daily interactions. Hence, one may be occupationally oriented but local. The concept of an occupational community does not assume that the occupational group of reference necessarily extends beyond an organization. Since the concept is defined phenomenologically, the researcher must first assess the community's interactive borders as they are perceived by members. Only when such an analysis reveals that an occupational community is organizationally extended in the experience of the membership will occupational loyalty be congruent with a cosmopolitan

orientation. When the occupational community is clustered within the organization, people may choose an occupational over an organizational orientation and yet, like nurses and perhaps engineers, be local in their orientation.

When occupational communities do not extend beyond the organization, several conditions appear to influence personal loyalties. Promotion opportunities seem to be particularly salient (Sykes, 1965; Kanter, 1979). If the occupational community is small and the chance for promotion within the organization reasonably good, then organizational careers are likely to prove seductive, particularly if the occupational community lacks power by virtue of its peripheral position in the workflow or by its inability to provide scarce resources in high organizational demand. Social scientists in technically-driven universities provide a convenient (if biased) example in this regard. However, if the organization does not itself offer much opportunity for advancement, or if the occupational community comprises a large proportion or powerful segment of the organization's membership, then individuals may be more inclined to choose careers in the occupational community. Such a choice might appear as a "plateau" from the perspective of an organizationally grounded theory of career. But, from the perspective of the membership within an occupational community, the choice carries no negative connotations. It is, of course, sometimes the case that to be called "a real pro" implies that one will never be anything else.

Often the loyalty issues are not apparent until organization or occupational shifts have been undertaken (Lieberman, 1956; Schein, 1978). Thus, when individuals are shifted from one functional area to another or when hierarchical movement occurs within an organization, exit

from the occupational community may be forced upon persons more or less against their will. Becker and Strauss (1956) have suggested that many, if not most, passages in the workplace induce problems of loyalty for the person undergoing the transition. When a member of an occupational community accepts a supervisory position or shifts to another department, members left behind may feel the person is "no longer one of us." A new organizational role may also demand the development of new skills because different problems are faced and, in learning these skills, an entirely new set of colleagues with whom to interact is encountered. In cases where major shifts of perspective are to be expected when moving up and away from one's occupational community, strong prohibitions may exist among the membership to discourage such movement, even when some members are favorably disposed toward an organizational career. For example, Manning (1977) documents how an occupational community of police officers protected its members from the scrutiny of organizational authorities. Among members of this police community, to become a sergeant was to betray the very trust upon which the community rested. Promotion-seeking itself may estrange individuals from colleagues by requiring the promotion seeker to act in ways regarded as inappropriate by members. Van Maanen (forthcoming) observed in another police community that even to talk about one's desire for upward mobility in the organization was to invite the ridicule of one's colleagues. Not only were such aspirations seen as foolishly optimistic, higher rank itself was seen by patrol officers to offer its uniform carriers only the paperwork headaches that come with virulent forms of memo madness. The power of such shaming tactics should not be disregarded by students of organizational careers. Shaming may be directed at the most central and skilled members of the community,

leaving only the most peripheral members free from its influence. The pool of those available for administrative or organizational careers may then be comprised largely of the least respected and least skilled members of an occupational community. Deans who are not thought by the professoriate to be "real scholars" come to mind in this regard, as are doctors-turned-hospital-administrators who, when evaluated by the medical staff, are held in low regard for "never having really practiced."

It appears that a paradox occurs when particularly strong occupational communities are enclosed within an organization. In such cases, organizational loyalty is negatively correlated with occupational loyalty. But, since the community is bounded by the organization itself, committed members will be reluctant to leave. Leaving would demand exiting the occupational community. Hence, occupational loyalty would be negatively correlated with turnover. Considering these relationships together, organizational loyalty appears positively associated with turnover insofar as the relation is premised upon the existence of an occupational community within the organization. Just such a situation seems to exist in police agencies where patrol officers most desirous of a managerial career and most committed to the organization are typically the least satisfied and most estranged from the patrol officer community (Van Maanen, 1975). Such members are also the most likely to "turnover" since promotion is both quite slow and (seemingly) capricious in police agencies. Occupational communities profit by this paradox since those least attracted and attractive to the membership are also the most likely to depart.

Although dual membership in an occupational community and an organization engenders conflicts of loyalty, researchers must not assume

that the issue of loyalty is always in the foreground or that the choice of an organizational career automatically alienates a member from others who continue to follow the occupation. Conflicts of loyalty are typically contextual and issue-specific. While many patrol officers do not desire the sergeant rank, many engineers do aspire to supervisory positions. Patrol officers often feel making rank reduces their ability to control what they do while engineers often believe making rank will help them achieve such control (Van Maanen, forthcoming; Goldner and Ritti, 1967). Clearly, to study occupational-organizational tensions and differentiate in any meaningful way between the occupationally and organizationally loyal is also to study the moral, social, and cognitive contours of occupational communities. As several decades of research suggest, much variability is sure to be found.

Innovation, Technology, and Managerial Control

The fertility of occupational communities for the creation and introduction of work-oriented innovations is equivocal. On one hand, to the degree that an occupational community represents a traditional social system that claims sole propriety over the jurisdiction of its work, resistance may be expected to any form of organizational or technological change which would threaten the community's sovereignty in its work domain. Certainly organizational interventions designed to increase the community's responsiveness and integration within the organization will be dismissed as attempts to destroy the autonomy of the occupational community. Technological innovations which are interpreted as potentially deskilling or which might disrupt the social structure and prestige of the community as it is currently organized will be resisted

and, if possible, sabotaged.³⁶ For example, artillerymen in the Israeli army pride themselves on their ability to quickly calculate and pinpoint targets using sharply honed trigonometric skills. In fact, such prestige attends the artilleryman's ability that mere privates often possess recognition and prestige that go well beyond their military rank. Consequently, when computerized range finders were installed in Israeli batteries many artillerymen gutted or otherwise disengaged the electronic equipment and continued to make the necessary calculations in their heads. Of course, the housings were discreetly left mounted and intact in case officers happened to inspect the operation (Kunda, personal communication).

On the other hand, since members of an occupational community identify with their work and with their skill and expertise, innovations which come from within the community may very well be encouraged and embraced. Skilled craftsmen and machinists who design new tools that allow easier, more precise, and perhaps speedier work, as well as computer programmers who constantly seek more elegant algorithms provide examples of innovations that serve to advance one's standing in the occupation by providing benefits to all members. Perhaps the best indicator of a community's response to innovation is whether or not the innovation comes from within the community and whether or not it will remain under the community's control.

It is worth noting too, that some occupational communities are apparently quick to adopt technological innovations, even those characterized by the membership as "not invented here." Yet, the evidence does not suggest that the innovations so adopted necessarily improve the community's ability to conduct its work effectively or

efficiently. There is no functional imperative that works in this domain. Police agencies are notorious consumers of new technology and police officers at all ranks take pride in sporting the newest electronic gadgets, the latest model cars, the most powerful weapons, and so forth. But, despite the rising sophistication of crime fighting technology, there is absolutely no evidence that the ability of the police to detect and deter crime has improved (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). There is even the hint that this rising sophistication has impaired their ability (Manning, 1979).

Of course, some technological innovations have not been adopted so enthusiastically by the police. Electronic scanners that make possible continuous monitoring of patrol car activities are one such innovation that has stirred up considerable controversy within police agencies. Consider also that when two-way radios were first being installed in patrol cars, replacing the fixed-post telephone systems of communication, many radios were reported lost, stolen, broken, jammed, or otherwise tampered with by "unknown persons" (Rubinstein, 1973). Similar reports are heard today with even the most foolproof communication systems wherein dispatchers are unable to establish the whereabouts of errant squad cars due to [claimed] static, low-flying objects, or black holes in the airwaves.³⁸

As a general rule, the more technologically or methodologically sophisticated an occupational community becomes, the more splintered and fragmented its membership — becoming, at times, many little occupational communities rather than one. Social scientists developed statistical routines to aid in the interpretation of collected data. Over the years, small pockets of statisticians have penetrated each of the social

sciences. The more refined and powerful the analytic techniques, the fewer the number of occupational community members familiar and comfortable with their use (Daft, 1980). Such splintering heightens the possibilities for organizational control since managers may argue that only occupational members with particular (rather than general) skills are to be employed. Some members benefit, others may vanish and a wedge is driven into the community. In occupational communities where the knowledge base and technical skills are rapidly advancing, cohort splintering may be prominent. New members possess more recent knowledge and hence may be of more value to organizations (and perhaps to the occupational community as well) than the older members. The wedge is driven further because there are usually economic incentives to be found when purchasing young talent rather than buying, retaining, or upgrading old talent. The ambivalence of some occupational communities toward innovation is hardly surprising given that their own demise may be forthcoming. Nor is the glee and eager pursuit of innovation among managerial bodies difficult to understand since innovation may be as valuable in terms of controlling the membership of an organization as it is for whatever reputed gains in productivity or efficiency are to be claimed for its implementation. Office automation and the computerization of newspaper printing are good examples in this regard (Champion, 1967; Wallace and Kallenberg, 1982). In both spheres, technological innovation has central-relevant implications since it has enlarged the prerogatives of management and diminished craft practices and judgemental tasks required of both secretaries and newspaper printers.

Where the knowledge base and skill levels contained within an occupational community remain relatively stable, danger to the community

from lack of innovation may develop. Accounting provides an interesting case for it appears that the mystique and exclusivity once associated with the black (and white) arts of accounting have significantly eroded as knowledge of accounting principles and financial management techniques have become less arcane and more dispersed throughout an organization. The new technology surrounding computer programming, making the use of computing machines far more accessible to those untrained in information processing, represents another erosion of a formerly glamorous occupational community (Kraft, 1979).

This is not to say that increased information or new technologies always disrupt and reorder the status and power of occupational communities. Certainly knowing the technology does not allow an analyst to predict what forms of social organization will develop to surround it as the comparative industrial experience of Britain and Japan all too pointedly testify (Dore, 1973). The claim that new technologies inevitably fragment work and deskill people will not hold across the board. Some technologies, as we have suggested, conceivably create occupational communities where none existed before, or empower existing communities. New diagnostic devices such as head and body scanners (CATscans) now used in some radiology departments of large hospitals seem to bolster the technicians' sense of work community and give them occupational clout because, within a given hospital, they are among the only skilled and practiced interpreters of the output created by the new machines (Barley, forthcoming).

In sum, occupational communities are bound to rise and fall with social and technological innovation, but the precise path such a rise and fall may take and the ripple effects it will have on organizational

matters are quite difficult to reckon with in the abstract. We do not share the Marxist gloom that craft skills and communal occupational ties are always destroyed by the advance of technology in capitalistic societies. Nor are we convinced by the more sanguine predictions made by those enamored by technology of the new freedoms and work communities to be encouraged. Historical, longitudinal, comparative studies are required and there are precious few such studies currently available in the organizational literature to be able to say much about what theories will or will not be generally useful in this area.

Some Closing Comments

We had two purposes in mind while constructing this essay. First, we wanted to convey a set of ideas for understanding work and work organizations that might complement those ideas currently in fashion within organization theory. In particular, we have tried to show how the concept of an occupational community might provide greater insight into the way careers are understood by people, the way complexity is managed and magnified, the way occupational loyalty is played out in organizations, and so forth. Our first intent then was to complicate organizational theorizing by suggesting how some of the "blooming, buzzing, confusion" of phenomenological approaches to the study of work worlds can be captured by our theories.

Our second purpose was more rhetorical and informed by some structural observations. Here we wanted to convey a sense of disenchantment with handed-down organization theory emphasizing harmony and

cooperation in the workplace. Too often organizational research represents a sort of effete innocence which speaks of attitudes, values, supervision, structure, goals, rules, ethos, culture, and communication, but not of conflict and power. To this end, we have tried in our essay to dismantle some of the seeming neutrality surrounding organization studies by emphasizing the political and economic roots of occupational self-control, by questioning the assumed traits of service and knowledge so often considered definitional when professions are studied and, in general, by presenting alternative sources of workplace authority. Our second intent then was to open up organizational theorizing in a manner that would allow some of these broader and ideologically sensitive matters to be addressed.

Whether or not such purposes have been served well or poorly is not ours to say. What we can do in these few remaining pages, however, is to briefly review our main points and then make a few suggestions as to why and where we think these points are particularly relevant.

We began by noting that a persistent theme in the sociological literature is the presumed dichotomy between communal or collegial and rational or administrative forms of work organization. Occupational communities, we argued, approximate the former and must be defined in terms of member-perceived boundaries. Within such boundaries, members of occupational communities claim a distinctive and valued social identity, share a common perspective toward the mission and practices of the occupation, and take part in a sort of interactive fellowship that transcends the workplace. The diverse origins of occupational communities were discussed in terms of how certain physical and social conditions surrounding particular lines of work might promote any or all

of these definitional characteristics. Occupational communities were seen to create and sustain relatively unique work cultures consisting of, among other things, task rituals, standards for proper and improper behavior, work codes which surround relatively routine practices and, for the membership at least, compelling accounts attesting to the logic and value of these rituals, standards and codes. The difficult but persistent quest for occupational self-control represented the single universal in our scheme. Although this quest has a Sysiphus-like character for all occupational communities, some have developed and maintain considerable structural advantages such as state support, an elaborate and advancing theoretical and procedural base to inform (and mystify) practice, and a relatively unorganized market in dire need of an occupational community's talents. We then suggested that the professions, when appropriately unpacked by specialty and interest, were best viewed as occupational communities, and that they differ from other lines of work (and each other) only by virtue of the relative autonomy each is able to sustain within the political economy of a given society. Finally, we catalogued a few of the implications the study of occupational communities posed for certain domains of organization research. Careers (individual and collective), complexity, loyalty, and innovation were areas given special attention.

By and large, throughout this paper we have taken organization behavior researchers to task for paying inordinate attention to the way managers attempt to control the labor process in organizations, and not enough attention to the ways those who are managed also attempt to control their labor. Along with Kerr (1977), we think theories of organization behavior exaggerate the role formal leadership plays as a

control device in organizations by too often failing to consider the nature and source of employee work orientations. Diversity is masked and only the most visible tip of the control structure is apparent when the research focus is upon hierarchy and workflow. One (and we emphasize one) way to redirect attention is through the study of occupational communities. The standards of evaluation, grounds for respect, and sources of ambition vary across occupational communities, yet we currently know very little about the conditions under which such variance is to be expected. A fruitful and ongoing research task, then, is to add to the ethnographic record of occupational communities, particularly those that appear to be located in organizational contexts.

Longitudinal studies of selected occupations are also needed. Communities rise and fall with social and economic change. The organizational implications of such shifts are more or less unknown. There may be some urgency to this task since many occupations are changing rapidly in the face of new technologies designed to alter work practices. The increased codification of occupational knowledge carries with it the distinct potential for allowing persons outside an occupational community to perform tasks previously reserved for the membership. Computer-based diagnostic routines, for example, make it possible for technicians to perform certain medical examinations without a doctor's presence. While some of these tasks may seem trivial and unrelated to the "real work" of a given occupation, over time the inroads made by outsiders may well loosen occupational monopolies, demystify practice, and increase the amount of administrative control exercised over occupational members. Such a theme is becoming prominent in sociological circles where, within a decade, the happy concern for the

"professionalization of everyone" (Wilensky, 1964) has become a sour concern for the "deprofessionalization of everyone" (Haug, 1975).

A focus on occupational communities offers new directions for research on organizational careers and socialization practices. Interorganizational career studies is one area to be developed (Faulkner, 1982). Skill acquisition and the learning of specific work routines and practices is another. While new entrants are socialized into the mores of a company, for example, they are also absorbing from colleagues and others the accumulated wisdom of an occupation, say, management. Such enculturation often transcends the organization's learning requirements and provides continuity (or lack thereof) with the lessons learned during anticipatory socialization undergone in educational institutions. To focus on occupational careers may also become less a matter of choice than a requirement. The sluggish economy with no surge in sight and the apparently common situation of declining opportunity in many, if not most, Western industries suggests we need to place more emphasis upon how to generate increases in both the quantity and, perhaps more importantly, the quality of goods and services produced by our major work institutions. This must be done without appeal for massive infusions of additional capital which, in all probability, will be in short supply. We believe members of occupational communities have much to tell us in this regard. Dedication to high standards of work performance and craft excellence are not matters easily promoted from outside an occupational community. Ways must be found, therefore, to preserve and encourage such dedication. At the same time, we need more carefully to examine the social (and ideological) mechanisms of accommodation to stable, "plateaued" organizational careers. A concern for how people draw meaning and value from what to

some are "stalled" or "flattened" careers will have considerable practical importance. Bailyn (1982) makes this same point more forcefully in the context of how different career paths influence men and women in their relations outside the workplace. Ways which protect and expand the influence of occupational communities within organizations may become as interesting to researchers (and managers) as the ways that destroy them are now.

All this is not to suggest that the study of those whose work histories are punctuated by disorderly and rapid shifts among jobs and occupations is to be foregone. An occupational community can be understood only by knowing what it is not. Discretion over the methods, pace, schedule, and outcome of one's work is the ambition of occupational communities but it is an ambition not often achieved and, even when achieved, it can be grasped only tentatively. Historical studies promise to untangle some of the knots which presently restrict understanding occupational communities by depicting the origins of such communities within the larger society (e.g., Larson, 1977; Edwards, 1979). An important feature of this work is that it also reveals organizational control principles. Occupational communities are, by and large, those work domains where member identities and work practices have not been fragmented into organizationally-defined positions by highly detailed job descriptions, where work performance is not ultimately judged by a management cadre, and where entrance to and exit from the occupation is not controlled by any one heteronomous organization. These are, of course, matters of degree but, as principles of occupational authority and control, they contrast to those prevalent in management textbooks. What historical study awakens us to are some fundamental constraints on

management influence that go far beyond the much-discussed limitations of improper spans of control, poor supervisory style, insensitive task design, or inadequate goal setting procedures.

One final caveat. We think the study of occupational communities vital to a concern for what people at work do all day (or would like to do). Organization theory has had relatively little to say about the things people actually do at work (although much to say about what others think they should be doing). We are just now learning, for instance, that middle and high level executives do not spend much time thinking or planning about what strategic options are available to their firms or departments. Evidence suggests they may not think or plan much at all, so busy are they rushing about answering phones, attending meetings, and engaging in brief encounters of the short kind (Stewart, 1968; Mintzberg, 1973; Feldman, 1982). Strategic decisions, then, are more or less backed into, and justified retrospectively with little, if any, foresight. Many organizations seem to move more from drift than design based on, in Weick's (1982) marvelous phrase, "the presumption of managerial logic." Certainly at lower levels of organizations the disparity between depictions and predictions (both manager and researcher) of what people do all day and descriptions and accounts (both member and researcher) of what people, in fact, do all day is equally disturbing and upsetting of received theories of organizational behavior (Van Maanen, 1981). Studies of occupational communities, because they force the analyst to move inside of them to discover member understandings of the work they do, gives license to explore the practical and moral contours of work worlds against which our organization theories can be assessed. With this remark we are back to where we began and can again wonder in print

whether it makes more or less sense to view Charlie, our hypothetical auto repairman down at Joe's Garage, as a "mechanic" or as an "employee." We suspect that for Charlie it is the former that matters and not the latter, although it is a question to which an answer must not be assumed.

NOTES

1. A dim and most abbreviated version of this paper was first presented at the ORSA/TIMS National Meetings, Colorado Springs, November 11, 1980, under the title "Careers in occupational communities: On being what you do." We have extensively revised that paper (several times), sometimes deleting, but mostly adding, materials we felt appropriate. Critical readers of note include Lotte Bailyn, L.L. Cummings, Deborah Kolb, Peter K. Manning, Edgar H. Schein, and Barry Staw.

They are not to be blamed for whatever substantive or judgemental errors are contained in this paper. They tried to warn us. Partial support for the writing was provided by: Chief of Naval Research, Psychological Services Division (Code 453), Organizational Effectiveness Research Programs, Office of Naval Research, Arlington, Virginia, 22217; under Contract Number N00014-80-C-0905; NR 170-911.

2. A sociology of knowledge perspective informs the way we handle the various work ethnographies (Berger and Luckman, 1966; Schutz and Luckman, 1973). Such an approach emphasizes the many ways people make sense of their lives and find meaning in work. A sociology of knowledge perspective also encourages the enlargement of our field of study by suggesting that people draw meaning and worth from endeavors beyond those traditionally studied by organizational researchers. Streetcorner hustlers, carnival workers, organic farmers, dishwashers, drug dealers, gamblers, fishermen, street sweepers, and housewives all work and, for the most part, define what they do as work. Such activities are rarely part of the popular conception of "real work" in this society, yet, for those involved, such activities are, indisputably, work. We follow Polanyi (1958) in this regard and take the view that any activity used to make a living is to be treated as work and, as such, treated as an occupation. Miller (1981) provides an excellent introduction to this approach.
3. For examples of the best in the genres, we would suggest, in the ethnographic writings: Millman's (1977) examination of the wonderful world of surgery, Willis's (1977) carefully detailed analysis of how working class youngsters get working class jobs, and much of the qualitative materials appearing in the journal Urban Life. In the organization behavior writings, Pfeffer's (1981) analysis of the sources and uses of power in organizations comes to mind as does Weick's (1979) highly charged writings on social systems and virtually all that appears in Administrative Science Quarterly. To bring these two literatures to bear on one another is an important task.
4. An exception to this general rule is found in studies of labor-management relations. Historically, the so-called institutional school emphasized participant-observation studies of work life and suggested that the roots of labor-management conflict are found in the expropriation of labor value by management (Hill,

1981). More recently, however, the institutional approach has lost ground (at least in the United States), replaced by the more sanguine view of work organization as a "system" by which divergent interests are brought into line through such mechanisms as collective bargaining, strikes, grievance procedures, and so on (Dunlop, 1958). Studies in this newer tradition take a variable approach, emphasizing large samples and sophisticated, quasi-experimental, statistical research designs in the apparent hope of uncovering the correlates of various dispute settlement patterns. As a result, the industrial relations literature and the organization behavior literature have begun to very much resemble one another (e.g., Kochan, 1980; Bacharach and Lawler, 1980). When labor-management clashes are unavoidable, such impasse is seen in terms of the divergent interest of unions (composed of a federation of occupations) and organizations (composed of managers representing de facto ownership). Rarely, then, do the thwarted but specified occupational interests of workers (or managers) enter into the analysis of union-management relations. Braverman's (1974) work represents a break from U.S. traditions, but such work has yet to become the research norm. A good review of these traditions and an overview of what, in England, has become the "New Industrial Relations" is provided by Hill (1981).

5. This conceptual situation is, in part, an artifact of viewing work organizations as systems for the achievement of goals (Bernard, 1938). Such a view emphasizes cooperation and anything seen to disrupt goal achievement is, by definition, dysfunctional and deviant. Behavior is viewed according to plan and is of note only when it is out of line. Key figures in the control scheme are supervisors who keep the enterprise "on track" by providing "negative feedback" to correct deviations. The so-called natural or taken-for-granted condition is the existing set of organizational relations and goals to which organizational members are to attach themselves. When they do not, moral or ethical questions are entertained, thus making any demonstrated lack of attachment deviant. The failure of researchers to appreciate value diversity, particularly in regard to worker resistance to dissatisfying work roles and goals, is a failure we would like very much to correct. This point has been a key notion in the so-called Critical Theory approach to organizational theorizing and is made powerfully by Clegg and Dunkerley (1980). A brief discussion of the role critical theory might play within an interpretive and phenomenological framework is provided by Van Maanen (1981).
6. The two forms of social organization were given different names by various theorists. Weber (1968) wrote of the "communal" and the "as-sociative." Durkheim (1933) contrasted "mechanistic" with "organic" solidarity. Tonkies (1957) used "gemeinschaft" and "gesellschaft" which, according to Gusfield (1975) are the terms most frequently adopted by sociologists.

7. On the Chicago School's contribution to an understanding of modern life, see both Faris's (1979) social history and Rock's (1979) intellectual history. The theoretical perspective most frequently associated with Chicago School sociology is symbolic interactionism of which Blumer's (1969) description is authoritative.
8. Gusfield's caution and preference for phenomenologically sensitive depictions of the boundaries of a community echo those of Weber (1968:42):

"It is by no means true that the existence of common qualities, a common situation, or common modes of behavior imply the existence of a communal social relationship. Thus, for instance, the possession of a common biological inheritance by virtue of which persons are classified as belonging to the same 'race,' naturally implies no sort of communal social relationship between them. By restrictions on social intercourse and on marriage, persons may find themselves in a similar situation, a situation of isolation from the environment that imposes these distinctions. But, even if they all react to this situation in the same way, this does not constitute a communal relationship. The latter does not even exist if they have a common 'feeling' about this situation and its consequences. It is only when this feeling leads to a mutual orientation of their behavior to each other that a social relationship arises between them rather than of each to the environment. Furthermore, it is only so far as this relationship involves feelings of belonging together that it is a 'communal' relationship."

9. The distinction used by Harris (1968, 1975) between "emic" and "etic" modes of analysis is useful in this regard. Emic study attempts to understand and describe the world from the perspective of those who are studied. Etic study attempts to understand and describe the world scientifically, using variables which pattern behavior in ways typically hidden from those who are studied. Though we perhaps err in the direction of run-on emics when depicting work worlds (in part, a reaction to the abstract and rather dull organizational theorizing currently in vogue), the interplay between the two is very much our concern in this paper.
10. "Guinea" is a term used by fishermen in Gloucester to identify Italian fishermen, typically Sicilian, who have more or less adopted American customs and mores. "Greaser" is a term used by Guineas to refer to recent immigrants, also typically Sicilians, who have not yet become acculturated to the larger American scene. Greasers are thought to cling stubbornly to their native language and the ways of the old country (Miller and Van Maanen, 1979).
11. Joining network analysis with interview or ethnographic techniques offers a promising methodological strategy in this regard. Network

models operate on observed or self-reported connections (e.g., exchanges, communications, acquaintances, etc.) among members of a given population. The meaning of such networks to members, as well as the grounds upon which such networks are built and change are, however, matters not so easily mapped since they require sensible qualitative study. Usually, one method or the other is employed in social research, but rarely both. The result is an elegant network model whose meaning to those modelled is quite unclear;..or, a rich account of the meanings members provide to their world whose empirical references (and connections) are left largely unchecked. A recent exception to this rule is Faulkner's (1982) inventive melding of the two approaches. Granovetter (1974) provides an early example.

12. By reference groups, we follow Shibutani's (1962:132) lead: "[The] group whose presumed perspective is used by an actor as the frame of reference in the organization of his perceptual field A reference group is an audience consisting of real or imaginary personifications, to whom certain values are imputed. It is an audience before whom a person tries to maintain or enhance his standing." It is hard to improve on this definition.
13. Culture, from this standpoint, is not strong or weak any more than it is good or bad. It simply is. Any two cultures will, of course, contrast but it takes an outsider to provide the dimensions of contrast and, as we suggest in this paper, such dimensions may or may not be of relevance to cultural members. On alternative perspectives on culture, Sanday's (1979) review of ethnographic paradigms has direct relevance to organizational and occupational research.
14. Occupational cultures may, of course, reside more or less peacefully within (and as part of) organizational cultures, may exist alongside and in opposition to them, may be buried by them, or may even contain them. Within organizations, occupational cultures are subcultures harboring segments of relative diversity within a generally approved organization plan; alongside organizations, occupational cultures compete with the plan, offering to its membership alternative goals; when buried by organizations, occupational cultures cease to exist; and, when containing organizations, the occupational and organization cultures are one and the same. This crude taxonomy, discussed in more depth later in the paper, only begins to suggest the kinds of interactions possible. The main point is, however, the need to explain each rather than assume the priority of one over the other. Schein's (forthcoming) analysis of organizational culture is sensitive to these issues, unlike other ventures into this domain where culture is treated too often as an undifferentiated organizational variable subject to varying degrees of managerial control (Schwartz and Davis, 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1982). In such a fashion, culture becomes merely another roadside attraction in the study of organizations, something to be attended to or not, based on an analyst's preference.

15. Goffman's (1961a) version of role distance is of obvious relevance here as are some of the empirical materials on the role working class cultures play inside some organizations, such as Katz (1965), Shostack (1969), Ferree (1976), and Foner (1976). Much of this material suggests that the less control people have over the pace, methods, outputs of work, the more likely they are to smuggle in interests and identities relevant outside the workplace. As noted in the text, in occupational communities the flow of interests and identities goes the other way.
16. The materials in this section draw on work highly critical of research treating the professions as homogeneous social groups whose members are united by common expertise and a calling to service (e.g., Johnson, 1972; Roth, 1974; Larson, 1977; Bledstein, 1976). As noted later in the text, professions are best regarded as loose federations of multiple groups, some of which may be occupational communities, forming around special interests, ideologies, and skills (Bucher and Strauss, 1961). The structural conditions allowing an occupational group more or less self-control are derived from Child and Fulk's (1982) first-rate comparative analysis of the professions control of occupations. We think these dimensions of more general worth and have thus followed their lead in this section.
17. We turn back to this topic later in the paper when discussing occupational careers. There we will argue that the cognitive learning associated with an occupational role precedes the learning of skills and that the difference is reflected in the popular conceptions of "knowing" and "know-how." The latter, in terms of establishing an occupational niche, is far more important than the former.
18. Caplow (1954) still provides the sociological primer on these matters; the examples may be dated, but the ideas are not. Bensman and Lillienfeld (1973) provide a useful reading of the historical sources of meaning in work. Recent writings tend toward the more specific and, hence, occupationally unique histories such as Noble's (1979) look at engineers in America or Miller's (1977) comparative treatment of cops and bobbies.
19. Turner and Hodge (1970) also point to a second approach to the professions which they call the "community approach." This approach emphasizes social characteristics, in particular the attitudes and values of those certified to practice the profession (Goode, 1957). We fall closer to the community approach but do not feel it is useful, as discussed in the following section, to sharply distinguish the professions as unique occupational communities.
20. Lyman and Scott (1970) on "accounts" and Hewitt and Stokes (1975) on "disclaimers" are mandatory reading on this matter. Both owe debts to Mills' (1940) "vocabulary of motives" idea. Bringing this line of thought to organizational theorizing is Starbuck (1982) in his examination of organizational ideologies.

21. The classic case of occupational control via union activity is, of course, the now woefully out-of-date Lipset et al. (1956) study of the typographical union. Currently, the battle of occupational self-control through unionization seems most visible in the public services -- particularly in teaching (e.g., Cole, 1969) and policing (e.g., Long and Fenulli, 1974). Freidson's (1973) reader is good on the issues raised by occupational communities in public organizations as is a recent article by Ponak (1981).
22. Bledstein (1976) is good on this point, taking care to note the special and elite connotations the term "professional" holds for Americans in contrast to the equally special but low connotations carried by the union-member tag. Larry Cummings (personal communication) suggests that unionization of an occupational group may actually lower the occupation's social status. For example, faculty unionization may lower the status of an institution's faculty in the eyes of the general public. While data are scarce on these matters, similar propositions seem not to hold in Western Europe where union membership neither symbolizes the vulgar pursuit of filthy lucre, nor conveys relatively low social standing. Unlike Europe, in the United States union membership as a proportion of the workforce has been on a downward slide for some time (Edwards, 1979: 202). Certainly this suggests the diminished appeal of unions in the U.S., but the reasons underlying such trends are no doubt far more complicated than by what can be slipped in under the social status argument.
23. Representative writings on occupation stress (and its popular semantic referent, "burnout") in the human service industry include Paine (ed.) (1982), and Cherniss (1980). Perhaps one reason behind the disproportionate attention given to stress in the bootstrapping versus elite occupations is that the elite are well compensated for their efforts and are relatively more distant from the carriers and substance of "other people's misery." Were the elite trades such as law and medicine to claim "burnout," the public might well begin to question the practical premises upon which these occupations are based (i.e., that they do what they claim to do and the practitioners are well qualified and screened to do it). Aside from more money, one solution to stress, infrequently mentioned in the literature of course, is for an occupational community to somehow generate a "better class" of clients which, empirical evidence suggests, also leads to heightened professional standing (Freidson, 1970).
24. The terms "external" and "internal" career are found in Van Maanen, Schein, and Bailyn (1977). The phrase "external career" refers to the path and sequence of positions and roles that constitute a career in an organization or occupation. "Internal career" connotes the meaning career related roles and experiences have for an individual. See Van Maanen (1977) for an elaboration of how internal careers are constructed.
25. The use of "career" to refer to advancement within a sequence of hierarchically arranged positions no doubt reflects the use of the

term in everyday language. We are suggesting, however, that popular discourse may not be the best guide for the definition of a concept thought to have theoretical value. Indeed, we are arguing that, as an analytic construct, the term "career" needs to be broadened beyond its colloquial connotation. Lotte Bailyn (personal communication) argues that to achieve such aims we may need to invent a new term devoid of an implied escalator clause. We tentatively agree, but are waiting for inspiration.

26. The rigid separation between captain and crew seems, in the United States at least, to be less prominent than sea stories would have us believe. In particular, the increasing geographic mobility of fishermen, along with the diminishing (regulated) lengths of fishing seasons, has created a situation where many fishermen jump from port to port throughout the year. These so-called flying fishermen not only fish different species in different ports in different seasons of the year, they often do so in different occupational roles. Thus, a skipper on a salmon vessel may also be an engineer on a tuna boat and a deckhand on a groundfish dragger. With such movement has come greater egalitarianism among fishermen. For a descriptive treatment of the causes and consequences of this relatively recent phenomena, see Van Maanen, Miller, and Johnson (1982).27.
27. Although the least studied of Schein's (1971) three dimensions, some recent work has been devoted to formalizing the inclusionary or centrality dimension. Van Maanen (1980a) notes that movement along this dimension can be seen in terms of rule learning, rule use, rule breaking, rules about rule breaking, and so on. Gregory (1980) provides a taxonomy of organizational inclusion that is sensitive to cross-cultural contexts.
28. We must note that the phrase "early periods of occupational learning" is a relative one. Some occupations require apprenticeships that extend over very long periods of time. Trades such as masonry are excellent examples where one passes from laborer or helper, to apprentice, to journeyman, and, finally, to craftsman. The trek takes many years. Consider, also, psychiatrists, who may be well into their mid- to late-thirties before fully shedding the student role. Greer (1972) provides a nice set of examples of varying forms of apprenticeship.
29. On the matters of practical reasoning and task rituals, ethnomethodologists have much to say as Garfinkel's (1967) classic analysis of "good reasons for bad organizational records" demonstrates. From this perspective, Kolb (forthcoming) provides a marvelous example of how the members of one relatively tight occupational community (federal mediators) routinely orchestrate work matters in ways that dramatically contrast to those rituals adopted by another, relatively similar, occupational community (state mediators).

30. This process is, at least according to Marxist scholars, in no way a natural or evolutionary one. Deskillling proceeds by the conscious design of management rather than being merely a technical requirement of the production of particular goods and services (Braverman, 1974). We tend to agree but hasten to add, as does Giddens (1973), class determinism is as equally full of dogma and unsupported contention as the technological determinism it seeks to replace.
31. Our discussion of coalitions parallels Dalton's (1959:57-65) more refined consideration of clique-formation in management circles. In Dalton's scheme, three general types of cliques can be identified: vertical, horizontal, and random. Vertical cliques subdivide into the symbiotic varieties where exchanges between higher level and lower level members of the organization are more or less balanced and the parasitic varieties where lower level members receive more than they give. Horizontal cliques are distinguished by their defensive or aggressive stance vis-a-vis general organizational policies. Random cliques are those based strictly on friendship and social satisfaction without conscious consideration of organizational policy or work goals. Occupational communities, if viewed as cliques inside an organization, would typically fall into Dalton's horizontal-aggressive classification when not faced with immediate threat. But, occupational communities, in our view, are much more than cliques since: (1) their formation rests on matters not organizationally specific; (2) the ties binding the membership are long lasting, potentially binding across the working lives of the members; and (3) though they may perform some of the same functions cliques in organizations perform such as bridging the official and unofficial goals of organizational members, their substantive concern for occupational self-control will invariably transcend issue-specific organizational concerns.
32. The essence of loose-coupling, as used in the organization literature, is that the stimulus-response links between any two subsystems are unpredictable (Glassman, 1973; Weick, 1976). A very nice, highly detailed illustration of equivocal and tentative links is provided in Manning's (forthcoming) analysis of police communication systems where the subsystems of dispatch and patrol are shown to be loosely-coupled for a variety of structural and phenomenological reasons. Attempts to tighten the links between the two by police administrators have repeatedly met with failure.
33. Gouldner's (1954) "vicious cycle" emerged from a study of underground miners who, prior to a personnel switch in management, possessed considerable work autonomy. When new management moved to call in some of this autonomy by formulating a set of new work rules, the miners reacted by claiming new areas of autonomy which brought forth more rules from management, and so on. A related point, well made by Douglas (1970), is that formal rules indicate deviance: the more rules, typically, the more and more widespread the deviance. That the two play off each other is Gouldner's (1954) original point.

34. The irony should not be lost. What Sofer's (1970) work suggests is that promotion is based, in part, on one's "desire for promotion." A self-sealing cycle may be created in which ambition is valued for ambition's sake, driving out even the most sincere efforts to pin promotions upon demonstrated performance at a given level. Part of the problem is, no doubt, the uncertainties and ambiguities surrounding the assessment of managerial work such that the search for promotional criteria leads back to such personal attributions as ambition, desire, drive, strength, will, and so forth. Apparently, the situation in many American firms is that, in the absence of performance indicators, striving will do. Sennett (1977) provides interesting commentary on these matters, updating the master work in the field of organization men by Whyte (1956).
35. Despite this list of four deadly sins, the research in the area is by no means dead. Recent work is still attempting to clarify the meaning of "local" and "cosmopolitan." Several studies proceed by factor analysis of items drawn from Gouldner's original questionnaire or from a questionnaire developed by Goldberg, *et al.* (1965). For example, Berger and Grimes (1973), Flago and Brumbaugh (1974), and Tuma and Grimes (1981) all show that localism and cosmopolitanism are independent dimensions rather than bi-polar, and that each are aggregate concepts "tapping" any number of underlying concepts. Whether or not such studies, in fact, clarify the meaning of local and cosmopolitan is, in our view, most uncertain.
36. This assumption derives directly from Gouldner's (1957:290) original paper where he notes "cosmopolitans are oriented to outer reference groups whereas locals use an inner reference group."
37. Lest we be accused of being Luddites in this regard, we must specify our context. In some areas, notably communication systems through which stolen cars and property can be traced, technology has increased the police's ability to at least detect, if not deter, crime. In other areas, such as the use of automobile patrol units in high population density neighborhoods, technology has impaired police functioning since they have lost touch with their clientele whose cooperation is essential for detecting some crimes, particularly street crimes. The ambiguity of technology in the context of police work is a point well covered by Manning (1981; forthcoming).
38. Again, Manning (1981) provides the empirical materials in his police communication work. The point not made explicitly in the text is that the presence of static, low flying objects, and black holes serves purposes to patrol officers who are busy at times with matters from which they do not wish to be distracted. Not wanting to be bothered by intrusive dispatchers who may try to whisk them away on other, less desirable, missions of mercy such as locating barking dogs or calming belligerent drunks, patrol officers simply fail to respond to dispatch, claiming later, if the matter arises, that they never heard the command or request. While sophisticated equipment allows dispatchers to efficiently send a message with very little noise, they must still rely on human contact to discover that their message has been received. This stands almost as a textbook example of a loosely-coupled system masquerading as a tightly-coupled one.

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