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PhD Thesis : Social & Economic Research Department  
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Organised Labour, Sectionalism & Changing Technology  
in the British Newspaper Industry

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## STRUCTURE of THESIS

| <u>Ch.No.</u> | <u>Chapter Heading</u>                                     | <u>Page</u> |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| 1             | Introduction   | 8           |
| 2             | Research Methodology                                       | 20          |
| 3             | Sectionalism:<br>an Analytical Framework                   | 33          |
| 4             | Three Generations of<br>Newspaper Technology               | 46          |
| 5             | Recent History of NP<br>Ind.Rel.& Technology:<br>1973-1988 | 71          |
| 6             | The Workgroups:<br>Journalists                             | 112         |
| 7             | The Workgroups:<br>Clerical                                | 195         |
| 8             | The Workgroups:<br>Craft                                   | 236         |
| 9             | Conclusion   | 322         |
|               | Appendices 1-10  | 327         |
|               | Bibliography & Further Reading                             | 379         |

## STRUCTURE of CHAPTERS

- Ch 1      Introduction      (5,000 words)
- a) Structure of thesis
  - b) A Note on the Use of Printing Terminology
  - c) A Brief Overview of the Thesis: the Workers, the Industry & the Researcher
  - d) Aim & Rationale of Study
- Ch 2      Research Methodology      (5,000)
- a) Introduction
  - b) The library research
  - c) The field research
- Ch 3      Sectionalism: an Analytical Framework      (6,000)
- a) Introduction
  - b) Sectionalism amongst newspaper workers
  - c) Theories of sectionalism
  - d) Critique of theories of sectionalism
- Ch 4      Three Generations of Newspaper Technology (7,500)
- a) Introduction
  - b) Old (hot-metal)
  - c) Intermediate (early photocomposition)
  - d) Contemporary (fully computerised)
  - e) Summary
- Ch 5      Recent History of Technological Change (12,000)  
& Newspaper Industrial Relations: 1973-88
- a) Introduction
  - b) The 1970s: technological potential unrealised
  - c) The 1980s: technological potential into fact
  - d) Summary
- Ch 6      The Workgroups: Journalists in the NUJ      (28,000)
- a) Structure of chapter
  - b) Organisational structure of NUJ
  - c) Historical aspects of journalist unionisation
  - d) Contemporary character of journalists
  - e) Conclusion: sectionalism & solidarity amongst journalists

Ch 7 The Workgroups: Clerical Workers in SOGAT'82  
(15,000)

- a) Structure of chapter
- b) Organisational structure of SOGAT'82
- c) Historical aspects of general worker unionisation
- d) Contemporary character of clerical workgroups
- e) Conclusion: sectionalism & solidarity amongst clerical workers

Ch 8 The Workgroups: Craft Workers in NGA'82 & SGB  
(29,000)

- a) Structure of chapter
- b) Organisational structure of craft unions
- c) Historical aspects of craft unionisation
- d) Contemporary character of craft workgroups
- e) Conclusion: sectionalism & solidarity amongst craft workers

Ch 9 Conclusion (2,500)

(Total Words = 110,000)

## Appendices

1. List of abbreviations
2. Glossary of printing/newspaper terms used
3. Description of trade unions/employers associations
4. Description of the 4 newspapers researched
5. Survey questions in full
6. Questionnaire data in full
7. Breakdown of questionnaire returns
8. Breakdown of interview/group discussions
9. Print industry trades union membership figures:  
late 19th Century - 1987
10. Print industry trades union family trees

## Bibliography & Further Reading

1. Printing in Britain:
  - a) pre-1945
  - b) pre-1970
  - c) post-1970
  - d) new technology
  - e) disputes
2. Printing International
3. Printing Workgroups & Trade Unions:
  - a) journalists
  - b) craft
  - c) semi-skilled
  - d) women
4. New Technology & Industrial Relations
  - a) empirical
  - b) theoretical
5. Sectionalism, Class Formation & the Labour Process
6. Print Trades Union/Employers' Association Documents
7. Miscellaneous References
8. Audio-visual Material Used in Thesis

## SYNOPSIS

Much has been written during the 1980s about the changes taking place within the British newspaper industry, emanating out of the development of computerisation and the concomitant demise of hot-metal production methods. However, most of the work undertaken in this field has tended to be either accounts of specific instances of conflict over the introduction of new technology, or have been focussed upon structural changes taking place within the industry and the trade unions. But given the radical nature of change occurring at the point of production, little work has been done on the perspective of the shop-floor worker and the longer term implications for inter-union relationships at the plant level. The following thesis therefore, attempts two main tasks. Firstly, in an empirical context, to bridge the 'gap' in the literature, by focussing on an analysis of the ways in which changing technology has interacted with and influenced the interrelationship between three highly differentiated categories of newspaper industry unionised employees - journalist, clerical and craft workers. And secondly, in a theoretical sense, to develop a conceptualisation which differentiates between structural change in the world of work, and perceptual change within the 'consciousness' of the workers, by focussing on the concept of 'sectionalism'.

Theoretically, throughout the 1980s, both pluralists and neo-marxists have commented extensively on the prevalence of 'sectionalism' within British trades union organisation, for the most part arguing that it is an inherently negative phenomenon inimical to the development of broader 'class' solidarity action by the working class. However, orthodox Marxist-Leninists have attempted to counter-act this negative perspective, arguing that sectionalism is an organic phenomenon, on the basis that sectional action by groups of workers sets in motion an anti-capitalist collective dynamic inevitably leading to a broader class based consciousness.

However, it will be argued in this Thesis, based on a socio-historical analysis of newspaper unionised workers, that 'sectionalism' is neither the polar opposite of, nor organically linked to 'class consciousness', but is rather a constant sociological factor, which whilst historically shifting, underpins relationships between differentiated groups of workers. Nevertheless, this perspective of sectionalism need not lead to pessimism regarding the ability of organised labour to act as an agency of change, but rather a more critical perspective of the relationships between workers must be adopted in our sociological understanding of working class activity at the point of production. In short, this study attempts to develop a conceptualisation of sectionalism by researching the phenomenon at a historical moment of change.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

|  | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| A/ Structure of Thesis   | 9           |
| B/ A Technical Note on the Use of<br>Printing Terminology                        | 9           |
| C/ A Brief Overview of the Thesis:<br>the Workers, the Industry & the Researcher | 10          |
| D/ Aim & Rationale of Study  | 13          |

## Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

### A/ Structure of Thesis

The structure of the following study is essentially divided into two parts. Part one incorporating Chapters 1-4, constitutes the introductory sections of the thesis: Chapter 1 outlines the main aim and rationale of the study; Chapter 2 explains the multi-disciplinary research methodology behind the thesis; Chapter 3 presents an analytical framework, which posits the way in which the research findings are to be interpreted throughout the thesis; and Chapter 4 consists of a technological outline of three generations of printing technology, and the concomitant division of labour in the production process.

The second part of this study - Chapters 5-8, constitute the substantive research findings and analysis: Chapter 5 gives a brief history of the impact of changing technology in the newspaper industry since 1973, and attempts to illustrate how the print unions at national level have approached the industrial relations problems presented by technological change; Chapters 6-8 present the main body of field research findings for each of the three main categories of workers studied in this thesis - journalist, clerical and craft.

And the final Chapter - 9, offers an overall summary of the main arguments made in the thesis.

### B/ A Technical Note on the Use of Printing Terminology

For the purpose of precision, print/newspaper industry terms will be used where applicable; for the purpose of clarity, the approximate general industrial relations term will be put in parenthesis for the first few times when the printing term appears. For further ease of understanding, a glossary of terms will be found in Appendix 2.

C/ A Brief Overview of the Thesis: the Workers,  
the Industry & the Researcher

The workers involved in the present research are organised in the following unions: the journalists union, the National Union of Journalists (NUJ); the main clerical workers union, the Society of Graphical & Allied Trades '82 (SOGAT '82); the craft unions, in England and Wales (and for a minority of workers in Scotland), the National Graphical Association '82 (NGA '82) and for the majority of craft workers in Scotland, the Scottish Graphical Branch of SOGAT '82 (SGB). Table 1.1 below outlines the relative numerical position of newspaper union members in their respective unions:

table 1.1 : print union membership - 1987 [1]

| <u>Union</u> | <u>National</u> | <u>Newspapers</u>          |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| NUJ          | 30,000          | 5,000                      |
| Sogat '82    | 196,000         | 18,000<br>(clerical 8,500) |
| NGA '82      | 130,000         | 20,000                     |
| SGB          | 5,500           | --                         |

The three categories of worker - journalist, clerical and craft, are all involved in what is termed the origination (or pre-press) side of the newspaper production process; that is those work areas engaged in producing a newspaper prior to its actual printing and distribution. It is in the origination areas that changing technology is having its most radical and problematic impact (although most areas of the production process have been/are being affected by technological change).

The three types of worker are, in fact, represented by **four** distinct unions, as there are two craft unions in this study - the NGA '82 and SGB. The main rationale for studying two craft groups lay in the fact that in Scotland, the SGB has been amalgamated with the general print union Sogat '82 for over a decade (since 1975), and thus represent an empirical example of the impact on inter-workgroup relations of a craft and general union merger.

However, print union structure is made more complex by the inclusion of Scotland, as the SGB organise not only the majority of craft workgroups, but also most clerical workgroups in Scottish newspapers as well. The SGB in fact constitutes a distinct trade union in many ways, acting to a certain degree somewhat independently of Sogat '82, with its own officers and office outwith the main union. However, unless otherwise stated, the research data has been compiled between categories of worker, ie journalist, clerical and craft, rather than between unions. Therefore



data received on Scottish clerical workers will appear under Sogat '82 clerical section, rather than the SGB.

It should be noted at this juncture, that it is necessary to distinguish between the newspaper industry, and the wider paper, printing & publishing industry. In workforce terms, table 1.2 gives some indication of the respective size of the constituent parts of the overall industrial sector:

table 1.2 : workforce size of paper, printing & publishing industry (1980) [2]

|                                      |   |         |
|--------------------------------------|---|---------|
| paper & board manufacture/conversion | = | 200,000 |
| general printing & publishing        | = | 200,000 |
| <i>newspapers</i>                    | = | 75,000  |
| periodicals                          | = | 65,000  |
| printing ink manufacture             | = | 6,000   |
| total                                | = | 546,000 |

In 1983, one estimate put newspapers as accounting for just 6% of all sales in printing materials, amounting to some £166million [3].

Newspaper production then, constitutes just one sector of the printing industry, therefore any conclusions drawn from the present study should be understood primarily as concerning the newspaper industry, and only indirectly the broader printing industry. And whilst it is an often made (and valid) criticism by those in the industry, that too much attention is paid to the newspaper world, and not enough to the less 'glamorous' sectors of the printing industry, it is beyond the scope of the present study to incorporate technological change and inter-workgroup relationships outside of the newspaper sector; both of which have a rather different character to that found in newspaper production. However, as many aspects of this study - union amalgamation for example, can only be understood in terms of the printing industry as a whole (as none of the three unions exist solely in the newspaper sector), it will be necessary to sometimes refer to workers/unions as being in the printing industry, rather than the newspaper sector of the latter.

The methodology employed in this study attempts to develop both a historical and contemporary perspective, and will be discussed fully in Chapter 2. But briefly, the socio-historical background is based upon research of the histories of the respective unions, and sociological studies of the relevant workgroups/unions. And a contemporary analysis is drawn from data compiled from a series of interviews and group discussions conducted with approximately 100 rank & file members of the three unions, and a questionnaire completed by 139 print trades

unionists. The field work was carried out between the summer of 1985 and autumn of 1986. For the purposes of discretion, the newspapers researched will be referred to as the following\*:

- 'Paper 1' (a national quality daily paper;  
researched summer 1986)
- 'Paper 2' (a large English provincial daily & evening;  
researched autumn 1986)
- 'Paper 3' (a Scottish regional daily & evening;  
researched summer 1985 & spring 1986)
- 'Paper 4' (a Scottish regional daily & evening;  
researched spring 1986)

Finally, it is perhaps relevant at this point to comment on the researcher's own background in the printing industry, working as a hot-metal compositor for approximately 13 years (between 1971-1984). This included a five-year apprenticeship, a year spent working at a local newspaper, and several 'casual' engagements on national newspapers in Fleet Street. The researcher has also been a member of the NGA'82 since 1973, and still holds an 'honorary card' (membership). Thus, 'academic neutrality' could be questioned in this thesis, with perhaps some validity. I would make just three points in my defence. Firstly, the idea of a value-free academic is not one the present researcher believes valid in any instance; personal bias will normally be present in both overt and sub-conscious ways. Secondly, my own experience as a printer will hopefully shed some insight into the subject matter that might otherwise be missing. And lastly, a sincere attempt was made to approach this study in an objective way as possible, but of course, ultimately the reader will have to judge the extent to which the latter has been achieved.

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\* A brief discription of these newspapers can be found in Appendix 4.

## D/ Aim & Rationale of the Thesis

The present study began life as an empirical attitudinal survey on the nature of 'craft exclusiveness' among chapels (workgroups) in the Scottish newspaper industry, for a Master's degree in 1985 [4]. Originally intending to base the present thesis on a larger scale version of the latter, it soon became apparent that some of the most interesting aspects of this question were being ignored by concentrating solely on craft workers. Given the radical changes taking place in production technology in the 1980s, the world of the craft worker has become increasingly intertwined with two other differentiated groups - journalists and clerical workers. It is in a study of the dynamics of this changing interrelationship that the most fundamental questions appear to be raised, in particular regarding workers self-identity and the phenomenon of **sectional attitudes and actions**.

However, in planning this study, it was immediately apparent that the subject matter was potentially very wide ranging, and the first difficulty lay in narrowing down the focus of the thesis to a manageable format. The main issue to be resolved was whether the thesis was to be primarily an empirical survey of worker attitudes at the plant level, or a theoretical study of the dynamics of 'sectionalism' amongst organised labour in the printing industry. This dichotomy in fact, proved misleading, as it became increasingly clear through the course of the research that the most fruitful, albeit problematic, approach to the study, was to combine both empirical and theoretical perspectives together. Thus whilst much of the background material is of an empirical nature, for example in the use of questionnaires and recorded interviews/discussions, an attempt to construct a theoretical understanding of the concept of sectionalism is made in part on the basis of the empirical work. Hence the central focus in analysing the dynamics of the changing relationship between differentiated groups of newspaper workers, will be the concept of sectionalism, and how the latter has interacted with changes in production technology.

The concept of 'sectionalism' is in fact problematic, and will be analysed fully in Chapter 3. However, the rationale for focussing upon 'sectionalism' is essentially three-fold. Firstly, the importance of studying the concept of 'sectionalism' amongst differentiated groups of workers lay in the general manifestation of disunity which has proved a key weakness in the response of organised labour to radical industrial, economic and political change taking place in late 20th Century British capitalism. The divisions within the ranks of the miners during the bitter year long mining industry dispute during 1984/85, bore witness to this weakness generally. In the newspaper industry specifically, the News International (Wapping) dispute of 1986/87, has been the most notable

example of the prevalence of 'sectionalism', manifested in a lack of trade union solidarity both between different union memberships (for instance with the majority of journalists failing to support their fellow print workers), and within the ranks of the same union (most significantly with the national membership of SOGAT'82 voting against an emergency levy, essentially aimed at financing the News International dispute - in January 1987).

Secondly, most academic work on working class differentiation has tended to be based either on a broad aggregate level, such as inter-union rivalry at national level, and changing patterns of political behaviour/attitudes (Hyman 1975; Hobsbawm 1981). Or has focussed upon just one individual category of worker, most notably male blue-collar groups such as assembly line workers (Beynon 1973), continuous process workers (Nichols/Armstrong 1976), and 'male-craft' workers/unions (Flanders 1970; Cockburn 1983 for example). In short, there has been an absence of analysis of the interrelationship between diverse groups of workers at the shop-floor level. This factor is critical, as a central premis of the present thesis is that the most direct and immediate manifestation of 'sectionalism' occurs at the shop-floor level between differentiated groups of workers. In other words, 'sectionalism' can only be understood as an outcome of social relationships at the point of production, and not in the first instance as a phenomenon manifested by one isolated type of worker in response to another abstracted group, or on an aggregate level as inter-union rivalry (although of course this does not deny the interrelationship of these different levels of analysis).

The third main reason for focussing upon sectionalism stems from point two. Throughout the 1980s, both pluralists and marxists [5] have commented extensively on the prevalence of 'sectionalism' within British trades union organisation, for the most part arguing that it is an inherently negative phenomenon inimical to the development of broader 'class' solidarity action by the working class (see eg Hyman 1975). However, the weakness of this conceptualisation, lay in a lack of intensive sociological investigation of 'sectionalism'; in other words, the tendency only indirectly to analyse the underlying dynamics of sectionalism at the point of production - that is the relationships between differentiated groups of workers. Also, an over-concentration on the sociology of the craft worker has led to static conceptualisations of sectionalism, or to sweeping historical disillusionment with the apparent 'conservatism' of trades unionism in general (see eg Hobsbawm 1981).

However, orthodox Marxist-Leninist attempts to counter-act this negative perspective, are equally flawed, perceiving

sectionalism as an organic phenomenon, on the basis that sectional collective action by groups of workers sets in motion a collectivist anti-capitalist dynamic inevitably leading to a broader class based consciousness (Foster/Woolfson 1986, Kelly 1988). It will be argued in this thesis, based on a socio-historical analysis of newspaper unionised workers, that 'sectionalism' is neither the polar opposite of, nor organically linked to 'class consciousness', but is rather a constant although historically shifting sociological phenomenon, which can be seen as locked into a dialectical relationship of tension within and between differentiated groups of workers. Nevertheless, this perspective of sectionalism need not lead to pessimism regarding the ability of organised labour to act as an agency of change, but rather a more critical perspective of the relationships between workers must be developed in our sociological analysis of organised labour, so as to understand better both the limitations and possibilities of working class action.

As well as the researcher's personal background as a printing compositor with experience in the newspaper industry, the rationale for selecting this industry for empirical examination lay in the highly sectionalised production process of newspaper work, which in part has led to historically consistent (albeit shifting) manifestations of sectionalism between various groups of newspaper workers. More importantly, the research was undertaken at the very time that these workers were experiencing a radical restructuring of both work organisation and inter-workgroup union relations, in large part due to changing technology. In this respect, the question of print trade union amalgamation was (is) of critical practical importance to the workforce from the early 1980s onwards, and thus for the purpose of sociological field research, offered a fruitful empirical case study of the socio-historical phenomenon of sectionalism.

That changing technology is having a major impact on industrial relations in the newspaper industry is by now well known, being dramatically demonstrated over the past few years in high profile disputes in both the provincial and national press in Britain. The conflict between Eddie Shah and the NGA '82 at the 'Stockport Messenger' (SM) newspaper in 1983/84, and the News International (NI) dispute in 1986/87, highlighted many of the fundamental problems facing organised labour in the printing industry generally, and the newspaper sector in particular. Of central importance has been the relationships between the differentiated workgroups, or chapels, who have traditionally exercised a high degree of autonomy in the industrial relations system in the newspaper industry.

The process of collective bargaining and control over the work process had been the most notable aspects of the uniqueness of chapel centred industrial relations for a

number of years, up until the mid-1980s. Sisson 1976, saw this sectionalisation as being underpinned by what he characterised as a 'sub-contracting' system, whereby the chapel were paid to perform a certain number of tasks by management, but with the former having direct control over the work process. Overseers (line-managers) were solely responsible for technical aspects of the production process, and not man-management. And the personnel management managed purely through the payment system, '...to all intents and purposes, the chapels have a relatively free hand in making decisions about working arrangements' [6]. This would entail the FOC (shop-steward), inter alia, organising overtime and shift working arrangements. Moreover, once the traditions had been established over a number of years, it equally suited many managements to continue interacting with the unions in an industrial relations structure that was highly sectionalised [7]. In short, demarcation patterns made it largely unnecessary for individual chapels to negotiate with management on a broader multi-chapel basis.

However, sectionalisation of the production process came increasingly to be seen by newspaper owners as the major problem as changes in technology made it ever more conducive to management to restructure long standing demarcation lines. By the early 1980s, this factor was perceived to be the critical industrial relations problem. Whilst a detailed account will be given in Chapter Four, a brief job description of the three main categories of worker researched, gives some indication of the impact of technological change on the job demarcation structure in the newspaper industry.

The job tasks of journalists revolve around the more 'creative' aspects of newspaper production: such as reporting, photography and the sub-editing of editorial matter. Increasingly, given the impact of computer technology, journalists are using computer keyboards for both the relaying of reporter's stories from the 'field' into the editorial room, and for the direct inputting of editorial copy ready made for insertion into the page. It is the latter that is the most problematic aspect of changing technology vis-a-vis inter-union/workgroup relations, as the editorial room increasingly takes over the work of the composing department.

Clerical workers are the most diverse pre-press group, engaged in tasks such as administration, circulation management, taking advertisements over the phone (tele-ad sales) and in a host of other jobs. It is the tele-ad sales workgroup that is being most radically affected by computerisation, in that the latter now has the ability to directly input advertising copy into the computer system for final page make-up. Again, this aspect of changing technology is impacting primarily on the typesetting role of the craft workgroups.

For its part, the craft groups in the origination areas carry out a number of tasks, such as preparing art work and processing photographs, setting editorial and advertising copy, making-up the printed page, and moulding plates from the made-up page to be sent down to the press machine room to be printed. Computerisation has had its most dramatic impact of all in the craft areas, in particular the setting of type, which is now done basically only once (single keystroking or direct input). At the present time, page make-up is still largely done as a separate function 'off-screen', by NGA'82 and SGB members, but this will almost certainly constitute the next major area of change given the advances being made in full electronic page make-up [8].

Overall then, most workgroups in the origination side of newspaper production are experiencing a radical change in their working practices in the 1980s, with the craft groups in particular being affected on two fronts, in respect of both editorial and advertising typesetting. Thus from the mid-1970s onwards, changing technology put increasing pressure on long standing patterns of sectionalisation within the newspaper production process, which in turn heightened sectional tension between the differentiated workgroups.

With the tendency of micro-chip computer technology both to deskill some aspects of the production process, and to radically challenge the logic of long standing job demarcation structures, the complexity of inter-union relations has been an especially problematic issue. From the trade union perspective, one of the most pressing difficulties is the inter-union tension and sometimes overt conflict, that has resulted from the restructuring taking place in the newspaper industry in the 1980s. For example, by 1985, when this study first began, relations between the printing unions had reached a low point, after a series of acrimonious articles had appeared during the summer of that year in respective union journals [9], reflecting the antagonism between unions at several provincial and national newspapers over the introduction of direct input technology [10].

In specific terms, changing technology had brought craft workers in the NGA'82 into conflict with journalists in the NUJ and clerical workers in SOGAT'82, over which group was to have jurisdiction over the typesetting of editorial and advertising matter. An article by SOGAT'82 national officer Bill Miles for instance, illustrated the mistrust and bad feeling between his union and the NGA'82, whilst at the same time recognising that all newspaper workers and print unions would be the losers if the trade unions withdrew into a sectional, intracidal battle:

"Surely, if there was a time for greater unity and understanding it is now, when the whole scenario of...newspapers is likely to be the subject of violent change and fluctuations in the next two or three years...It is a time for understanding and not emnity. 'How the mighty have fallen' - is not an epitaph that we would wish to see placed on the NGA. There must be a better way."

[SOGAT Journal Special Edition, July 1985 : pp.4-5]

Much has been written in the press itself, and in academic literature during the last five years or so about the changes taking place within the newspaper industry, emanating out of the development of computerisation and the concomitant demise of hot-metal production methods. However, most of the work undertaken in this field has tended to be either accounts of specific instances of conflict over the introduction of new technology (Jacobs 1980, Dickinson 1984 and Melvern 1986), or have been focussed upon structural changes taking place within the industry and the trade unions (Marshall 1983, Gennard/Dunn 1983 and Goodhart/Wintour 1986). But given the radical nature of change occurring at the point of production, with the exception of Cockburn 1983, little work has been done (in Britain) on the perspective of the shop-floor worker and the longer term implications for inter-union relationships at the plant level.

The following thesis therefore, attempts two main tasks. Firstly, in an empirical context, to bridge the 'gap' in the literature, by focussing on an analysis of the ways in which changing technology has interacted with and influenced the interrelationship between three highly differentiated categories of newspaper industry unionised employees - journalist, clerical and craft workers. And secondly, in a theoretical sense, to develop a conceptualisation which differentiates between structural change in the world of work, and perceptual change within the 'consciousness' of the workers.

In summing-up this introductory chapter, the rationale for basing a theoretical analysis of sectionalism upon an empirical examination of the newspaper industry, lay in the latter's highly differentiated workforce currently experiencing a major restructuring and dynamic realignment of both job content, and inter-workgroup relations. In short, the present study attempts to develop a conceptualisation of sectionalism by researching the phenomenon at a historical moment of change.



## References (Chapter One)

1. Sources for table one are various, and the figures given are approximations of the total working membership of the unions.
2. ACAS 1980.
3. Greater London Enterprise Board 1984, p.6
4. This initial research was conducted over a three month period in the summer of 1985, and involved a field study at one Scottish newspaper in Glasgow. The result of this study have been incorporated into the present thesis.
5. By pluralist (or Oxford school) industrial relations perspectives is meant the following: a) that conflict of interest, goals and values are inherent in the structure of industrial relations; b) that management and trade unions are equally legitimate and each party should pursue its own goals independently but in interaction of the other; and c) that conflict in industrial relations is not only inevitable but acceptable within an institutionalised framework. By marxist perspectives is meant the following: a) that conflict in industrial relations is inevitable, but capitalism seeks to ensure that conflict takes place within strictly defined rules; and b) that industrial relations is generally determined by the unequal power relationship between capital and labour.
6. Sisson 1976, p.165.
7. See for example ACAS 1977, p.216.
8. See for instance Program of Policy Studies in Science and Technology 1978.
9. See for example, SOGAT JOURNAL Special Issue, July 1985; and the NGA '82 journal PRINT, June 1985.
10. See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion on the recent history of attempts to introduce new technology into the newspaper industry.

Chapter Two

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

|                               | <u>Page</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| A/ Introduction               | 21          |
| B/ The Library Based Research | 21          |
| C/ The Field Research         | 24          |
| 1. Quantitative methodology   | 25          |
| 2. Qualitative methodology    | 29          |

## Chapter Two: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### A/ Introduction

The main aim of the study is to develop a theoretical conceptualisation of 'sectionalism' through an empirical analysis of the dynamics of inter-workgroup relations in the newspaper industry, with specific reference to changes in production technology. The present chapter attempts to define the methods of social investigation employed in this thesis.

Given one important aim of the study is to assess the extent of change (quantitatively and qualitatively) being experienced by organised labour in the newspaper industry, it is clear that the experience of change is central in formulating a methodological framework in which the following analysis of the dynamics of workgroup sectionalism is to be structured. However, assessing the extent of change in any context is problematic. To begin with, a historical bench-mark needs establishing by which to measure the contemporary data. As there is no previous data to compare and contrast directly the contemporary findings, for example over the question of workers' attitudes to union merger in the printing industry, a second type of methodology is necessary. Hence to develop a historical bench-mark, secondary sources were used, such as academic studies on the relevant unions and workgroups, whilst a contemporary account relies primarily on original source material, in particular the use of interview and group discussion material. Thus a general rather than specific assessment of change is used to structure the thesis.

The research methodology employed in the study therefore, is of a multi-disciplinary character, which attempts to develop both a sociological and historical analysis, from within a quantitative and qualitative perspective. Essentially, the thesis entailed two phases of research. The first phase concentrated on a library based search of the relevant source material and information; and the second phase involved field research at four large national and provincial newspapers in England and Scotland.

### B/ The Library Based Research

In order to gain the socio-historical 'benchmark' by which to assess the degree of change in inter-workgroup relations, the initial phase of the study entailed an extensive library based research of the relevant literature. The sources used were various, and included the following: official histories and sociological studies of the respective trades unions/workgroups; specialist social scientific and printing industry journals; monthly

journals of the NUJ, SOGAT'82 and NGA'82; post-graduate dissertations relating to the printing industry; various commissioned reports and trades unions/employers' association documents; quality national newspapers, and television and radio current affairs programmes.

Whilst the above types of source material and literature were used so as to place the current experiences of newspaper workers in a broader socio-historical framework, the different categories of research material were employed to provide insights from varying perspectives. A full bibliography (and further reading list) will be given at the end of this thesis, but the following categorisations, it is hoped, will provide some indication of the relevance of the source material used in this study.

To begin with, four basic categories can be distinguished:

- a) industrial relations in the printing industry;
- b) changing technology re industrial relations generally;
- c) the concept of 'sectionalism' within organised labour;
- d) miscellany.

a) Printing/newspaper industrial relations -  
this category can be sub-divided into five streams:

- i. Official histories of the trades unions, for example Mansfield 1943, Musson 1954 and Moran 1964. Although the latter tend to be written in a 'magnificent journey' style, and therefore often lack critical insight [1], these histories provide a wealth of information on the respective unions, and constitute an important source for gaining an overall understanding of the development and growth of each printing union. In particular, the union histories are an invaluable source for charting the family trees of the present day unions.
- ii. Sociological studies of the relevant unions and workgroups. See for instance Sykes 1967, Christian 1977, Cockburn 1983 and SOGAT'82 1985. The latter proved an important source for developing a critical approach to the background of the respective workgroups, and bridged the gap between the histories of the unions and the contemporary situation in which newspaper workers find themselves in in the 1980s.
- iii. The impact of changing technology on newspaper industrial relations. For example, Martin 1981, Gennard & Dunn 1983, Marshall 1983 and Goodhart & Wintour 1986. Whilst some of these studies are already dated given the rapid and radical developments in newspaper industrial relations

during the past few years, they nevertheless constitute a good background to the main structural changes taking place within the industry in the 1980s. In order to keep abreast of the latest events concerning changing technology and industrial relations in the newspaper world, the monthly publications of the NUJ, SOGAT'83 and NGA'82 were an important, if somewhat partisan source of information. Newspaper stories also proved a useful mechanism for compiling an up-to-date record of the most recent events (as were television and radio reports).

- iv. Specific studies of major disputes revolving around the introduction of new technology at particular papers. See Jacobs 1981, Dickinson 1984 and Melvern 1986. These highlight in dramatic terms the seminal instances of industrial conflict between newspaper publishers and organised labour at 'The Times' (1978-79), the 'Stockport Messenger' (1983-84) and News International (1986-87) respectively. Again, newspaper articles, television/radio reports and union journals proved useful in gaining background information on conflict situations. Newspapers dating back to 1973 were referred to, a date which marks the first important new technology dispute in the provincial press [2].
- v. International studies of newspaper industrial relations. See for example, Winsbury 1975, Zimbalist (ed) 1979 and Rogers & Freidman 1980. Although the present research is essentially a British based study, both in terms of the concept of sectionalism and changes in newspaper technology, references will be made to work undertaken abroad (particularly the USA) on indigenous printing industries, where it is felt that the latter allows for insights into the British situation [3].

b) Changing technology & industrial relations -  
this category falls into two main parts:

- i. empirical studies on the trades unions response to the introduction of new technology. See for example, Manwaring 1981, Robins & Webster 1982 and Batstone & Gourlay 1986. The latter constitute research on the ways in which trades unions have responded at both national and shop-floor levels to the impact of changes in production technology across British industry as a whole. These studies were valuable in putting the print trades unions approach to changing technology into a broader perspective.
- ii. Theoretical perspectives on the nature of changing technology. See for instance, Wilkinson 1983 and McKenzie & Wajcman 1985. This literature is part of

a growing sociological focus and debate on the concept of 'new technology' and its interrelationship to capitalist development.

c) 'Sectionalism' and organised labour:

See for instance Flanders 1969, Hyman 1975, Foster & Woolfson 1986 and Kelly 1988. These studies focus in part on the nature of sectionalism and sectionalisation amongst various groups of workers in British industry, and allows for a broader contextualisation of sectionalism within the newspaper industry. A full theoretical discussion on the concept of sectionalism will be given in chapter three.

d) Miscellany:

In addition to the above, miscellaneous sources of information were used, including trades unions and employers documents and correspondence [4], Certification Officer Annual Reports, Royal Commission Reports, and various ACAS publications.

Overall then, it was the aim of the first phase of the research to gain a broad understanding of the printing/newspaper industry, changing technology and sectionalism, so as to develop a coherent foundation on which to base the second, contemporary field research phase of the thesis.

### C/ The Field Research

At the outset of the research, it was envisaged that there may well be difficulties in obtaining access to as many papers as ideally was required, at least six were initially hoped for. In fact, gaining access to newspapers did prove problematic, for two main reasons. Firstly, the field work entailed an extensive period of time spent by the researcher at each newspaper on a day-to-day basis, and therefore involved some interruption in production time; this was very often quoted as the reason for refusing access to the researcher. And secondly, the very reason for basing the thesis in the newspaper industry<sup>1</sup> the radical changes in industrial relations and working practices currently being experienced - produced a natural wariness towards the researcher's initial approach and towards the content of the finished thesis. It became apparent that many managements (and some chapel representatives) felt the time inopportune to have their newspaper researched by a social scientist. Thus the weeks, then the months went by, and only slow process was made in gaining access to the various newspapers. The final total of four papers researched was therefore less

than initially hoped for. However, those newspapers that did allow me access showed a remarkable willingness to assist in the mechanics of the field work. This was true of both management and trade unions (representatives and members). This factor is worth more than a passing reference in a footnote, as it made a vital and qualitative difference to the outcome of the thesis. In many instances, union members were allowed time off work (often three to four at a time) to speak to me in group discussions that lasted on average 45 minutes (sometimes longer). The latter, coupled with the degree of freedom given me to wander around the plant and talk informally to whoever I wished, allowed for the development of a much greater understanding to be gained in a broad but detailed sense, of the changes taking place in the newspaper world in the 1980s. The newspapers themselves will remain anonymous, although a brief description of each one is presented in Appendix 2, so as to give the reader some idea of the size, structure and history of the companies involved in this research.

Whilst the library based phase of the research was aimed primarily at establishing a socio-historical framework, the second, field work stage, constitutes the main body of the thesis, that is an examination and analysis of the contemporary character of workgroup interrelationships between journalist, clerical and craft workers. The field research was designed to develop both a quantitative and qualitative perspective, through the methodologies of a survey and group discussions respectively. The field work at the four papers was undertaken between the summer of 1985 and autumn of 1986. Three to four weeks was spent at each newspaper, and involved arranging for the questionnaires to be distributed amongst the members of the relevant chapels, and the setting up of a series of interviews and group discussions with management representatives, Mothers/Fathers of the chapel (M/FOC's - shop-stewards) and rank & file trades unionists from the three unions - the NUJ, SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82. Overall, 139 questionnaires were returned, and approximately 100 people participated in tape recorded interviews/group discussions [5].

### 1. The Quantitative Approach

Using a quantitative approach as one method in analysing contradictory tensions within and between each of the three categories of worker studied, is problematic. From a marxist perspective, Ollman 1984 criticises the use of the survey/questionnaire method on the grounds that "those who conduct such surveys generally assume that the answers they get back are honest, of similar intensity, easy to interpret, and most suspect of all, relatively stable (pp.2-3). Ollman goes on to suggest that no survey ever predicted any of the great outbursts of working class consciousness that have occurred historically (p.3). On the

question of 'honesty' in the workers response, this seems over cynical. Why should we assume 'dishonesty'? More importantly, this negative view of the survey methodology misses the point that all social analysis depends partly on method, and partly on interpretation. If one starts out from the perspective of looking for the contradictions in the questionnaire response, this would surely offset the problems of a more mechanical approach which Ollman tends to characterise. For example, if workers in the newspaper industry overwhelmingly reply in the positive to the question of 'are you in favour of your union amalgamating to form just one single union for the printing industry', but then respond negatively to the question 'do you think that combining with members of the other unions will strengthen your collective bargaining position within the industry', then *a priori* either the questions are poorly designed (therefore a technical, not analytical problem) or more likely, the workers in question have responded in a contradictory fashion. It is a premise of the present research's methodology that only when the researcher attempts to 'iron-out' contradictions of this sort (ie interpreting them as being technical faults) that flaws arise in interpretation. If the researcher primarily focusses upon 'contradictory' responses, and interprets them as reflecting contradictions in consciousness, then the survey method can prove a useful adjunct to the overall methodology used. Mann 1977 makes a similar point in discussing 'explosions of consciousness': "in fact from surveys, we can easily perceive latent consciousness of class, which, in certain situations, can explode' (p.229). Perhaps Mann goes too far in implying that simply the use of surveys can be used to interpret such complex issues as consciousness, but nevertheless there seems to be no a priori reason for dismissing the questionnaire method out of hand a la Ollman.

In order to gain a quantifiable source of data, two questionnaires were compiled [6]. The first, and most important (QA), was aimed at examining some of the fundamental attitudes of the respective chapel members, both towards other groups of workers and toward their own self-perceptions of occupational status differentiation within the newspaper industry. This questionnaire, in fact, evolved into two separate questionnaires during the course of the field research, as it became apparent that for the clerical workgroups, many of the questions in the original questionnaire appeared irrelevant to their own experiences within the industry. In part, this problem may have been caused by the researcher's own craft background in the industry, which may have led to the use of terminology that favoured the latter group, and not immediately definable by clerical groups. Thus a second questionnaire was produced specifically for the clerical workgroups, although it was designed to be analysed in conjunction with the original, which was used for journalist and craft groups. (Although in some instances, the data is not comparable between the three categories of



workers, but only two. Where this occurs, it will be indicated in the text). In retrospect, it would have been more efficient (both from the chapel's point of view in completing the questionnaire, and in analysing the results afterwards) to have compiled three separate, but compatible questionnaires for each of the three categories of worker.

In fact, this stage of the research proved to be the most problematic, owing to both the researcher's lack of experience, and only a vague idea at the outset of where precisely the research as a whole was going. Two weaknesses in particular became apparent in the original questionnaire. Firstly, about a third of the questions were of a speculative nature, centering around the theme of what would be the worker's attitude to various issues 'if there was only one union in the printing industry'. The questions asked in this respect were probably too detailed, and involved too high a degree of *a priori* theorising on the part of the respondent. As one sociologist, sympathetic to the quantitative approach, has commented:

"...the practical problems of organising such studies mean an inevitable temporal divorce between an attitude when measured and the past circumstances to which it may relate. Of course, the difficulty is by definition all the more intractable when measuring attitudes that may relate to some possible future circumstance whose occurrence is indefinite. Such a separation in time may...seriously compromise the sociological analysis by questionnaire of some issues, and perhaps industrial relations with their exceptional volatility, are an area where this is the case."  
[HUSBANDS 1981 : p.93]

However, in defence of the qualitative methodology employed in this thesis, the question relating to union amalgamation is so central to a discussion concerning 'sectionalism', and the issue has such a high profile with newspaper workers at the present time, that it was felt that this should not detract from the legitimacy of the research findings, as it is precisely the group's subjective feelings vis-a-vis other groups of workers, that will have a significant impact on the prospects for future union amalgamation.

The second major weakness of the original questionnaire lay in its length, consisting of 21 main questions, many of which were sub-divided into 4-5 constituent parts. This could have been reduced, particularly by compiling three separate questionnaires for the three distinct categories of worker, as several of the questions were group specific. In general, the length and detail of the questions may well have contributed to the rather poor return rate, particularly amongst the craft and journalist

chapels. The returned questionnaires in fact totalled one hundred and thirty nine, a breakdown of which is given below in table 2.1 (p.29)

The questionnaires themselves were structured around four main categories of question:

- i. personal details to build-up a profile of each workgroup;
- ii. orientation towards the job and perceptions of new technology;
- iii. attitudes towards print industry trade unions at the national level;
- iv. attitudes towards other workgroups/unions at the shop-floor level.

(Appendix 6 presents the questionnaire data in full)

In the relevant sections of this thesis, the survey data is presented as a comparison between the particular workgroup being studied, and the total findings for all workers surveyed on the respective question. In other words, the figures relating to 'all workers' is the overall average including the specific workgroup being studied. Whilst it may have been more insightful to compare the particular workgroup with an amalgam of all other workgroups, it was felt that given the low sample number of returned questionnaires (139), the validity of the statistics needed maximising. This method nevertheless enables a reasonable analysis of the unique response of the specific workgroup compared with the general response of all workers. The statistical methodology was to weight the responses, in order to take account of missing answers for each category of worker. For example, the NGA'82 workgroups returned a total of 42 questionnaires to the researcher. Thus if in a particular question, only 39 answers were recorded (ie three were missing), the responses were weighted by a factor of 1.08 (ie  $42 \div 39$  to the nearest two decimal points). The figures calculated for 'all workers' were based on the average for all categories of worker, thus giving a more accurate figure in respect of workgroup variations (the essence of the research) than an individual weighted count of each individual response would have provided. The latter method would have been particularly misleading as there are large variations in the absolute numbers of respondents in each category. Hence the craft workers would have distorted the average for 'all workers' as they are in a majority. The method chosen eliminates this problem by taking into account only the percentages arrived at for each group, and not the total number of respondents involved. The weighted variables are given in appendix four, together with a full breakdown of the survey questions and responses. Finally, each set of statistics is preceded by the relevant question repeated in full.

The second questionnaire (QB) to be completed by M/FOC's of the respective chapels, related to inter-union structural changes that may have taken place in industrial relations practices at the particular paper. The questions asked were primarily designed to examine the extent to which inter-chapel relations had altered (if at all) in respect of collective bargaining units over the introduction of new technology. In other words, whether or not bargaining with management over technology had produced a more united approach between the different unions, than was the case when bargaining over other issues. QB was a relatively short multiple-choice type survey, consisting of nine questions. It was not envisaged that QB would form the basis of a scientifically sound pool of data itself, due to the smallness of the sample. But rather it was to be used as an aid in developing a structural picture of changes in inter-chapel relations, to assist in the interpretation of the findings from QA. In all, eight union representatives completed this questionnaire (see table 2:1).

table 2.1 : breakdown of questionnaire returns by workgroup category and occupational status

|         | journalist |    | clerical |    | craft [7] |    |
|---------|------------|----|----------|----|-----------|----|
|         | QA         | QB | QA       | QB | QA        | QB |
| Paper 1 | 10         | 1  | 13       | 1  | 10        | 1  |
| Paper 2 | 10         | 1  | 16       | 1  | 17        | 1  |
| Paper 3 | -          | -  | 5        | -  | 45        | 1  |
| Paper 4 | -          | -  | -        | -  | 13        | 1  |
| total   | 20         | 2  | 34       | 2  | 85        | 4  |

## 2. The Qualitative Approach

Up to this stage, the research methodologies were designed primarily to create a quantifiable pool of empirical data, on which to base the study. The final research method employed was a series of individual interviews and group discussions, with workers and managers at the various newspapers (see table 2.2). All the interviews/discussions were tape recorded, and extensively transcribed.

table 2.2 : breakdown of numbers involved in interviews, & discussions by workgroup/occupational status

|             | journalist | clerical | craft [8] | mgmt |
|-------------|------------|----------|-----------|------|
| rank & file | 11         | 10       | 49        | -    |
| M/FOC       | 5          | 3        | 5         | -    |
| management  | -          | -        | -         | 7    |
| total       | 16         | 13       | 55        | 7    |

The individual interviews took place with a management representative (normally the personnel manager) and the M/FOC's of the respective chapels, and were designed to gain an overall picture of the industrial relations climate at the specific newspaper, and to gauge the changes that had occurred in respect of production technology. These interviews often took place over several sessions, each one lasting from between 20 minutes to 2 hours.

The group discussions were organised to include three to four chapel members at a time, and lasted on average about 45 minutes. The technique used in these discussions was fairly informal, with the researcher just guiding the participants through the main points of the discussion (usually revolving around the type of questions asked in the survey), and letting the workers themselves bring out what they felt were the most salient issues regarding changing technology and inter-chapel/union relations [9].

These sessions formed the basis of the qualitative contemporary analysis of the thesis, and are quoted extensively in chapters six, seven and eight, so as to allow the chapel members to articulate their feelings and perceptions towards the issues raised in this research. It should be noted however, that the quotes are used primarily only when they illustrate a generally held attitude amongst a specific group of workers, and will not just reflect an individual's beliefs. At the outset of the research it was envisaged that the group discussions may prove the most problematic aspect of methodology, both to arrange and carry-out successfully. These initial fears were in retrospect unfounded, largely due to the excellent assistance and cooperation I was given at the newspapers concerned. Middle management and overseers (line managers) went out of their way to allow for the group discussions to take place, more often than not in production time. At each of the four paper the M/FOCs of the respective chapels organised for the researcher, those chapel members willing to take part in the group discussions, often on their own initiative arranging for a cross section of workers to be present, in respect of age, sex and general attitudes towards trade union affairs. And finally, the chapel members themselves proved to be eager to discuss the issues currently affecting their working lives, in an articulate and positive manner. Of course, inherent in an interview/discussion format are many difficulties, not least the researcher's own bias, both in channelling the discussion along a particular route, and in interpreting what is being said by the participants. Perhaps this problem was especially acute given the personal background of the researcher and the nature of the research. However, this qualitative methodology proved fruitful for several reasons. Firstly, so as to allow the researcher to develop a more open and understanding relationship with the various managers, workers and chapels at the respective newspapers. Secondly, to enable a more insightful

interpretation to take place in respect of the questionnaire data, thus attempting to avoid a 'mechanical' process of data analysis occurring. In other words, the interviews/discussions were to be used interactively with the survey findings. Thirdly, by involving groups of workers in discussing their experiences and perceptions together, rather than individually, it was felt that this would produce a more representative result in respect of chapel orientation, thus emphasising the need to distinguish between individual perceptions and collective manifestations of those attitudes. And lastly, the interviews/discussions were used to gain a qualitative perspective on which could be developed a theoretical analysis of the concept of 'sectionalism'. In short, it was felt that the above rationales for adopting a qualitative approach, more than offset the negative aspects of this type of research methodology.

Of course, ultimately, the analysis of qualitative and quantitative material will be largely shaped by the framework in which the interpretation is made, and the following Chapter will present a discussion concerning the analytical framework in which this thesis is to be understood.

## References (Chapter Two)

1. Moran (1964) makes a similar point in British Journal of Industrial Relations, March 1967
2. This dispute took place in a provincial newspaper in Nottingham - the Evening Post - in 1973, and resulted in the loss of recognition for the production unions after a protected lock-out. In 1979, the NUJ were also to lose recognition at the Nottingham Evening Post after the chapel had taken strike action in pursuit of a national pay claim. The initial dispute in 1973 concerned the use of a plastic platemaking machine. See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of this dispute.
3. It should be noted that it is not the intention of the present study to examine industrial relations of other countries in respect of the newspaper industry. In general, whilst many commentators (including the trades unions) have adopted an 'America today, Britain tomorrow' approach to changes in newspaper technology and concomitantly industrial relations (see for example Winsbury 1975 and NUJ 1980), this is superficial methodologically, as the differences between Britain and the USA are too wide, both in respect of the newspaper industry and industrial relations, to draw direct analogies.
4. Some documents shown to the researcher were in fact private and confidential, and were therefore not to be directly referred to. Where this is the case, the text shall signify this.
5. See tables 2.1 & 2.2 for a breakdown of these figures. Appendices 7 & 8 present a fuller breakdown of the latter.
6. See Appendix 6 for an examination of the questionnaire data in full.
7. The preponderance of craft workers largely reflects & the fact that there are two craft groups in this  
8 study, which in practice more or less doubles their numbers in relation to the journalists and clerical workers, both in questionnaire and group discussion terms.
9. Some chapel members were interviewed on an individual basis, due to the practical limitations sometimes present on people's time. However, these workers only constitute a small minority, the overwhelming majority being involved in the group discussions. Therefore I have incorporated the individually interviewed numbers into the overall group discussion figures.

Chapter Three

SECTIONALISM: an ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

|   | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| A/ Introduction                           | 34          |
| B/ Sectionalism Amongst Newspaper Workers | 35          |
| C/ Theories of Sectionalism               | 36          |
| D/ Critique of Theories of Sectionalism   | 41          |

A/ Introduction

Although 'sectionalism' as a concept is a problematic, it has tended to be used as a negative term in a theoretically very loose manner. The mere manifestation of 'isolated' action has been perceived as 'sectionalism', defined as being action inherently negative to other groups of workers. Regarding its theoretical usage, a useful starting point can be gained from a study of the shipbuilding industry conducted in the early 1970s:

"One of the most striking features about the independent action exercised from the employees side is that it is highly sectional in character. That is the action is generally taken by individual unions or individual workgroups working in isolation from, and at times in conflict with, other unions and workgroups."

[COMMISSION on INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS 1971 : p.109]

In other words, 'sectionalism' relates to the attitudes, perceptions and actions of separate workgroups/unions, which manifest themselves as defensive/hostile to the interests of other groups of workers. At first glance, one can immediately see the apparent relevance of this basic definition when applied to the newspaper industry, particularly with the inter-union rivalry of the mid 1980s.

However, the present chapter attempts to develop a more rigorous theoretical understanding of the concept of sectionalism, firstly by looking at the somewhat loose way in which the concept has been used to refer to newspaper workers; and secondly by formulating two ideal type conceptualisations of sectionalism: the **static-conservative** and the **dynamic-embryonic**. Each approach will be examined in turn, and a critique will be offered of both perspectives, with the aim of developing a sociological understanding of the nature of 'sectionalism' outwith the above two frameworks.



## B/ Sectionalism Amongst Newspaper Workers

In examining studies undertaken specifically in the printing/newspaper industry, two flaws in the use of the term 'sectionalism' are evident: firstly, there tends to be a lack of clarity of and rigour in defining and using 'sectionalism' as an explanation of the character of organised labour; and secondly, this first point has been exacerbated by an over-concentration on specific instances of industrial disputes, which have often entailed some degree of inter-union conflict. Of course, most studies have not been directly concerned with 'sectionalism' per se, and other works have quite legitimately been focussed upon major newspaper disputes, particularly over the past decade. But in general, these studies have been underpinned by an uncritical understanding of the concept of sectionalism. For example, the belief that sectionalism is an important and pervading characteristic of organised labour in the newspaper industry is now a commonplace, and references to this concept permeate much of the relevant literature. In examining the nature of sectionalism in the newspaper industry, it is clearly at the level of the chapel (workgroup) that one needs to focus primarily. An ACAS report on the provincial press in the 1970s for example stated:

"At chapel level we found from our case studies that the tradition of sectional action is deeply ingrained. The long history and stability of the chapel and its scope for independent action have influenced the view that chapels can best defend their interests by acting independently."  
[ACAS, 1977 : p.216]

In other words, the individual chapel is the basic unit for collective bargaining purposes with management, and there is little perceived advantage for negotiating on a broader based collective level with other chapels/unions. In this context, sectionalism is a structural element of industrial relations, and can be referred to more precisely as sectionalisation. To the extent that ACAS's findings were accurate in respect of the provincial press, the national press represents an even stronger case for the contention that organised labour in the newspaper industry has traditionally been highly sectionalised at the chapel level. Martin 1981 for instance, comments that:

"The limited success of attempts to co-ordinate tactics even at individual house level through the election of Imperial Composing FOCs, and the unpopularity of proposals for a system of Federated House Chapels, at least with the London national newspaper chapels, indicate that chapel separation...remains a considerable force."  
[MARTIN 1981 : p.114]

The historical validity of the above two quotes need not concern us for the time being, but rather their importance lay in the way in which they conflate two constituent elements of workgroup differentiation. As can be seen in ACAS 1977, workgroup divisions exist as a structural element of industrial relations in the newspaper industry (sectionalisation) of organised labour. In this sense, sectionalisation refers to the fact that the individual chapel/workgroup is the basic unit for collective bargaining purposes with management, and there is little perceived advantage for bargaining on a broader level with other chapels/unions. This does not mean however that the workers or workgroups themselves are necessarily sectional in attitude, which is implied by the above two quotes. Of course structural divisions may lead to sectionalism, but this is a matter of empirical investigation rather than an *a priori* assumption. In other words, theoretically, sectionalism has been used uncritically, through a failure to distinguish clearly between structural divisions, and perceptual sectionalism. This in turn has implied a misleadingly mechanistic relationship between two distinct constructs. In order to understand more precisely the concept of sectionalism, it is therefore necessary to go beyond studies of the newspaper industry, and explore more generally theories of worker differentiation.

### C/ Theories of Sectionalism

In order to develop a more rigorous theoretical approach towards sectionalism, using ideal type formulations, two competing perspectives can be distinguished in the literature on worker differentiation: (i) the 'static-conservative'; and (ii) the 'dynamic-embryonic' approach.

#### 1. The Static-Conservative Perspective

The *static-conservative* perspective essentially understands workgroup/union sectionalism as an inherently conservative phenomenon, inducing in the sectioned group a negative perception of other, differentiated groups of workers. Underpinning this conceptualisation of sectionalism, is an over-concentration on the world of the craft worker, characteristically a white, male, apprentice trained/socialised worker, who in contradistinction to the wider 'semi/unskilled' sector of the workforce, perceives himself and is perceived by others as an 'elite' part of the workforce (or labour aristocracy).

Implicitly using this type of conceptualisation, both pluralists and marxists [1] have commented extensively on the prevalence of sectionalism within the the labour force and between the trades unions, for the most part arguing that it is an inherently negative phenomenon inimical to the development of broader solidarity action by the

working class. This is not to argue that trade unionism in itself cannot develop and progress, in organisation and outlook, perhaps because of occupational restructuring and changing technology, but that the development of organised labour would remain statically locked into an organisational framework that by its very definition was sectional and economistic in orientation, inhibiting what some marxists see for example, as the development of a 'class consciousness'.

From a pluralist perspective, Flanders 1975 for example, saw changing technology as essentially exacerbating the conservatism of a relatively privileged craft section of the workforce, by inducing in it a heightened defensiveness in order to combat what the craft worker perceived to be a threat to his privileged position in the labour market.

"...technical change, by shifting the boundaries of traditional crafts and eroding their genuine skill content, strengthens rather than weakens the force of craft tradition."

[FLANDERS 1975 : p.286]

In other words, rather than the de facto erosion of craft skills, required at the point of production leading to a mechanical stripping of the worker's 'skill label', those sections of the workforce that have been formerly treated as being 'craft workers', react defensively to real changes in the labour process and attempt to retain (Flanders felt in the 1960s quite successfully) their sectional craft position and status. Eldridge 1968 noted that this competition over job rights cannot be directly conflated with sectionalism, as the claim for work is "grounded in certain moral considerations", and entails an acceptance by one craft group of other craft workgroups rights to their traditional jobs (p.109). However, Eldridge similarly to Flanders, also sees the problematic nature of this type of 'moral' framework, given the often radical changes in work organisation and production technology:

"The argument is that over time job rights based on claims of exclusive competence have become increasingly artificial. Skill monopoly on an objective assessment may be regarded as more notional than real, yet it is maintained through techniques developed by craft unions as interest groups: the maintenance of a closed-shop and a strict regulation of conditions of entry to the trade."

[ELDRIDGE 1968 : p.118, emphasis added]

Hence to a certain extent, this type of pluralism stems from a Weberian perspective, with groups of workers are competing in a (labour) market often against one another for scarce resources (for example a job).

Despite major differences between pluralists and marxists on the question of worker differentiation, there are clear similarities of thought between the two regarding sectionalism. As Hyman argues:

"Class bias is built into everyday thought and language...similar constraints encourage workers' self-conception in essentially sectional terms: the notion of the working class as a group with common interests' opposed to those of employers as a class is excluded from everyday language. Fragmented in their presentation, the interests of the majority can thus paradoxically be construed as minority interests, to be pursued defensively and apologetically."  
[HYMAN 1975 : p.147]

However, unlike the pluralist perspective, politically for marxism, this then raises the problem of how to overcome sectionalism, and develop a broader based class consciousness, if in fact, such a development is attainable. In the 1970s, mainstream marxism tended to follow the Leninist dictum that trade union organisation leads to sectional unionism, and not solidaristic class based activity. Marxists such as Hyman argued that sectionalism is structurally endemic in the organisation of trades unionism: "The principle obstacle to a coherent radicalisation of the objectives of industrial struggle...[is] the sectionalism inherent in trade union action" (1975, p.177). Thus only the development of broader political organisation(s) and action can overcome this basic conservatism within the ranks of organised labour. In the dialectical relationship between capital and labour, the former has overdetermined the historical development of the trades unions, in such a way that:

"Unions were moulded according to the contours of capitalist industry and accepted as legitimate the sectional interests which resulted; sectionalism blurred any awareness of the common problems of workers inherent in capitalist work relations - which necessitate a class response."  
[CLARKE 1977 : p.16]

In other words, not only are 'skilled' working class groups manifestly defensive in their status perceptions, but the working class as a whole are locked into an inherently sectional organisational framework. This is not to imply that that this stream of marxist thinking allows for no progression and development of trade unionism as such, but that in organisation and outlook the development of working class activity will remain statically locked into a framework that by its very definition is static and conservative, inhibiting what some marxists term as the development of a 'class based consciousness' amongst organised labour. In short, what is required for this latter development is a broader based revolutionary

political party capable of transcending the inbuilt conservatism of industrial organisation.

In the 1980s, one stream of marxism, generally denoted as 'Eurocommunism', has gone further in its critique of the nature of the working class and its organisations, arguing that not only is trade unionism an inherently sectional entity, but that the working class is no longer, in itself, the agency of revolutionary (or even progressive) change in capitalist society. Trade unionism, from this perspective, thus becomes just one of many 'pressure groups' within society, representing a series of diverse sectional worker interests.

Eric Hobsbawm 1981 has been perhaps the most influential theorists in respect of the 'Eurocommunist' school, which has come to adopt, in essence, a pluralist understanding of the 'working class': "we now see a growing division of workers into sections and groups, each pursuing its own economic interest irrespective of the rest" (p.14). Moreover, any form of politics (be it revolutionary or otherwise) based on the activity of organised labour is fatally flawed, as the working class at the point of production no longer have the coherence and strategic importance to fundamentally alter society.

## 2. The Dynamic-Embryonic Perspective

In contradistinction to the latter viewpoint, some orthodox marxist-leninists have held onto the belief that the working class are still the agency of change, and that the latter and its organisation is capable of revolutionary transformation. Foster & Woolfson 1986 formulated what can be termed a 'dynamic-embryonic' conceptualisation of workgroup trade unionism, in a study of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS) occupation in 1971. For them, the workers' primary organisation - the workgroup - contains within it the embryonic form of broader solidaristic class based consciousness. The central rationale behind this viewpoint is that the workgroup is the initial collectivist organisation that labour creates, thus representing the first movement away from the individualism that capitalist society inculcates in the consciousness of the worker. In criticising the Eurocommunist position in general, and Hyman in particular, Foster & Woolfson argue that empirically, the static-conservative perspective on workgroup sectionalism fails to account for three specific features of the shipbuilding industry: i. a history marked by explosions of broad based class activity; ii. the general strength of the individual craft based organisations have been matched by a wider work-force cohesiveness; and iii. a very high level of formal industrial militancy. And therefore theoretically criticises the static/conservative perspective over its lack of definition of where to draw a line between sectional and solidaristic/class based action:

"What is lacking...is an ability to identify where class activity starts. Whether it is limited to the protection of craft status or extends to much wider class aims, it must begin at the same point: a collective not individual, attempt to limit the market freedom of capital. At either level, the strength of the workgroup in day-to-day bargaining is central, and it is here that the character of shipbuilding technology assumes especial importance. Just because it was so conducive to the maintenance of workgroups based on skill, but at the same time continually changing, it posed with particular force the issue of who controlled production, and did so in ways that sustained a permanent challenge to the power of management."  
[FOSTER & WOOLFSON 1986 : p.141]

In other words, in this dynamic-embryonic perspective, the workgroup is central, as it is the primary collective organisation of the working class, thus breaking down the individualist ethos of capitalist society. Hence workgroup action (inherently sectionalised) constitutes an embryonic form of a greater class consciousness, rather than being a block to the latter.

More recently, Kelly 1988 has argued for more rigour in analysing sectionalism than the static-conservative approach tends to adopt. Kelly notes a conflation of three distinct aspects of working class activity in the use of sectionalism: *organisation*, *action* and *consciousness*; and goes on to argue that given the often ill-defined and pejorative use of the term sectionalism,

"...it would therefore be valuable to distinguish between three different forms of the phenomenon. *Competitive* sectionalism refers to actions by one group of workers that are taken at the expense of another group. *Beneficial* sectionalism refers to actions by a group of workers that promote the interests of wider sections of workers. Finally *benign* sectionalism refers to actions by a group of workers that have no effects on others."  
[KELLY 1988 : p.145-46]

Similarly to Foster & Woolfson, Kelly's arguments are underpinned by a dynamic-embryonic conceptualisation of sectionalism, as being the 'raw material' of working class interest and aspirations, out of which socialism must be constructed (p.146).

## C/ Critique of the Theories of Sectionalism

Foster & Woolfson offer a detailed socio-historical explanation for the dialectical realignment of sectionalism and solidarity in the shipbuilding industry, which clearly presents an empirical and theoretical challenge to the generalisations of the static-conservative approach to sectionalism. And Kelly points to another weakness in the latter perspective, which lay in the avoidance of intensive investigation of 'sectionalism'. In other words, there is a tendency on the part of many theorists of working class differentiation to only indirectly tackle the question of the underlying dynamics of sectionalism at the point of production. This becomes ahistorical, in the sense that little real attention is paid to the changing relationship between workers at the point of production but rather upon broader socio-political aspects such as voting intentions and patterns. In short, there has been a scarcity in analyses of the interrelationship between diverse groups of workers at the shop-floor level. Moreover, an over-concentration on the sociology of the craft worker has led to static conceptualisations of sectionalism, or to sweeping historical disillusionment with the apparent 'conservatism' of trades unionism in general; the central guilty party being: male, white, skilled, craft unionised workers (particularly noticeable in the methodology of Cockburn 1983). It's not that male, white, conservative craft workers are not 'sectional' in certain respects, but all groups of workers manifest some forms of 'sectionalism', including 'liberal' journalist and female clerical workers. Thus it is misleading to solely concentrate on the apparent negative attitudes and actions of craft workers/unions in a void, without analysing in conjunction their relationship to other groups of workers at the point of production. And more importantly, without exploring the way in which these sectional contours are actually restructured through the changing relationships between differentiated groups in the production process.

The above understanding of sectionalism has had serious implications, and has in part underpinned the Eurocommunist claim that the working class can no longer be seen as an homogeneous entity, but rather is increasingly heterogeneous - (increasingly more akin to a Weberian than Marxist view) manifested in times of conflict in 'sectionalism' as defined above. The present study attempts to challenge the above 'static-conservative' conceptualisations of sectionalism by examining and analysing the phenomenon at a historical moment of change; amongst a workforce that is experiencing a radical restructuring of its working environment, underpinned by changes in technology producing a dynamic realignment of inter-workgroup/union relations, in particular in the area of blue/white collar skill, gender, occupational and cultural differentiation. Essentially, this thesis will argue that sectionalism is neither

static, nor inherently 'conservative', but must be seen as a historically dynamic phenomenon, which creates its own limitations and possibilities regarding the development of broader class based solidarity.

However, the dynamic-embryonic approach can be criticised in respect of its tendency to rest on a flawed a priori dichotomy: that is that sectionalism should not be seen as a static phenomenon, unaffected (or even exacerbated) by capitalist development and changing technology, but that sectionalism contains a dynamic that can develop into a broader based class consciousness. Indeed, defining where sectional action ends, and class action begins implies that a clear cut division can be theoretically distinguished, which itself is misleading, and assumes a dynamic undercurrent which can/will lead to 'class consciousness'. This perspective has tended to have more of a political imperative than a sociological one, and whilst not wishing to create a false barrier between political and sociological analysis, it is important from an industrial sociological viewpoint to clearly distinguish sociological analysis from political ideals.

To elaborate upon this point, it can be seen that in many ways, both of the above two ideal type formulations on sectionalism have stemmed from the classical marxist ideas of a 'class in itself', and a 'class for itself'. The 'class in/for itself' dichotomy denotes the distinction between the idea that social classes objectively exist in the structure of capitalist society in antagonistic relationship to each other (centrally in the form of capital and labour), but are not necessarily aware of their position in relation to other classes (class in itself). And the subjective development of a 'class consciousness' whereby the working class for instance, begins to understand its position in society as being primarily determined by its antagonistic relationship to the capitalist class. Or as Ollman puts it:

"In dealing with the possibility of socialist revolution in the present...it is not enough to treat people as embodiments of social-economic functions...the people involved must still respond to these influences in ways that make what is possible - actual. In Marxist terminology, they must become class conscious."

[OLLMAN 1984 : p.8]

This dichotomy between objective class position and subjective consciousness of that position has been the problematic for marxist thought in the post-1945 period. And both the static-conservative perspective (or at least its Eurocommunist element) and the dynamic-embryonic thesis has largely arisen out of a tension in the theory of marxism, between a 'humanist' and 'structural' perspective, which moreover have been heavily influenced



by the needs of political expediency. The humanist tradition reflected in Marx's early work, particularly the Economic & Philosophic Manuscripts 1844, and a 'structural' perspective which argues that Marx's later work, especially Capital 1867 (V.1), can be seen as an epistemological break from Marx's early 'humanist' period, and represents a view of social class which stresses the reality of structural class locations irrespective of consciousness of those locations.

The structural position is represented most notably in the work of Althusser (1970, with Balibar) and the early Poulantzas (1973), who argue that consciousness is determined equally by political and ideological structures, as well as economic (ie class relations of production). All three societal structures interrelate in a dialectical process, thus the working class do not simply develop a class consciousness directly as a result of its 'economic' position - as 'labour' inherently antagonistic to 'capital'. Indeed, political and ideological structures can often blur working class perceptions of society. More importantly for the purpose of the current discussion on sectionalism, the structural account of class consciousness tended to minimise the relevance of individuals and collectives who constituted the class as being active agents in the formation of the class. Putting it crudely, the working class (or any other class) existed structurally, not because of the perceptions of its members vis-vis class location. As Poulantzas, argues:

"...while it is true that the agents themselves must be reproduced - 'trained' and 'subjected' - in order to occupy certain places, it is equally true that the distribution of agents does not depend on their choices or aspirations but on the very reproduction of these positions... These two aspects are features of the ensemble of reproduction, inside which the reproduction of social relations...is dominant. But in the ensemble of reproduction, including the reproduction of social relations, the reproduction of places constitutes the *principal aspect*."

[POULANTZAS 1982 : p.111, original emphasis]

The political implication of this conceptualisation was, that the working class was not capable of a self-development of 'class consciousness', but were rather passive recipients of historical realignments of societal structures. The implicit assumption here was that the working class had to be directed and led by a class conscious revolutionary vanguardist party, which itself would reflect favourable objective historical conjunctures of interrelated structures [1]. However, this was not the 'voluntarism' advocated by Lenin due to the political expediencies of the situation in Russia in the early 20th

Century, which emphasised the need for the working class to create a revolution, led by a conscious centralised party, but rather (particularly in respect of Althusser's somewhat Stalinist political leanings), a recipe for political inaction on the part of the working class, under the benign leadership of a centralised party. A priori, from this stand point, sectionalism within the ranks of organised labour can be seen to reflect primarily adverse historical conjunctures, outside the direct influence of differentiated groups of workers, rather than being a phenomenon that was capable of being transformed (or even restructured) by the working class itself through its own activity.

In contradistinction to this type of structural marxism, a humanist tradition re-emerged within marxism, initiated amongst others by Thompson 1980, who in attacking the authoritarianism and elitism that the structural school of marxism had historically led to, stressed the voluntary self-activity of the working class, in its own making:

"I do not see class as a 'structure', nor even as a 'category', but as something which in fact happens ...in human relationships. The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born - or enter involuntarily. Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms. If the experience appears as determined, class-consciousness does not."  
[THOMPSON 1980 : pp.8-9]

The humanist approach to class formation is not in an abstract sense, historically determined, but rather by its very definition, allows for an open-ended development of class consciousness; or more precisely, does not understand consciousness in the structural sense, but rather sees it as the total set of relationships between and within classes which is continuously being restructured and reformulated. A priori, this implies the distinct possibility that forms of sectionalism will coexist alongside manifestations of broader class consciousness within the perceptions of the working class. Following the logic of this approach it will be the aim of this thesis to show that although workgroup sectionalism is a profoundly dynamic phenomenon, offering the potential for a broader based unity amongst organised labour, capitalist restructuring leads to a *realignment of sectionalism*, rather than a progressive development towards an abstract idea of 'class consciousness'. More specifically, it will be argued that each of the three categories of worker studied in this thesis - journalist, clerical and craft - exhibit a complex set of *contradictory perceptions and attitudes*, within a framework of 'tensions' specific to each group; in part

reflecting the historical trajectory of organised labour in the newspaper/printing industry.

Moreover, both Eurocommunists and orthodox Marxist-Leninists tend to imply that radicalisation of the working class is determined historically, and thus the working class have either missed its chance for radical change (Eurocommunism), or that the historical factors have yet to manifest themselves, therefore working class radicalism is yet to come (orthodox Marxist-Leninist). But the chances for radicalism come and go, and spaces appear at historical moments, hence the importance of being sociologically rigid in analysing the chances that are created at particular moments, but to recognise the limitations and overall sectional framework that these situations will exist within. In short, sectionalism and class consciousness are not polar opposites (static/conservative), or organically related (dynamic/embryonic), but are locked into a dialectical relationship of tension, in which the terms themselves are but abstract conceptualisations in which to attempt to understand the experience of working class activity.

#### Reference (Chapter Three)

1. For a full critique of the structural marxist position on this question see Connell in Giddens/Held 1982.

Chapter Four

THREE GENERATIONS of NEWSPAPER TECHNOLOGY

|                              | <u>Page</u> |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| A/ Introduction              | 47          |
| B/ 'Old' Technology          | 47          |
| 1. Introduction              | 47          |
| 2. Editorial Workgroups      | 50          |
| 3. Clerical Workgroups       | 51          |
| 4. Composing Workgroups      | 52          |
| C/ 'Intermediate' Technology | 55          |
| D/ 'New' Technology          | 61          |
| E/ Summary                   | 68          |

A/ Introduction

Before we turn to the substantive part of the thesis, it is necessary to look specifically at how changing technology has affected workgroup/union job demarcation structures at the shop-floor level. It should be noted at the outset, however, that this chapter does not attempt a systematic or detailed description of newspaper technology through the ages for the following reasons: firstly, it is not directly relevant to the present thesis; secondly, it lay beyond the researcher's competence; and thirdly, experts in the field have written extensively on the subject [1]. But rather the purpose of this chapter will be simply to give the reader a basic understanding of the plant level division of labour within the newspaper production process, by outlining some of the main job tasks of the various workgroups within the hot-metal system of printing (see diagram 1), and examining briefly how the job content of each group has been affected by computerisation [2]. Primarily for heuristic purposes, the present chapter distinguishes three basic generations of technology, and the typical (though not sole) job demarcation pattern concomitant to each period:

1. the 'old' technology: hot-metal printing, which in its 'modern' form dates back to the 1890s and into the 1970s;
2. the 'intermediate' stage of technology: early phase photocomposition (generically termed 'cold-type') which began to be introduced in British provincial newspapers on a large scale from between the late 1960s and the mid 1980s;
3. the 'new' technology: fully computerised systems of printing. This 'state of the art' technology being gradually introduced in national and provincial newspapers from the mid 1980s.

B/ 'Old' Technology [3]

1. Introduction

Letterpress printing, the principle of a relief surface making an impression on paper (or other suitable material), is the oldest method of printing, dating back to 8th Century Japan. The first movable type is known to have been developed around the middle of the 11th Century in China, using hard baked clay. Four-hundred years later, the ability to mass produce printed material from movable type was set in motion by the European Johann Gutenberg, who is popularly accredited with the mantle of being 'father of the printing process'. Hot-metal movable

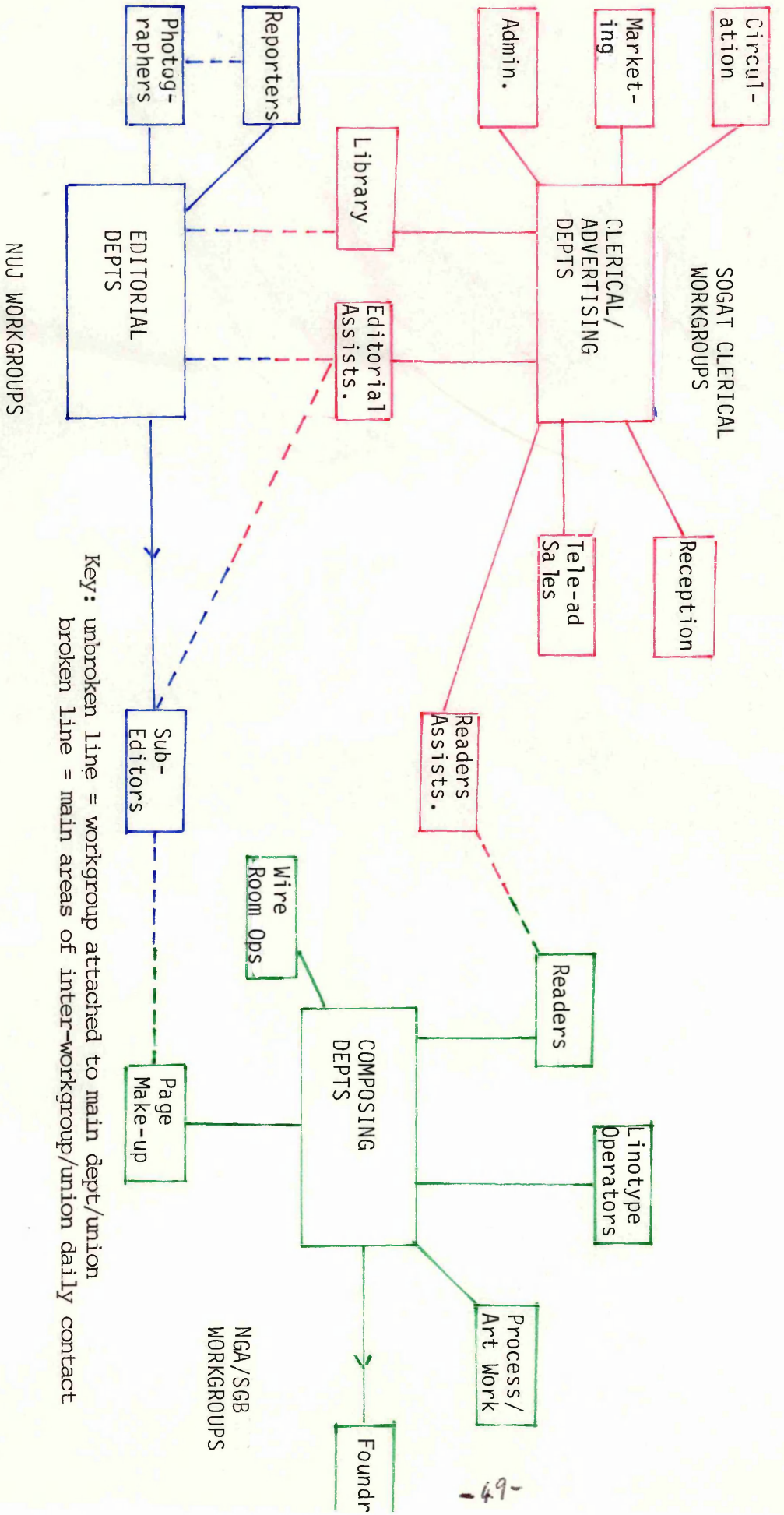
type soon replaced the earlier use of wood, and other peripheral changes in letterpress techniques took place, but basically the principle of relief printing by use of movable type remained unaltered (as a technology) between the 15th and 19th Centuries.

By the early 19th Century mechanisation was developing rapidly in Europe, and the first mechanical typesetting machines began to take shape in the 1840s, although it was not until the 1890s that the 'Linotype' and 'Intertype' machines (see glossary of terms in Appendix 2) were introduced on a large scale in the British printing industry. However, despite the many further advances in printing technology, making inroads into the general printing industry, particularly with the development of lithographic technology, little change occurred in the organisation of the production process in the British newspaper industry.

Thus between the 1890s and the late 1960s, with the advent of early forms of phototypesetting, there developed a rigid job allocation structure, in a relatively highly unionised industry, with the chapel forming the basic unit of workplace organisation. The origination side of newspaper production centred around a three tier division of labour. Journalists were responsible for the gathering, writing and processing of news stories and articles, a set of functions that can be termed as the 'creative' side of newspaper work. Clerical workers were employed as both administrative and advertising personnel, responsible for the collation of advertisements as well as general administrative duties. And craft workers, who were engaged upon a variety of tasks revolving around the mechanical setting and making-up of the printed page. Diagram 1 illustrates the job demarcation structure typical of most national and provincial newspapers in Britain up to the 1970s.

Diagram 1. Workgroup/ union demarcation lines - Hot-metal method of newspaper production [circa. 1890s - mid 1970s]

Flow of production from external sources of information to the printing press



Key: unbroken line = workgroup attached to main dept/union  
 broken line = main areas of inter-workgroup/union daily contact

NUJ WORKGROUPS

NGA/SGB WORKGROUPS

## 2. Editorial Workgroups

In the editorial department, journalists fall into four basic categories: photographers, reporters/specialists, feature writers/columnists, and sub-editors. However, more importantly, the organisation of journalists work can be seen as a dichotomy between news **gatherers** (the first three groups) and news **processors** (the sub-editors). Tunstall 1971 (p.15) lists the following as a typical breakdown of 'gatherers' and 'processors' in a national and a large provincial newspaper:

### Gatherers

foreign correspondents  
financial specialists  
other news specialists  
sports specialists  
general sports reporter  
photographers  
leader writers  
columnists, cartoonists  
feature writers, critics  
general reporters  
regional sports/news reporters

### Processors

news & specialist subs  
sports sub-editors  
features sub-editors

In fact, feature/leader/columnist writers are in practice very often not in the NUJ, being either IoJ members or non-union. These journalists tend to be highly placed in respect of status position within the editorial department, but this would not normally be reflected as an authority position within the editorial room hierarchy. The work content of these groups is to write analytical pieces and reflect the general editorial stance of the particular newspaper.

The photographer usually works with a reporter when it is deemed necessary to obtain a picture to accompany a specific story. The photographer would bring his/her day's work back to the editorial room, where it would be sent along to the composing department to be developed by the process workers. The term 'reporter' in fact encompasses two main types of journalist: general reporters (for example news and sports) and specialist reporters (for instance Parliamentary Lobby Correspondents and foreign correspondents). The reporter's job, as the term implies, is to go into the 'field' to either report on, or to obtain, material for the newspaper to publish in each edition. In hot-metal days, the reporter would return the story to the editorial room, to be later typed-up on a mechanical typewriter. The typed copy would then be passed along to the relevant sub-editor (there being different sub-editor 'desks' corresponding to the kind of story being processed - for example sports, news or features).



The job of the sub-editor is essentially to correct, edit and possibly restructure the reporter's and outside contributor's editorial material, carrying out copy instructions along the way (for instance concerning 'style of the house' typography). Tunstall 1971 lists what one senior processor describes as the characteristics of an ideal sub-editor: a capacity to check and check and check; an organised mind; a sense of time - a good sub must always watch the clock; an understanding of type; an ability to assess length; an ability to count headlines; an ability to write clearly in a well ordered way; an ability to write bright headlines; the knack of getting to the heart of a story; a clear understanding of when re-writing is necessary and when it's not; a continuing sense of excitement about change; and a capacity to cope with dull stories and get the best out of them (pp.31-32). Already one can see a distinction between the 'routine' work of the sub-editor, and the non-routine work of the reporter, a dichotomy that will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter 6.

The sub-edited material would then be sent through to the composing room to be typeset in hot-metal. It is worth noting that although it is the job task of the reporter which corresponds most closely to the layperson's perception of what 'journalists' do, it is the sub-editor who generally has the higher 'status' in the industry, in as much as most journalists begin their working lives as reporters, and work their way 'up' to the sub-editing desk. This higher status reflects a belief amongst journalists that the skill factor involved in sub-editing is greater than that necessary for reporting. As one NUJ chapel representative commented to the researcher:

"Sub-editing is actually a second tier of journalism, most sub-editors are reporters first, so you don't become a sub-editor until someone trusts you to handle their story...In point of fact, a sub-editor has to be able to review and edit the story, which is a more responsible job than writing the story in the first place."

[PAPER 1 interview : 17/6/86]

The above factor becomes critical when examining the attitudes of journalists to the question of greater inter-workgroup flexibility given changing technology, as will be seen in Chapter 6. In all then, the total amount of equipment any journalist would need at their disposal in hot-metal days, would be a pen, note-pad and mechanical typewriter.

### 3. Clerical Workgroups

The second category of workgroup - the clerical workers - are engaged in the administrative, advertising and auxiliary functions of the origination production

process. Many of these jobs have not been radically affected by changing technology, although few have remained completely unaffected. As can be seen in diagram 1, eight main workgroups have been distinguished in the clerical area [4]. The circulation and marketing workgroups have responsibility for promoting the newspaper and maintaining/improving its circulation figures and advertising revenue. The administrative work of the clerical groups could involve anything from accountancy to personnel work. Library workers are responsible for keeping newspaper cuttings and other forms of research material, to liaise with the reporter/sub-editor when the latter needs background information on a particular subject. Editorial assistants are basically engaged in handling paper copy, and distributing the copy from one department to another. Readers' assistants act as 'copy holders' to the apprenticed trained reader, and read out the copy as the latter corrects the proof. The reception (or front office) workers deal mostly with enquiries from the general public, and write down on paper the advertisements brought into the newspaper by hand, to be passed onto the composing room to be set in type. Finally, the tele-ad sales workgroup, have two basic functions: firstly, to take classified adverts over the telephone and transcribe them onto paper, also to be sent along to the composing room for setting; and secondly, to canvass by telephone regular advertisers in order to boost advertising sales.

Thus for the most part, clerical workers are only indirectly involved in the hot-metal production process. This of course does not mean that the skill requirement is marginal, although it tends to be non-newspaper specific, entailing as it does job tasks such as accountancy, personnel and reception work. However, some workgroups in the clerical area clearly have work skills directly concerned with newspaper production, in particular the tele-ad sales department. This latter group has become increasingly central to newspaper industrial relations with the developments in computerisation in the 1980s, a subject that will be looked at in detail later in this chapter and Chapter 7.

#### 4. Composing Workgroups

As it is the craft workgroups that have been most radically affected by computerisation of the printing process, it is necessary to examine the job content of the hot-metal craft worker in slightly more detail than for the journalist and clerical groups, so as to give the reader a clear understanding of just how far-reaching changing technology has been in respect of craft work.

The composing department encompasses six main work areas, each task being a clearly defined, demarcated work process\*.

The stages for preparing the actual printing matter for the press are as follows. Firstly, the linotype operator taps out individual lines of type (slugs) on a mechanical typesetting machine, which has a 90-key keyboard layout, rather different from the standard 'qwerty' boards used in typewriters and computer keyboards. The machines used in mechanical line composition are called 'Linotypes' or 'Intertypes'. (The machine operators however are generally known as 'lino-operators'). The principle of both machines are the same; the machines being in a single unit in which the setting and casting of the type are performed by one operator, who also hyphenates and justifies each line. The matrices are assembled in word formation by the depression of a keyboard, and the casting and delivery of the metal slug is done automatically. An average of 3-5 lines of type can be produced per minute using this method, with a reasonable operator making one mistake every 10-20 lines [5]. During the 1960s, this basic hot-metal method of typesetting was developed by the use of teletypesetting (TTS) techniques. Davies 1982 (p.4) notes four key aspects of TTS (initially developed in the 1930s):

- a) it enabled a unit value method of calculating characters, word, line width (inter alia important for evaluating piece work scales of payment);
- b) it enabled the use of coded paper to drive the typesetter, and had the ability to justify (thus in theory separating the initial operating function from the possible multiple production of type);
- c) TTS used off-line keyboards (similar impact to 'b' above);
- d) it introduced computers into an essentially hot-metal process.

In short, the central industrial relations feature of the TTS machine lay in its separation of the line-operator from his casting machine. Instead, the TTS operator produced a punched tape which could be fed into any number of line casting machines to produce the metal slugs automatically. Furthermore, the tape could be used simultaneously in several plants.

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\* In fact, as will be seen in Chapter 8, historically many of the craft workgroups defined in diagram 1 were organised in individual trade unions.

Also, the use of punched tape in one machine was quicker than with an orthodox operator tapping out the metal type directly [6]. However, despite its apparently radical implications for the labour process, TTS was a brief interlude (and a minor technological stepping stone) between hot-metal and computerised typesetting. And whilst TTS did cause some inter-union conflict between the then separate unions of compositors (who set the type) and the press telegraphists (who transmitted the type), this was a relatively short-lived problem [7].

Two other line casting machines are also used in hot-metal production, but cannot be referred to as composing machines in the strict sense of the term: 'Ludlow' and 'Nebitype', which are used for casting display lines (large type as used in newspaper headlines). The matrices are set by hand, and have to be distributed back into the matrix case by hand. This work is normally undertaken by a separate group of compositors - 'case-hands'. Both the lino-operators and case-hands would usually be paid at piece rate scales, as their work output was more easily measured than the other composing groups, who were normally paid a standard 'stab' rate [8].

After the type has been mechanically composed, it is worked upon by the hand compositor who makes the necessary corrections, adding headlines and illustrations (half-tones) where appropriate. The hand compositor then assembles the type into a required format, such as a page or as an advertisement to be placed in the page at a later stage. The hand compositor is occasionally responsible for setting lines of individual pieces of type from a 'type case' (although this is a rare task in newspaper work). And lastly, the compositor 'imposes' the printing matter - i.e. the made-up page - on a flat work bed (a 'stone') in a way that ensures the correct positioning of the page when it is finally printed in the machine room. As it is a 'stone' that most of the hand compositor's tasks are done in newspaper work, this workgroup is commonly known as 'stone-hands'.

The reader's (or corrector of the press) job is to check for errors in the proofs that are sent into the reading room at various stages of the process (for example 'galley proofs' when the type is first set, page proofs when the page is initially made-up, and machine revises as the page is being printed). The reader's precise job is to correct literals, spelling, and spot 'outs' (missing chunks of type often caused by misplaced copy). In many cases the reader verifies facts and corrects journalistic errors. Essentially, the reader has overall responsibility for making sure that the 'style of the house' is followed throughout the origination process. A major aspect of the reader's skill requirement is the knowledge of proofreading symbols (64 in all), which enables the efficient correction of printing errors in a language understood by all printers. Until 1966, the readers were

organised separately in a union called the Association of Correctors of the Press (ACP).

Two smaller workgroups involved in the composing department are the wire-room operators and the process workers. The wire-room operators are employed to receive agency news copy over a telex machine (or teletype printer). This copy is then handed to the linotype operators to be set in type. Wire-room operators are mostly drawn from the ranks of compositors. The process workgroup constitutes the artist/retouchers and camera operators, responsible for preparing and developing artwork and photographic images (half-tones) prior to insertion on the page. The process workers, until amalgamation with the NGA in 1982, were in a highly organised autonomous craft union - the Society of Lithographic Designers & Engravers (SLADE). SLADE itself had witnessed a major technological change in the early 1960s, with the introduction of a 'powderless etching' technique, which replaced the traditional way of producing process engraved illustration blocks for letterpress printing. The new method required less labour and less manual attention during engraving, although the time saved was offset by the greater amount of corrections that had to be made at the 'negative' stage of the process [9].

The final workgroup involved in the work of the composing room is the 'foundry', whose workers are called stereotypers and electrotypers. There are four phases in the sequence of the foundry process: i. forme preparation; ii. making the mould; iii. casting the plate; and iv. finishing the plate - by which the foundry moulds the page of type into a saddle shaped 'flong', which is essentially a method of producing a hardened image of the original metal type so as to allow for extended printing runs where metal type would otherwise wear out. Several 'flonges' are made for this purpose, depending on the length of the printing run. This foundry process then, completes the origination side of the production process, at which point the moulded page plate is sent down to the machine room to be printed.

#### C/ The 'Intermediate' Stage

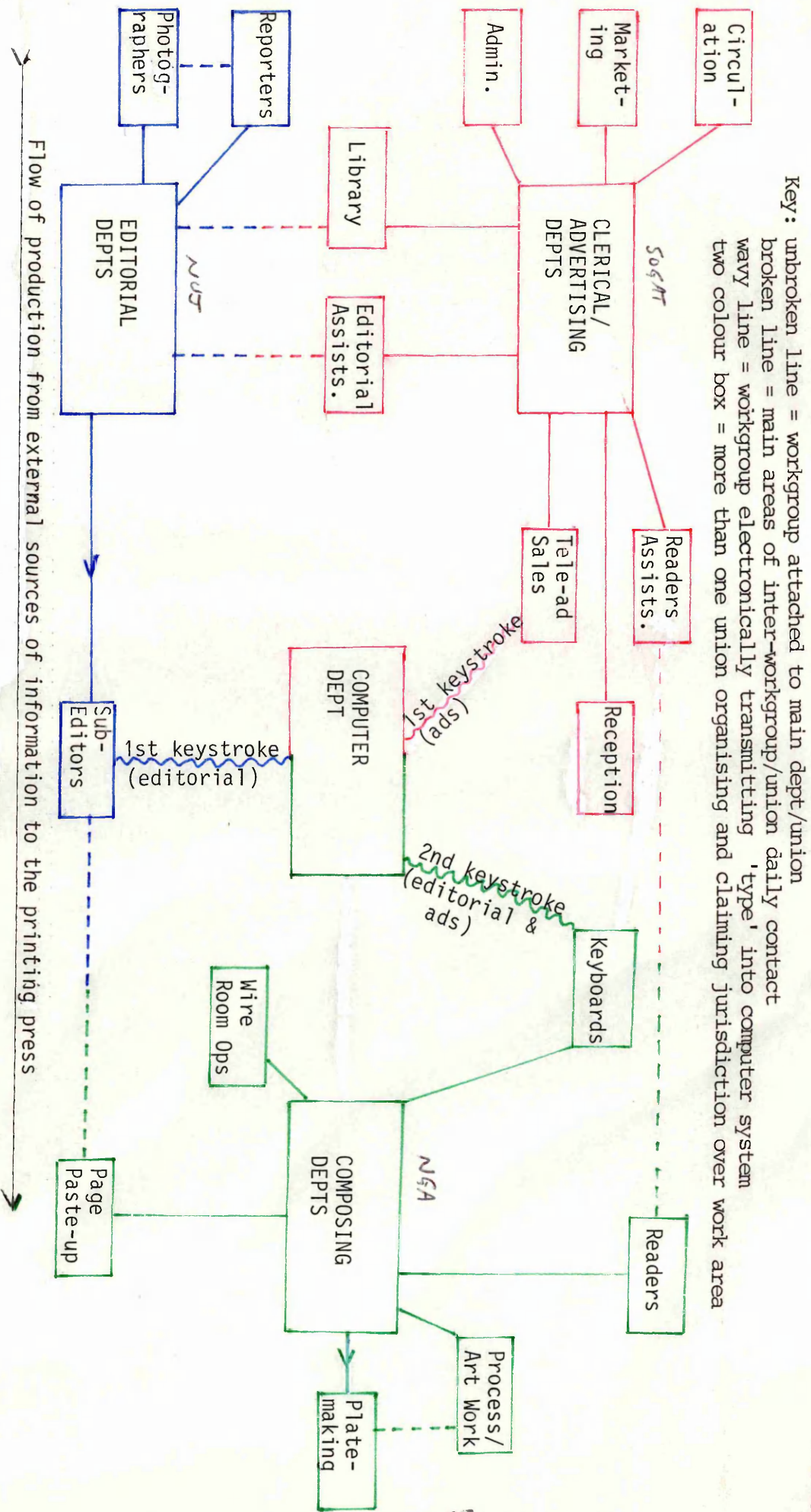
The traditional hot-metal method of newspaper production continued basically unchanged into the late 1960s/early 1970s. However, attempts to produce photaset matter (generically termed 'cold-type' composition) began as long ago as 1925, although the first machine to become a practical proposition was the Hagedo film-setter invented in Holland in 1948. This machine was the film equivalent of the Ludlow and Nebitype hot-metal machines, producing display size matter from hand-set plastic negative characters. From the 1950s onwards, technological advance accelerated with developments in computer technology, which became increasingly applicable to the 'information'

industry in general, laid the foundation for cold-type technology in the printing industry. In Britain, the general print industry started to undergo a radical restructuring in the 1960s, with the joint development of photocomposition and the web offset press, creating a growth of 'instant' print shops and 'in-house' printing, both of which made large scale inroads into work hitherto undertaken in commercial print houses [10].

In the newspaper sector of the printing industry, technological change was to take longer to come about, with an early phase of photocomposition making its mark in the late 1960s/early 1970s. There have in fact been three stages of photosetting technology within this early phase period [11]: firstly, camera based equipment modeled on hot-metal casting machines; secondly, light flash methods which removed most of the mechanical movements of previous techniques; and thirdly, cathode ray tube techniques, which reproduced type electronically with very rapid speed, producing 1,000-10,000 characters per second, compared to the 5 produced from line casting machines. In general, the basic principles of photo-composition are as follows. All photocomposing machines produce a piece of film or sensitised paper bearing the required image. The character images are exposed to a light source, which through an optical system of prisms and lenses, are ultimately positioned on the photographic film or paper. The system is very flexible, different type sizes being produced merely by an adjustment of lenses, and the matter produced is of very high quality. In the early phase of photocomposition, the system could be divided into two groups: the first being major systems, which can be compared to hot-metal type casting machines - i.e. the Linotype and Intertype - which produce text matter. The film composing machines first introduced were based on the principles of their hot-metal counterpart, for example with the 'Fotosetter' being a new technology version of the Intertype. More complex computer aided systems began to be developed which produced text at very high speeds, for instance the 'Photon', 'Linotron' and 'Digiset'. Some of these systems could produce large size characters (for headlines) but were mainly used as text setters. The second group in this period were minor systems, which had the specific function of producing display size matter.

Once the type had been set on the photocomposition machine, the film (or paper) had to be processed like any other photographic material. After this it had to be cut and assembled into a page form on an illuminated sloping glass-topped console. Finally, proofs (for correcting purposes) had to be taken as in hot-metal days, and this was generally performed on dyline copying units in which the film image reproduced on light sensitive paper.

Diagram 2. Workgroup/union demarcation lines - Early stage photocomposition method of newspaper production [circa. mid 1970s - mid 1980s]





A short history of the industrial relations implications of photocomposition technology will be given in chapter five, but for the purposes of the present chapter, the most important point to note is that whilst this initial introduction of photosetting gradually replaced hot-metal with electronic technology, *working patterns continued to follow the logic of hot-metal demarcation of jobs*, as can be seen in diagram 2. For the journalist workgroups, life remained much the same as before, despite the fact that in theory, photocomposition enabled the sub-editor to input editorial material directly into the computer system (direct input/single keystroking), thus by-passing to a certain extent the craft typesetters in the linotype room. Furthermore, by using a visual display unit/terminal (VDU/VDT) attached to the computer keyboard, this cathode ray tube could display 'chunks' of type at the press of a code button, enabling the journalist to correct errors in the typeset matter, thus eradicating much of the work traditionally done by craft readers. VDU's and computer keyboards then (or 'front-end' systems) offered the technological potential for a fairly far reaching restructuring of the origination production process, and a radical change in the job content of both journalists and craft workers. As one enthusiast wrote in the mid-1970s:

"The photocomposition machine has revolutionised the basic method of getting words into print. The sophisticated photocomposition machines of today can be driven by several methods: a keyboard, electronic impulses from computers, punched paper type, or magnetic tape. Essentially, what a photocomposition machine does is translate the input into a printed readout of the original copy. The copy reappears in column form just as it will finally appear in the newspaper. There are many sizes and types of photocomposition machines. Speeds range from 25 lines per minute for less sophisticated machines up to several thousand lines per minute for high priced, computer driven models. Photocomposition machines take the place of Linotype and headcasting machines and the operators needed to run them. Because of their high accuracy, they eliminate mechanically caused typesetting errors, thus contributing to the elimination of the proof reading process."

[WINSBURY 1976 : p.17, emphasis added]

For the most part however, this direct input technical ability was little utilised either in the provincial or national press [12]. Some provincial papers did install systems that had a direct input capability to replace hot-metal machinery, but very few papers actually used the photosetting equipment in this radical way. Thus sub-editors still carried out their work within the logic of hot-metal methods, but instead of employing a mechanical typewriter, some began to use computer keyboards. But the editorial material still continued to be typeset again



(double-keystroking) by the craft compositors. Furthermore, electronic full page make-up on screen was still not technically feasible at this point in time, thus the sub-editor and paste-up artist continued to work side by side whilst making up a page, much the same as in hot-metal days, only pieces of paper would be positioned onto a make-up sheet rather than manipulating metal type on a stone. The job content of the reporter and photographer was virtually unaffected by the early phases of photocomposition, it being another ten years or so before technological advance was to turn its attention to the former group of workers.

In the clerical areas, early phase photocomposition similarly allowed for the direct inputting of advertising matter, particularly by the tele-ad sales workgroup, but again this tended not to happen for various technical and industrial relations reasons [13]. For clerical workers in general, little changed in the nature of their job content during most of the 1970s.

For the craft worker, the 1970s did in fact herald a period of change in the character of work, but not in its logic, with the craft worker retaining a de facto double keystroking function in respect of advertising as well as editorial material. Thus linotype machines were replaced by electronic keyboards that produced tape which could be fed into line casting machines (or photosetting equipment), or more efficiently by direct impression keyboards. And whilst this electronic change produced marginally greater flexibility between various craft workgroups [14], normally it was the linotype operator who transferred onto the keyboarding function. In short, it was the craft unions that maintained jurisdiction over the electronic keyboard.

The specially prepared paper or film produced by photocomposition, was then given to a 'paste-up artist' to position the material into its required format; this latter process directly mirroring the work of the hand-compositor (stone-hand) and done by this same workgroup, only now handling paper rather than metal type. As for the other, smaller craft groups, again little changed in the logic of their work, although the materials and equipment being used began to change and reflect the growing use of photocomposition typesetting techniques. Indeed, a new stage in the production process was created by the need to transform the pasted-up page into a printing plate, suitable for either web offset or letterpress printing machines (as in hot-metal days a page of type went straight into the foundry to be moulded into a flong). Within a photocomposition system, the process or foundry workgroup would use a large camera to take a photographic image of the pasted-up page, which in negative form is ready to be made into a printing plate [15].

Overall, despite the potential of this 'intermediate' phase of photocomposition, its technical practicability remained ambiguous. Even as late as 1979, it was possible for the following to be written in a scientific journal:

"It has not yet proved possible to perform fully electronic composition for a British national newspaper largely because of the need for extreme sophistication, speed and reliability in the software. No one has yet generated software which will do all the work required on time."  
[NEW SCIENTIST 28.6.79 : p.1086]

In fact, the importance of the early phase of photocomposition lay not in what it achieved in a technical sense, but rather in its making initial inroads into the long standing traditions and working practices of hot-metal production methods. In particular, it laid the ground work for the eventual reshaping (although not complete erosion) of the clearly demarcated three tier job structure between journalists, clerical and craft workers [16], as will be seen in the final section of this chapter.

## D/ The 'New' Technology

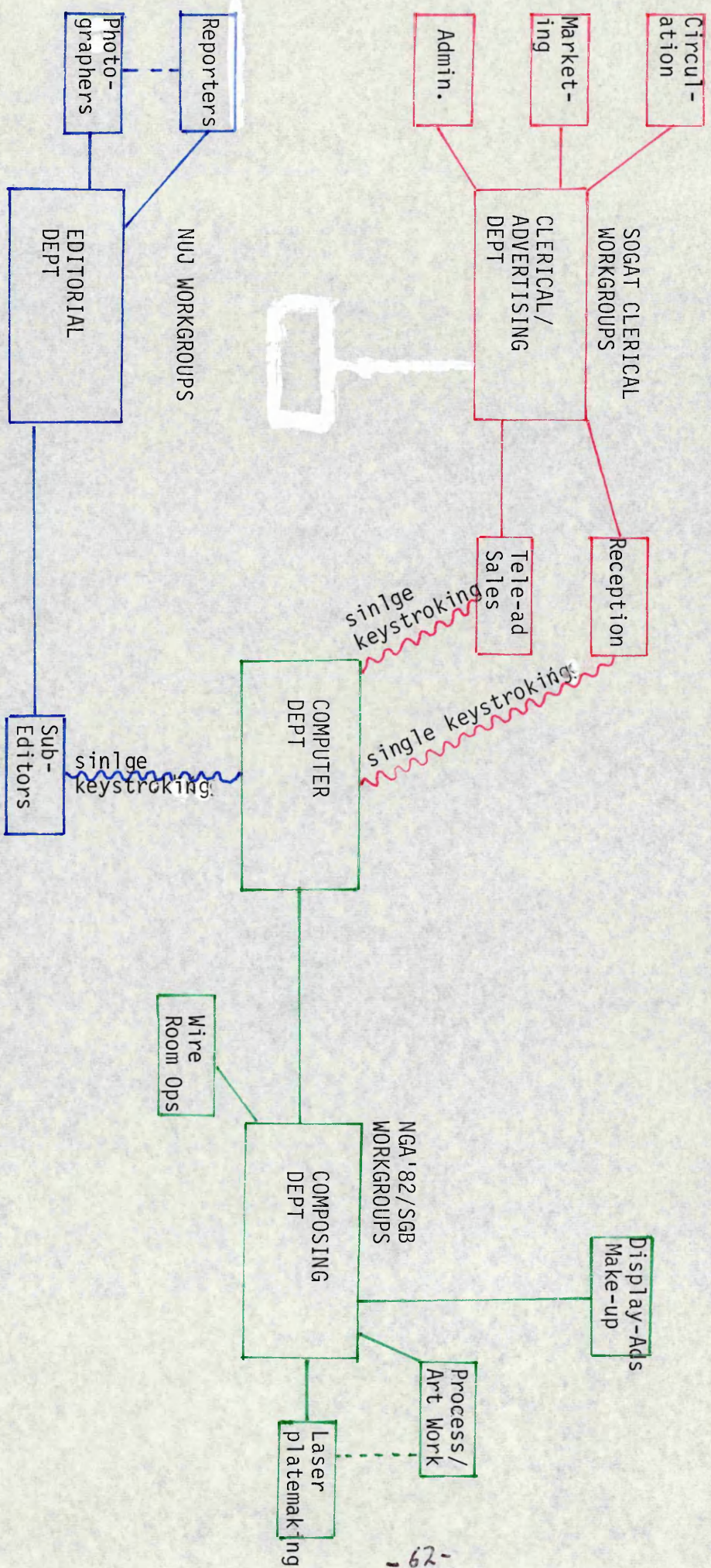
If the technically limited intermediate phase of photocomposition systems is located essentially in the 1970s, a second, much more far reaching phase of changing technology came on stream in Britain in the 1980s. This was the development of a highly sophisticated fourth generation laser based computerised system, specifically designed for the newspaper production process, which could scan copy, set type, compose pages and insert halftones and drawings all 'on screen' [17]. The radical changes underway in the newspaper industry can to some extent be equated with change in the production methods of the advanced industrial economies as a whole, generalised in the USA as 'flexible specialisation', and in Europe as 'neo-fordism' [18]. In short, the moving away of industrial techniques from 'Fordist' methods of mass production, large scale centralised workforce structures, towards a radically more flexible administration, marketing, production and distribution system; whereby economies of scale can be achieved on relatively small-scale batch production, multi-purpose machinery, through computerisation and micro-chip technology. Concomitant with these technological changes is the requirement for a more flexible workforce, not rigidly demarcated either by union structures or mass production line principles of minutely defined work tasks. As an example of the trends in printing technology world wide by the mid-1980s, an unpublished report by the Economist Intelligence Unit and the Printing Industries Research Association [19], compared the 'backward' British newspaper industry to the USA and West Germany, where single keystroking was almost universal, and major initiatives were underway to introduce electronic page make-up. Craft typesetters, it was argued, should be re-deployed as sub-editors, press room operatives and in advertising sales. Events, however, moved quickly in Britain, and a year later 'The Economist' excitedly summarised the potential that a developing neo-fordism was offering to national newspaper proprietors:

"For the first time since medieval typesetters created Britain's most secure closed shop in 'the London Print', there is now a chance of breaking the print labour duopoly of the NGA and SOGAT'82. This in turn offers the enticing prospect of a completely new national press... National newspapers can be printed locally in full colour, with inserts and supplements directed at specific areas of interest groups. Groups of journalists can transmit material and subcontract production and distribution

Diagram 3. Workgroup/union demarcation lines - Fully computerised direct input method of newspaper production

[circa. from the mid 1980s]

Key: unbroken line = workgroup attached to main dept/union  
 broken line = main areas of inter-workgroup/union daily contact  
 wavy line = workgroups electronically transmitting 'type' into computer system



to the fast growing network of local contract printers, escaping the high costs of unionised central London plant. British newspapers could begin facsimile products elsewhere in the English speaking world, following the footsteps of the 'Wall Street Journal', 'Financial Times' and 'Asahi Shimbun'. Britain's booming local and weekly press have shown the way."  
[The ECONOMIST 4.1.86 : p.16]

Nevertheless, despite this broad perspective on changing technology, the single most important aspect regarding its introduction, was the technique of direct input (DI), a term which is itself complex and needs further exploration.

To begin with, DI has not had such a straightforward impact on the production process as is sometimes inferred. Firstly, there are approximately a dozen individual job tasks that could possibly be affected by single keystroking, only about half of which, given present 'state of the art' technology, are suitable for immediate use of DI. This is how Paper 2 broke down its precise introduction:

Categories of job tasks in respect of DI in the editorial & advertising areas -

- a) suitable for immediate transfer to DI  
(editorial matter)
  - i. copy from newspaper's own staff;
  - ii. copy telephoned by newspaper's own staff to copytakers/recording machines;
  - iii. copy received from the wire service agencies;  
(advertising matter)
  - i. classified adverts taken over the phone;
  - ii. display advertisements from newspaper's own advertising staff;
  - iii. house/promotional adverts received from own staff.
  
- b) not suitable for immediate transfer to DI  
(editorial matter)
  - i. copy telephoned to copy takers/recording machines from non-staff journalists
  - ii. readers letters/contributed features in manuscript form;
  - iii. copy from contract printing customers in manuscript/typed form;  
(advertising matter)
  - i. classified adverts in manuscript/typewritten form from advertisers
  - ii. display adverts in camera ready form
  - iii. display adverts in manuscript/typewritten form from advertisers.



Thus, DI in practice, still leaves some scope for the typesetting of editorial and advertising matter to be done by the craft workgroups.

Secondly, one needs to differentiate between broadsheet newspapers (as used by the 'quality' press, e.g. the 'Financial Times') and tabloid papers (normally the size used by the 'popular' newspapers such as 'The Daily Mirror'), when assessing the efficacy of DI techniques of photocomposition:

"The needs of a quality and a popular are different in three main respects: the qualities handle a greater volume of text in the form of large numbers of classified and semi-display advertisements; in the populars the design of the page is very important and much effort is spent on making page layouts; and stories in the populars, though shorter, are more rewritten by sub-editors."

[RCP - Interim Report 1976 : p.50]

In short, DI is relatively less important to the popular tabloids than to the quality broadsheets [20]. However, many newspapers are currently at the stage of negotiating over the direct input of some of the above mentioned secondary job tasks, and in general, DI has had a major impact on many workgroups, particularly in the craft areas. Referring to diagram 3, one can see that a fully computerised DI system allows for a rapid movement away from the logic of traditionally demarcated work structures, towards a more flexible production process, incorporating far fewer individual workgroups than hitherto.

In the editorial area, the possibility for journalists to key matter directly into a central computer, to be stored and later recalled onto a VDU, is now a working reality. This has meant that the job content of the sub-editing workgroup increasingly involves a reading/correcting function [21], as well as typesetting, thus significantly eroding the work of the craft readers and keyboard operators. This is how two well known specialist reporters described the job content of the journalists under the newest forms of technology:

"Each journalist has his own private basket of material to which no one else has access but once a reporter electronically sends his copy to the newsdesk for evaluation and subbing, an elaborate hierarchy built into the computer software comes into play, restricting access to stories to various levels of editorial management. The sub-editor works by altering copy on the screen, ensuring that it will fit the space allocated on the page. The computer will also tell whether the proposed headline

will fit. For any headline that does not, the number of characters or even tenths of a character by which the headline 'busts' will be displayed. The sub's typesetting commands tell the photosetter which fount, size and column-width to use in the story."

[GOODHART & WINTOUR 1986 : p.55-56]

It is not only the work of the sub-editor that is radically altered by computerisation, this is how one reporter described his potential job given 'state of the art' technology:

"It will be easier to transmit copy, by sending it through 'tandys' [portable terminals] down a telephone line...so it comes up on a teleprinter, quickly, so you don't have to dictate everything to a copy taker...The whole bit of communicating your copy and getting your copy back - barring technical bugs...I think that's going to be better."  
[PAPER 1 interview : 23.6.86]

In other words, the reporter can now transmit his/her story from the 'field' directly into the computer back at the newspaper's origination department. As the JOURNALIST reported in its February 1986 edition (p.9), newspaper managements will want to introduce portable terminals on an increasing scale, now that they are no longer just moveable, but very light and portable (weighing just 5-10lbs). The latest machines have access to message facilities such as 'Telecom Gold', and can store up to 15 stories at once. "Some employers will see little point in giving reporters VDT terminals that cost twice as much, do three times more than is required, and take up far more space" (ibid. p.9).

Overall, computerisation has created the possibility for the virtual redundancy of paper, allowing each piece of editorial and advertising matter to be stored in the computer and called-up on a VDU for correcting, editing and final page make-up; thus by-passing the work not only of many of the craft groups, but also of many of the tasks done by clerical workers such as readers' and editorial assistants. However, even in a fully electronic origination process, 'editorial assistants' would still be needed for such tasks as receiving and directing agency copy to journalists, keying-in contributed copy, producing routine tabular work, processing sports results, administering the electronic library, and assisting journalists in working the page make-up screens [22]. Given that some of these tasks emanate from the demise of the composing workgroups, diagram 3 shows this new workgroup of 'editorial assistants' as being organised by both SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82.

Whilst most workgroups in the clerical areas of SOGAT'82 are using computerised technology, for example, the

administrative, marketing and circulation reps, this has had only a marginal impact on workgroup structures. The two clerical groups that have had their job content and inter-workgroup relationships radically affected by computerisation are the tele-ad sales and the receptionists. Both sets of workers are now able to directly input classified adverts into the computer system, thus by-passing again the work of the craft compositors. This to a certain extent has improved the scope, efficiency and job content of the respective clerical group's work, as was made clear during a group discussion:

"We work in a much cleaner environment now, much quieter...there used to be typewriters, now there's VDUs...You can keep up to date records, so we can give more information to our customers, especially our account customers, because we keep library adverts and at least then we know what they have had and we can recall them. We've got things at our fingertips...We can give them information straight away because we've got reference to it; whereas before we would have to say...'right, I'm going to have to let you know and call you back'..."

[PAPER 2 group discussion : 21.10.86]

It should be stressed however, that in practice, many provincial and national newspapers are by no means fully committed to applying the latest technology to its full extent. Indeed, Paper 2 had a written policy of only introducing tried and tested techniques, rather than being the innovator:

"Our initial basic philosophy was to install only proven and demonstrable hardware and software, *we should not be pioneers in the introduction of new but unproven systems.* We should keep close behind the forerunners in the field ready to take full advantage of changing circumstances within our industry."

[Paper 2 : internal company notes for IFRA seminar]

In particular at Paper 2, a relatively well advanced DI system was in use, but had retained the use of paper proofs so as to 'copy taste' (obtain a quick glance idea of the material being used) at regular stages of the editorial process [23]. The retention of paper has an important implication for several of the workgroups already mentioned, such as editorial assistants. As Winsbury 1976 argued a decade ago [24], the advances made in electronically produced information in the wider communications industry, has been an important impetus behind the newspaper technological revolution, but even in the 1980s the former has its limitations. For instance, whilst diagram 3 has eliminated the library workgroup (organised in SOGAT'82), because theoretically technology



can transfer its 'newspaper cuttings' function into a computerised data based system of information storage, in practice this may not happen. This is what a library worker (and chapel representative) at Paper 1 had to say on this point to the reseacher:

"We were a bit apprehensive because...they [management] are planning for DI purposes to have journalists having terminals on all their desks...Theoretically you could have each journalist accessing the data bank himself with no further need for any cutting service. But as we suspected, and as it seems currently to be working out in practice, a journalist uses cuttings for different purposes...So you either go to one or the other depending on your own experiences to where you're going to find it [information] quickest - because it's 'time critical' most the stuff. And it tends to be 50/50; about 50% of the time you find that the old cuttings service is still useful...and that also applies to the journalists themselves."  
[PAPER 2 interview : 18.6.86]

Moreover, it was suggested that the data bank usage could become a 'skill' in its own right, thus creating a new job area - 'a data bank query person'. While the above only refers to a small workgroup area - the library - it does reflect the problematic character of changing technology in general, in that the full technical possibilities of a given system is rarely used in a pure sense; the practical application of that technique being modified to suit the particular needs of a specific newspaper [25].

For the craft workgroups, the latter has an important implication, particularly concerning the page make-up function. Thus whilst by the mid 1980s, fully electronic page make-up on screen had become a realistic technique, most national and provincial newspaper preferred to maintain a separate page make-up task off-screen [26]. One technical reason for this reluctance to go 'fully electronic' is that it basically requires a one supplier system, and thus the future of the individual newspaper could be at the mercy of another single company [27]. This became a problem in fact for Eddie Shah in the run up to production of the 'Today' newspaper in March 1986, when, Shah found out that the company supplying his origination computer system - Haztec - were in severe financial difficulties [28].

In workgroup terms, this means that the ex hand-compositor largely retained the paste-up function, working alongside a sub-editor in making-up the page, following much the same logic as in hot-metal days.

By way of an actual example in the national press, the 'Financial Times' in 1986 published an internal document outlining its workgroup restructuring plans to be carried out between 1986-88. In composing room workgroup numbers, this meant the following:

table 4.2 : Financial Times composing room restructuring 1986-88 [29]

| <u>1986</u> | <u>No.</u> | <u>1988</u>      | <u>No.</u> |
|-------------|------------|------------------|------------|
| lino-ops    | 67         | compositors      | 56         |
| timehands   | 89         | process &        |            |
| readers &   |            | platemaking      | 18         |
| revisers    | 81         | fax transmission | 8          |
| process     | 16         | (wireroom)       |            |
| foundry     | 27         |                  |            |
| wireroom    | 8          |                  |            |
| monocasters | 2          |                  |            |
| pressmen    | 7          |                  |            |
| total       | 297        | total            | 82         |

(voluntary redundancies = 215)

Generally, even in the late 1980s, contrary to popular perceptions, the craft worker still has a noticeable (if numerically much reduced) presence in the origination production process, not only in the paste-up area but also in the process and platemaking functions. Hence it should be noted that the workgroup demarcation structure illustrated in diagram 3 reflects the theoretical possibilities of 'state of the art' newspaper technology, rather than what is the typical application of that technology.

#### E/ Summary

From the clearly defined job logic of hot-metal production to the contemporary high-tech world of computerisation, where there is an increasingly blurred demarcation line between the task of the journalist, clerical and craft worker, the above chapter will have hopefully provided the reader, albeit in a simplified fashion, a basic understanding of the magnitude of change currently being experienced in the working lives of the newspaper workforce.

The following chapter will examine the recent history of industrial relations and changing technology in the newspaper industry, so as to put the technological change outlined in the present chapter, into the problematic context of the real world of newspaper industrial relations.

## References (Chapter Four)

1. For technical studies concerning the printing industry see for instance Hills (ed) 1980 and Seybold 1976
2. The diagrams in this chapter are simplified, to allow for greater clarity of examination. Emphasis is given to explanations of the job content of certain workgroups which are most affected by computerisation. The present chapter makes no attempt to systematically examine every job task performed by workers in the origination side of newspaper production.
3. It should be noted from the outset that the historical evolution of the division of labour within the newspaper industry will be elaborated upon in chapters six, seven and eight of the thesis. It is therefore not the intention of the present chapter to imply an unproblematic characterisation of technological change, either in hot-metal days or through various stages of computerisation.
4. The clerical area in particular has been much simplified for the purpose of clarity.
5. Winsbury 1976, p.15
6. See for instance Hunter et al 1970, pp.63-65
7. Ibid p.66
8. It was amongst the ranks of the piece workers that the well publicised exceptionally high rates of pay were to be found in the national newspaper industry.
9. Hunter et al op.cit., p.70
10. For an examination of the impact of changing technology see Gennard & Dunn 1983 and Goss 1988.
11. For a full explanation, see Davies PhD 1982
12. See Chapter 5 of present thesis and Royal Commission on the Press 'Interim Report' 1976, p.47
13. Again, see Chapter 5 of present thesis.
14. Many provincial newspaper for example, underlined the importance of complete composing room flexibility when negotiating the change over from hot-metal to photocomposition systems. Paper 3 for instance, rotated work tasks throughout the composing room floor - between reading, keyboarding, paper paste-up and computer room work. This flexibility was generally regarded as a positive factor by the workers, who felt that it offset to some extent the lost 'skill' requirement of each individual task compared to hot-metal production.

15. This new platemaking function did cause some friction in its initial introduction, between the process and foundry workgroups who each claimed jurisdiction over this work. An inter-union demarcation dispute over this issue took place at Paper 3 for instance.
16. See Royal Commission on the Press op.cit.,p.47 para 6.
17. See for example Davies op.cit., p.6
18. For a succinct account of this global change in production see Murray 1985
19. An account of this EIU/FIRA Report can be found in the Financial Times 9.7.85
20. Pickering makes the same point in Henry 1978, p.43
21. See Winsbury 1976 p.28-29 on the complexities of technology on the 'reading' function.
22. Goodhart & Wintour 1986, p.179
23. See Winsbury op.cit.on the functionality of paper compared to an electronic screen.
24. Ibid, ch 4
25. See Pickering in Henry op.cit. p.44.
26. The Daily Telegraph for example decided to maintain a paste-up function in 1986 when it introduced an ATEX direct input system during the radical period of change in Fleet Street between 1986/87.
27. Financial Times 19.2.86.
28. Reported on '40 Minutes' BBC2, 3.4.86
29. Financial Times/St.Clements Press, July 1986 (internal document).

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
in the NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY: An Overview 1973-1988

|  | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| A/ Introduction  | 72          |
| B/ The 1970s: Technological Potential Unrealised                 | 78          |
| C/ The 1980s: Technological Potential<br>into Technological Fact | 88          |
| D/ Summary   | 103         |

Chapter Five: TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
in the NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY:  
An Overview 1973-88

A/ Introduction

Chapter four outlined the job demarcation pattern of three generations of newspaper technology, and chapters six-eight concentrate on the main body of analysis of the research, namely the interaction between changing technology and inter-workgroup relations. It seems appropriate therefore, to build links between these chapters by examining, on an industry wide level, some of the important changes that have taken place over the last two decades, vis-a-vis the print unions and technological change in the newspaper industry. It should be noted from the outset however, that no attempt will be made to present a systematic history, but rather an attempt will be made to analyse some of the main underlying trends that have emerged since the early 1970s, that are specifically relevant to the study.

The structure of this chapter is problematic, as to some extent it would be fruitful to focus on the recent history of the newspaper industry in a chronological fashion. But this approach would be flawed for two reasons. Firstly, it would tend to lead to an in-depth focus on the minutiae of major events, the latter being already covered both in terms of specific disputes (see Jacobs 1980, Dickinson 1984 and Melvern 1986), and on print/newspaper industrial relations in general (see Martin 1981 and Goodhart/Wintour 1986). And secondly, a chronological structure would probably lead to a descriptive, rather than analytic approach, it being more relevant to develop a qualitative understanding of change on an industry wide level so as to highlight some of the overall trends in industrial relations. Thus the following sections of this chapter, whilst being divided into two respective decades, concentrate on issues raised by the introduction of new technology, rather than a chronological history of the latter. However, for the purposes of clarity, table 5.1 presents an at-a-glance outline of major events since the early 1970s.

table 5.1 : major industrial relations landmarks 1973-87

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Event</u>   | <u>Outcome</u>   |
|-------------|--|--|
| 1973        | Nottingham Evening Post dispute                                | NEP de-unionises production areas  |
| 1974        | Royal Commission on the Press                                  | To investigate press's 'financial crisis'  |
| 1975        | Peterborough Standard (Sharman's) dispute                      | NGA retain double-keystroke function   |
|             | SOGAT & SGA merger   | Unique general/craft merger  |
| 1976        | Programme for Action: NFA & union leaders agree DI in Fleet St | Rejected by FS rank & file due to lack of consultation & fear of major redundancies                  |
| 1977        | Royal Commission publishes Report                              | Stresses financial crisis re staffing & chapel position new technology                               |
| 1978<br>Nov | Times/Sunday Times lock-out                                    | Climax to industrial unrest in national press in 1970s   |
| 1979        | Times/Sunday Times resume publication                          | Compromise: NGA agree job cuts/retain double-keystroke   |
| 1982        | SOGAT/NATSOFA = SOGAT'82<br>NGA/SLADE = NGA'82                 | Leads to just two production unions in print industry  |
|             | Project Breakthrough: NS plan for provincial DI                | Several years of talks with NGA'82 but ultimately is not implemented                                 |
| 1983        | Most nationals announce move out of Fleet St                   | Early attempt to break 'Fleet Street' IR culture   |
| 1983<br>-84 | Stockport Messenger dispute                                    | NGA'82 defeat and loss of union recognition.   |
|             | The Way Forward: NGA'82 response to NS's Project Breakthrough  | Rejected by NS. not favoured by SOGAT, as it allows NGA recognition in editorial & advertising areas |
| 1985        | Wolves. Express & Star/Kent Messenger disputes                 | NGA'82 loses recognition at papers, journalists sign DI deal   |
| 1986<br>Jan | News International (Wapping) dispute                           | Murdoch moves production to new plant at Wapping, locks-out NGA, SOGAT & AEUW                        |

|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| 1986        | Most nationals announce move to London docklands             | Beginning of the end of 'Fleet St', and major redundancies amongst print workers |
| 1987<br>Feb | 'Wapping' dispute called-off by unions                       | NGA, SOGAT & AUEW lose recognition.  |
| June        | United Newspapers last national group move from Fleet Street | Central London loses last labour intensive production ind. End of 'Fleet Street' |

It is of course, difficult to decide on a starting date for the analysis, any year chosen will be arbitrary to some extent. The story of conflict over the introduction of new technology in the newspaper industry dates at least as far back as 1814, when 'The Times' installed the first steam powered cylinder press in Fleet Street. The pressmen on the paper were only told of its existence after the steam press had printed its first edition in an adjacent building to the original 'Times' plant [1]. Bringing the topic into a more recent context, Cockburn 1983 has marked the mid-1960s as the technological turning point in the British printing industry, noting for example, the 'Reading Evening Post' being the first newspaper in Britain to be produced by photocomposition at that time [2]. In fact, for Cockburn, the 1959 national printing strike had already resulted in a significant loss of union 'power', paving the way, as far as the employers were concerned "to the technological revolution that was looming on the American horizon..." [3]. The 'revolution' however was to prove some way off for the British newspaper industry. Employers were still complaining in the mid-1960s about 'artificial' union imposed labour restrictions, a point taken up by the National Board for Prices & Incomes [4]. The real problem, according to the Board lay in the insufficient use of labour, which in turn was bound up with the problem of demarcation:

"...the technological developments of recent years have tended to blur the old distinctions between unions and to throw all categories of worker into a closer relationship."  
[NATIONAL BOARD for PRICES & INCOMES, 1965 : p.45]

However, whilst the mid-1960s may be a relevant starting point from a technological standpoint, it seems reasonable to argue that it was not until the early 1970s that the radical implications of changing technology began to make fundamental inroads into the perceptions of the majority of rank & file trade union members in the newspaper industry. There were three main reasons for this lag between worker perception and technological potential. Firstly, the implementation of photocomposition systems did not begin on a large scale in the newspaper industry until the early 1970s. Secondly, the technological change



that had taken place up to this point in the printing industry as a whole, had produced an uneven employment impact. (As trade union members exist within the printing & publishing industry, rather than just the newspaper sector, it is relevant to examine employment figures when discussing the impact that the latter has on worker perceptions of their position and strength within the industry). Hunter et al 1970 (p.91) produce the following figures for the 1960s:

table 5.2 : number employed & % change in main printing occupations in 1964 & 1967

| <u>occupation</u>    | <u>1964</u> | <u>1967</u> | <u>% change</u> |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| machine minders      |             |             |                 |
| - letterpress        | 22,980      | 22,680      | - 1.3           |
| - offset             | 4,780       | 5,200       | + 8.8           |
| - gravure            | 1,820       | 2,000       | + 9.9           |
| machine assistants   | 17,810      | 17,780      | - 0.2           |
| compositors          | 48,910      | 46,800      | - 4.3           |
| process engravers    | 4,610       | 2,810       | -39.1           |
| electro/stereotypers | 4,640       | 3,830       | -17.5           |
| skilled binders      | 25,240      | 29,060      | +15.1           |
| semi-skilled binders | 22,650      | 24,550      | + 8.4           |
| other manual workers | 97,470      | 93,560      | - 4.1           |
| all manual workers   | 250,910     | 248,270     | - 1.1           |

Thus manual workers in the print industry overall had experienced just over a 1% fall in employment between 1964-67. These industry wide figures tended to support evidence encountered in the case studies Hunter et al researched, which was summarised thus:

"...as with most new installations of printing machinery, the principal motive for the introduction of new typesetting equipment has been a growth in demand. Particularly where TTS equipment with quite clear labour saving effects has been installed, this growth in demand has prevented any serious problems of redundancy; the increased labour productivity has served to prevent an increase in the work force, rather than to reduce it. Filmsetting does not generally save any significant amount of labour, as the essentially manual keyboarding operation remains, though systems based on typewriter keyboards do appear to have a higher output per man than conventional keyboards."  
[HUNTER et al 1970 : pp.69-70]

Moreover, it was estimated by the Department of Employment & Productivity, that in London between 1967-72, the number of compositors (including paste-up artists) was actually going to increase from 17,900 to 18,340. Other traditional areas were however declining, such as stereotypers and

electrotypers, who during the same period were estimated to fall from 850-590 (p.46-47).

The third factor affecting workers' perceptions of the changing nature of the printing industry, was that changes in skill content due to technological change had remained relatively marginal. It was certainly the case that process and foundry workers had experienced a notable 'deskilling' impact during the 1960s, due to powderless etching and sensitised/automated platemaking respectively [5]. And a small proportion of compositors had seen TTS erode their 'hyphenation' and 'justification' skill requirement in setting type. However, origination workers generally had experienced only marginal change in their job content re new technology during the 1950s/60s.

Overall therefore, the early 1970s would appear a more relevant starting date for the purpose of the present study, with 1973 marking a particularly important year as it witnessed the first major dispute over the introduction of new technology in the provincial press.

Before turning to a detailed account of the recent history of newspaper industrial relations, it is useful to comment briefly on the distinctions between the national and provincial press. Generalising, trends in the national newspaper sector of the industry have followed more easily definable lines than in the provincial press, for three main reasons. Firstly, the national press is a homogenous entity, synonymous, up to 1986, with the label 'Fleet Street'. Hence events at any one paper (industrial relations or otherwise) are soon known throughout the national sector. Secondly, there is far greater internal competition between national newspapers in respect of circulation and advertising revenue than in the provincial press; the latter being more subject to external competition such as local radio and 'free' newspapers. Thus if one national paper cuts its costs, there is a strong impetus for the others to follow suit. And thirdly, the economic position of the national press has historically appeared to follow similar trends, particularly noticeable during periods of Fleet Street wide 'financial crisis'. In examining the introduction of changing technology in the industry over the last fifteen years or so, one needs therefore, to distinguish between the provincial and the national sectors, particularly as there developed a marked disparity between the two sectors in the use of photocomposition in the 1970s.

In many ways, the 1970s and 1980s can be seen as two distinct periods, with sub-periods of intensified activity within each decade: in the provincial press - 1973-75 and 1982-86; in the national press - 1974-76 and 1983-86. Of course, any construction of this kind is somewhat arbitrary, and no period presents a clear cut phase of technological interaction with newspaper industrial relations. Moreover, from a theoretical perspective, the

above periodisation is not meant to imply that either employers or trades unions entered a pre-determined pathway along the road to change in 1973 (or at any other time). Rather, the present chapter attempts to illustrate the complex and often ad-hoc manner in which new technology has entered the newspaper industry, and the various approaches/responses adopted by employers and unions.

## B/ The 1970s: Technological Potential Unrealised

Throughout the 1970s, in the provincial press, the change over from hot-metal to computer systems of newspaper production progressed steadily, but was interspersed with two major instances of conflict between unions and employers, which in part, had the effect of restricting the actual use of new methods by channelling its introduction along lines of existing demarcated job structures, rather than implementing more radical changes in the pattern of work (see chapter four).

July 1973 saw the first salvo over new technology, in an industrial dispute at a newspaper that was soon to gain notoriety in the eyes of many trade unionists, the 'Nottingham Evening Post' (NEP). Three-hundred printers and journalists took action over what was initially the attempted introduction of a plastic platemaking machine [6]. During this dispute, the striking chapels combined to produce their own paper - 'The Press', whilst emergency editions of the 'Post' were produced by the newspaper's owner, T.Bailey Forman, and other executives and managers [7]. This dispute ultimately led to the loss of recognition of production trades unions at the 'Post', despite a widespread campaign by the print unions and the local Labour council. Undoubtedly, T.Bailey Forman was the first British newspaper proprietor to demonstrate the potential shift in the 'balance of power' between unions and employers, which was underpinned by changing technology [8]. A few year later, the NUJ reported:

"Since then new technology has spread its wings through all departments: from tele-ads to the editorial floor, and from payroll accounting to commercial printing. The company [NEP], in 1973, were able to prove to representatives in newspapers throughout Europe that they had reached their editorial objective. The visitors saw the Post's reporters at the keyboards of visual display units, sending their copy direct to the computer."  
[NUJ 1980 : p.33]

However, at the same time, the dispute also demonstrated to other newspaper owners that the trade unions were prepared to put up strong resistance to non-negotiated attempts at change. In fact, the NEP was to be the only provincial paper (excluding free sheets) that published without recognising the printing production unions (and later the NUJ) throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s [9].

Two years after the dispute at the 'Post', a second major dispute erupted in the provincial press, at the 'Peterborough Standard', owned by Peter Sharman. The 'Sharman's' conflict involved an attempt by the management to introduce an optical character recognition (OCR) phototypesetting system into the origination process, in essence an early form of direct input [10]. Management's

rationale for attempting to introduce this technology was to turn a weekly newspaper into a five-day evening paper without increasing the forty strong NGA composing staff. The NGA at chapel and national level resisted this move, and despite editions of the paper being published with the assistance of most NATSOFA and NUJ members (although the NUJ executive instructed its members not to cross picket lines), a seven week lock-out resulted in a compromise settlement, with Sharman abandoning his plans for a new evening paper. The NGA's relative success in this dispute can be seen to be partly due to the high priority given it at national level (involving the use of mass picketing by the NGA for the first time), and to solidarity action shown by NGA workers at other newspapers in blacking advertisers that used Sharman's publications [11]. However, for its part, the management at Sharman's were able to induce the NGA into agreeing that NUJ members could type copy on OCR compatible typewriters, leaving the NGA to set non journalist copy such as readers' letters and advertisements. Several NGA jobs were lost as a result of this compromise through the mechanism of 'natural wastage' [12]. The symbolic importance of this early dispute was not lost on the wider newspaper industry:

"As many newspapers, including the Daily Mirror, the Daily Express and The Guardian, have announced plans to modernise their production methods, the Peterborough situation is seen as a microcosm of the whole British industry."

[The TIMES 1.7.75 : p.2]

The compromise reached in the Sharman's dispute did not halt the steady development of new technology in the provincial press, although it did appear to have some bearing on how that technology was actually utilised, particularly regarding the continuation of a double-keystroking function, carried out by the craft workgroups. For example, Journalist Charter 1976 reported the following developments in the mid-1970s. An experiment at Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers, in the use of OCR technology had led the way in the provincial press for a joint NUJ/NGA agreement over its use. But in the wake of the Sharman's dispute, the NGA blacked all further management attempts at introducing OCR. At the Coventry Evening Telegraph, a £300,000 investment plan for a new technology composing room was only implemented after the NGA had been given assurances that they would remain the keyboard operative workgroup. (Although it was envisaged and agreed in principle that DI would be the company's eventual negotiated aim). At the Halifax Evening Courier a two phase plan was put to the unions in March 1976, which in the origination section involved the loss of between 20-50 NGA jobs (including the entire reading room), through the introduction of photocomposition and VDUs. The NUJ agreed to the proposals within the fourteen days specified by management, with the proviso that there would be no compulsory redundancies. The Warrington Guardian

installed VDU equipment, but on the agreement that it would only be operated by NGA members. The Belfast Telegraph introduced a photocomposition system that was plagued with technical problems. At the Kettering Northants Evening Telegraph a Lino-Paul System V was installed which was adaptable for DI, but retained a double keystroke function. And at the Kentish Times, the NUJ, NGA, NATSOPA and SLADE held regular joint demarcation meetings when management began considering the introduction of a Linotron System V [13].

Gradually, the relatively slow pace of change began to accelerate in the provincial press sector by the mid-1970s. The Advisory, Conciliation & Arbitration Service (ACAS) reported in 1976 that 38% of provincial houses had introduced either web offset presses, or one or other of the new technical processes in the composing room over the previous few years. Furthermore, many more newspaper houses were in the process of changing their technology or had advance plans to do so (p.12)

Although the implementation of DI tended to be 'put on ice' during the latter half of the 1970s, the increase usage of photocomposition in the provincial press continued apace into the early 1980s, by which time it was difficult (outside London at least) to find a newspaper house using hot-metal production methods.

In the national press, a very different history unfolds in respect of the experience of new technology in the 1970s. The period 1974-76 is important as it marks the first and last attempt by national newspaper publishers and the trade union leaderships to introduce new technology on a planned, industry wide basis, based on a formula outlined in the 'Programme for Action', which was issued jointly by the Newspaper Publishers Association (NPA) and print industry trade unions in 1976. It is worth looking briefly at the background to this initiative, as it marked a watershed in Fleet Street industrial relations. By 1974, the third Royal Commission on the Press this Century had been set-up, primarily (like its predecessors in 1949 and 1962) to investigate the cause of an apparent crisis in the financial position of the British national press [14]. The objective reality behind the 'crisis' has been questioned [15], but whilst an examination of the latter is not necessary for the purpose of the present study, it is important to note that the general tone of the Commission's report made a significant impression on the print trades union leadership, particularly over the need to introduce technological change and reduce staffing levels at a much faster pace than had previously been the case. Thus against the background of the Royal Commission and a perceived economic crisis, the impetus for radical change in technology staffing levels got firmly underway in the mid-1970s. 'The Times' had already embarked on its first serious contemporary approach to new technology in 1973, formulating a plan that was to culminate in the

'Times' dispute at the end of the decade [16]. In July 1975, the 'Financial Times' was the first national paper to follow 'The Times' lead, by announcing plans to cut its staff by 33% (a total job loss of 769) [17]. In the same month the 'Daily Mirror' stated that it intended to convert all of its titles to photocomposition by early 1977. Having left the NPA in 1974, the 'Mirror' offered a wage increase over the 6% being offered by NPA members, in return for union acceptance that jobs lost through 'natural wastage' would not be automatically replaced. Whilst the NGA chapel membership accepted this offer, NATSOPA members rejected it [18]. In August 1975, the 'Observer' followed suit and demanded a 30% staff reduction, issuing notices to 200 of its 700 workforce. And then in September, 'The Daily Telegraph' stated it too wanted to drastically cut its staff of 1600 by between 560-720 [19]. Together with 'The Guardian', which had slightly less ambitious plans at the time, 'The Times', 'Financial Times', 'Daily Telegraph', 'Observer' and 'Daily Mirror' all wished to introduce DI systems using contemporary state of the art technology, casting a technical eye over to some of the most up-to-date American newspapers, such as the 'Baltimore Sun' [20].

For the leadership of the print craft union, the NGA, the above events in the mid-1970s began to induce a profound change of attitude towards new technology. With the Royal Commission reinforcing a belief that newspapers were in poor financial health, and with the experience of the 'Sharmans' dispute in the provincial press demonstrating the potential of DI in the craft areas, new perceptions began to take shape. By the summer of 1975, the NGA's leaders were coming round to the idea that radical change in the national newspaper industry was imminent, and that the latter would involve large-scale job loss. As the then General Secretary of the NGA - Joe Wade - argued:

"It would be a brave man who would attempt to assess the amount of overmanning in Fleet Street, but it would be a foolish one who denied its existence. It is now manifest that there is no way in which we can avoid grasping the nettle of overmanning."

[PRINT 28.8.75]

The above attitude towards Fleet Street industrial relations was not confined to the NGA, but became increasingly generalised throughout the printing trades union leaderships. The then new General Secretary of the NATSOPA 'semi-skilled' union Owen O'Brien wrote:

"Now is the time for a complete reassessment of the situation in our industry, and we can make a final attempt to put it on a rational basis to provide security for a large number of our members."

[NATSOPA JOURNAL 26.9.75, emphasis added]

O'Brien was in fact alluding to the 'Programme for Action', which had basically emanated from the TUC Printing Industries Committee (TUC-PIC). The TUC-PIC had decided that an industrial level approach to changing technology in the national press had become the appropriate strategy, and it was agreed by the print industry trade unions that a joint approach should be sought with the NPA. Thus in 1975, the General Secretaries of the then four main print unions - the NUJ, SOGAT, NATSOPA and the NGA - together with national level representatives of the EETPU and AEUW, joined together with the NPA to create the 'Joint Standing Committee for National Newspapers' (JSC) [21]. The JSC's function was to formulate and oversee technological change at the level of the entire national newspaper industry, it being felt by both sides at this juncture that it would be detrimental to employers and unions if the alternative to a national approach, an ad-hoc paper by paper negotiation of technological change and staffing reductions were to ensue.

Clearly then, the leadership of those unions involved in the newspaper industry had been convinced that radical change was round the corner, and that the unions should act accordingly, in order to try to exert as much influence as possible over the future of the newspaper industry. However, by way of stressing the point that there was a distinct lack of determinism involved in this historical process, feelings of ambiguity amongst the trades union national officials were obviously present. For example, a JSC policy document was published in November 1975, entitled 'National Newspapers: Manpower & Technology', outlining briefly the industry wide plan to introduce new technology, erode old demarcation lines, and reduce staffing levels [22]. The latter was to be accomplished without compulsory redundancies, but by a combination of: early retirement provisions, decasualisation, retraining-redeployment, lump sum payments on voluntary redundancy and the maintenance of incomes for those displaced. However, although six out of seven trade unions involved in organising Fleet Street workers were initial signatories to the above policy statement - the NGA, SLADE, SOGAT, NATSOPA, NUJ and EETPU - SLADE were later to pull out of the JSC in December 1975 [23]. And whilst the AEUW eventually entered the negotiations, both they and the NGA leadership harboured serious reservations [24]. One source of disagreement between the NPA and the unions revolved around defining the exact nature of Fleet Street's 'financial crisis', with the employers putting great emphasis on overstaffing. For the unions however, whilst agreeing that workforce reductions were necessary and could assist in the improvement of the economic situation of the national press, nevertheless felt that the main problems lay in rising newsprint costs, falling advertising revenue and declining circulations [25]. Overall however, the above difficulties were overcome, and in November 1976, the JSC



published its plan under the title 'Programme for Action'. In its Forward, the national union leaders left the rank & file membership in no doubt as to the position of the former:

"If...the provisional agreements are rejected, there will be no agreed overall framework through which the problems facing the industry can be dealt with and the consequences of this could...be extremely grave and have a serious affect on the continued viability of some titles in the industry, the maintenance of employment, and the continuation of a strong and effective trade union organisation. For these reasons, we commend the proposals...to members employed in national newspapers...The industry's future, the future of your union's organisation in national newspapers, and your own future depends on it." [PROGRAMME for ACTION, 1976 : p.4, original emphasis]

But despite this clear cut warning of future perils, the membership of all the production unions in Fleet Street rejected the proposals, put to them in early 1977, with only the journalists approving it. Table 5.3 below details the ballot result for the two most important newspaper unions at that time, the NGA and NATSOPA.

table 5.3 : ballot result over the 'Programme for Action'  
[26]

|         | <u>for</u> | <u>against</u> | majority<br><u>against</u> |
|---------|------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| NGA     | 889        | 3,778          | 2,889                      |
| NATSOPA | 4,296      | 4,598          | 302                        |

The reason behind the rank & file rejection of the 'Programme for Action' are complex. Certainly the fear of large scale redundancies played a part. But probably more importantly, the failure on the part of the union leaders to consult what had traditionally been very independent minded Fleet Street chapels caused much resentment amongst the membership. The latter was a particularly salient point in the case of NATSOPA, where personal animosity between leading shop-floor union activists and the national leadership had reached bitter proportions during the 1970s [27]. The narrow margin voting against the 'Programme' in NATSOPA nevertheless reflected a generally more favourable appraisal of the potential of new technology for uplifting the position of so-called semi-skilled workers in the newspaper industry, than was the case amongst the craft workers, who feared the 'deskilling' aspect of computerisation [28]. Overall, the somewhat autocratic stance adopted by the respective national union leaderships at this juncture, was not a

tactical error as such, as far as the latter were concerned. The chapel as a level of the union, it was felt, was in general too powerful and exercised an unhealthy autonomy vis-a-vis the national unions. Indeed, it was this latter belief that in part led to the union leaders approaching the employers in the first instance, to formulate a joint approach to the introduction of new technology in Fleet Street; thus by-passing the 'intransigent' shop-floor chapels. Hence to a large extent, it would have appeared to have been a self-defeating exercise for the union leaders to consult, in any meaningful way, the rank & file. In any event, the 'Programme for Action' proved a short lived first and last attempt to introduce changing technology into the national press on an industry wide basis.

The first half of the 1970s then, had produced an uncertain situation in the newspaper industry in respect of changing technology. In the provincial press, photocomposition systems of production had been steadily introduced, but the potential of DI had remained unutilised, in part because of the industrial relations problems encountered in the few newspaper houses that had attempted to introduce it [29].

In the national press, computerised technology had made little impact into the traditional hot-metal method of printing, with the only attempt at formulating an industry wide level plan for its introduction being rejected by the rank & file membership of the respective unions. Moreover, the actual technical abilities of computer systems, remained at this stage uncertain.

In many ways, events in the latter half of the 1970s consolidated rather than altered this complex situation. In the provincial press, the implementation of DI tended to be 'put on ice' during this period, although in Scotland, several regional newspapers were involved in a series of new technology/DI disputes in 1978 [30]. But again, the trades unions were generally able to prevent any large scale redundancies due to technological change, and DI was still to be a realised goal as far as managements were concerned.

In the national press, the introduction of new technology took a step backwards if anything, with the Mirror Group's attempt to convert the 'Sporting Life' to photocomposition overnight in May 1978, ending in technical failure with the paper having to revert back to hot-metal. The problematic nature of technology was thus highlighted, although as Duncan Cambell argued:

"The lesson to draw is not that all technology does not work, for much of it does. But over-eager computer printing salesmen, together with newspaper management who increasingly see themselves as managing just one more profitable product line

for multinational companies, have oversold their abilities to equip or manage national newspapers, and undersold traditional skills and sensibilities. The original 1970s 'crisis' of Fleet Street that started the fuss about the new technology revolution, largely over escalating newsprint prices, has been solved. It is ironic that it has left a further, unnecessary, crisis in its wake." [CAMBELL in New Statesman 28.6.79 : p.1088]

It lay beyond the scope of the present study to examine industrial relations in the national newspaper industry during the latter half of the 1970s [31], but it was certainly a period of heightened conflict, as much intra-union as union/employer [32]. Unofficial chapel action was rife, particularly in the case of NATSOPA and the NGA, which not only presented problems to the Fleet Street publishers, but equally was creating severe and overt strain between chapel and national levels of the unions. 'Wildcat' action at the 'Observer' in May 1978 brought this situation to a head in the NGA, with its then General Secretary Joe Wade, threatening the unprecedented step of replacing the chapel members (in the machine room) who were taking unofficial action, with an alternative labour force supplied by the London Region of the NGA. Clearly, for the NGA leadership, the action taken by the 'Observer' machine chapel represented something far more serious than the possible closure of a newspaper (although this was viewed as serious enough). Reflecting a general fear at the time amongst other union officialdoms, Wade stated:

"I don't think we have ever taken such an action as severe as this against one of our Fleet Street chapels. We saw this as a complete challenge to the authority of the executive and if we did not take these steps other people might be tempted to follow in the footsteps of the twenty-five [machine minders]."

[The GUARDIAN 20.5.78 : p.1, emphasis added]

This deteriorating industrial relations situation in the national press culminated in the best known newspaper dispute in the 1970s, the 'Times/Sunday Times' lock-out, which took place between November 1978 and November 1979. Like most other specific instances of conflict in the newspaper industry, 'The Times' dispute was extremely complex, involving issues of control over the production process between management and chapels, DI technology, a disputes procedure and a host of other secondary issues. Of course, all the above factors were interconnected, but it is not the place here to explore the minutiae of this dispute (see Jacobs 1980, Socialist Workers Party 1980, Martin 1981 and Routledge 1981). However, it can be reasonably argued that 'The Times' dispute was more a confirmation of the confused state of the industry at that stage, rather than a major watershed in newspaper industrial relations. As Hird & Wintour 1978 commented at

the time, a combination of five main factors led to "a highly complex bungle" rather than any long term "conspiratorial plan": the enrichment of the Thomson Organisation (owners of 'The Times') through North Sea oil; the Thomson family decision to give up financial responsibility for 'The Times'; many never ending industrial relations battles with the chapels; technical failure of new technology systems; and a curious off-hand attitude towards Times Newspapers Ltd (p.568).

This complex and confused industrial relations situation of the 1970s is reflected in the divergent assessments of the outcome of 'The Times' conflict. It is generally agreed the dispute brought to a conclusion one marked trend of the 1970s, that was a growing autonomy and strength of the Fleet Street chapel organisation vis-a-vis the respective national union organisations [33]. However, for Jenkins 1981, the unions as whole were clearly the victors, demonstrating once again their defensive ability to "obstruct change" by retaining a double-keystroke function (p.57). But for the Socialist Workers Party 1980 (p.2) and Routledge 1981 (p.9), one of the most notable aspects of the dispute was the unions' apparent weakness in conceding the principle of job reductions under future computerised printing systems. Thus whilst it may be legitimate to talk in terms of 'power battles' between capital and organised labour in the newspaper industry [34] at a certain level of abstraction, at the level of everyday understanding and perceptions, it seems fair to conclude that 'The Times' dispute symbolised and brought to a close a very uncertain and confused period in the history of changing technology and industrial relations in the newspaper industry.

One final point to demonstrate further the complexity of the situation in the national press at this stage, was the rather contradictory employment pattern of the late 1970s. Thus whilst the employment level fell overall, the use of craft workers actually increased slightly in some areas, as table 5.4 shows:

table 5.4 : employment in Fleet Street 1976-79 [35]

| <u>year</u> | <u>total</u> | <u>compositors</u> |
|-------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 1976-7      | 36,402       | 4,010              |
| 1977-8      | 36,361       | ---                |
| 1978-9      | 36,309       | 4,202              |

This increase in the composing workforce was, in part, the result of 'The Times' dispute, as its rival newspapers took on more staff to increase their pagination [36] to take advantage of Thomson's titles being off the street. But for the purpose of the present study, this factor is important in illustrating the complexities in worker perception of their situation in the national press.

Empirically, it was the craft worker who felt himself most at risk given the potential changes taking place in the newspaper industry in the 1970s. But together with the non-utilisation of DI in the provincial press, craft worker perceptions of radical change were offset to a certain extent, with the more far reaching impact on employment levels still to be experienced by the end of the 1970s.

It is worth mentioning at this juncture, that the present chapter has concentrated on events specific to the newspaper industry, and has tended therefore to emphasise the more 'reactive' strategies adopted by the print unions in the 1970s to changing technology. But the unions were also taking initiatives to solidify their respective positions in the industry as a whole, particularly in the form of organisational restructuring. In the 1970s, the most notable example of this was in the 1975 amalgamation of the Scottish Graphical Association (SGA), which represented craft workers north of the border, and SOGAT. This merger will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven, but two factors are worth noting. Firstly, the SOGAT/SGA merger presented an almost unique example of the possibilities of a 'general' and 'craft' union merging in the printing industry [37]. And secondly, it also put the Scottish craft workers in a relatively stronger position vis-a-vis their Southern counterparts in respect of job demarcation, as most workers in the newspaper industry in Scotland were now organised by a single production union - SOGAT [38].

A second important instance of union restructuring took place in 1979, when the National Union of Wallcoverings, Decorative & Allied Trades (NUWDAT) transferred its engagements into the NGA. This merger will be discussed more fully in chapter eight, but for now it is useful to note that the merger gave the NGA a white-collar base, through which it could pursue a strategy of broadening its recruitment area away from its traditional craft base [39]. The job demarcation implications of both mergers were to become increasingly salient in the 1980s.

## C/ The 1980s: Technological Potential Into Technological Fact

If the end result of events in the 1970s was one of uncertainty and contradiction, both in terms of the relationship between capital and labour, and in respect of technological know-how, the decade of the 1980s produced a more clearly defined, yet still problematic outcome.

The changes that have taken place in the newspaper industry in the 1980s have tended to be characterised in the form of two major disputes: firstly at the 'Stockport Messenger' in 1983/84, between the paper's proprietor Eddie Shah, and the craft union the NGA'82; and secondly, in the News International ('Wapping') dispute during 1986/87, between the multinational media magnate Rupert Murdoch, and the print unions SOGAT'82, NGA'82, NUJ together with the engineers union the then AEUW. It is unnecessary to examine in detail these disputes, both have been extensively documented (see Dickinson 1984 and Melvern 1986 respectively). But undoubtedly, both instances of conflict have had a profound effect on the attitudes and perceptions of the printing/newspaper unions, both at national and chapel level. Unlike most of the disputes discussed in the 1970s, the 'Messenger' and 'Wapping' disputes produced clear cut results, namely the loss of recognition and negotiation rights for the unions involved (except the NUJ) [40]. However, neither dispute was typical of the general trends in the provincial or national press, although it is generally accepted that the 'balance of class forces' have been radically shifted in favour of newspaper employers, largely as a result of the defeats suffered by the print unions at Stockport and Wapping [41]. But in order to understand some of the underlying trends in newspaper industrial relations in the 1980s, it is necessary to look beyond the latter two atypical instances of conflict, and towards more generalised events during this period.

The 1980s began on a relatively high note for the printing unions, with the first national print industry dispute since 1959 taking place in 1980, after the annual round of collective bargaining between the joint employers representatives - the British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF) and the NS [42] - and the NGA, had broken down. The NGA was able to sustain a national lock-out situation (lasting for up to twelve weeks in some commercial print/newspaper houses) which resulted in the virtual collapse of the BPIF/NS as a united bargaining organisation. Even so, this dispute emphasised the unpredictability of the 'balance of power' in the industry, rather than marking any long term continuation of apparent union strength, as will be seen later in this chapter. Another positive outcome was achieved by the print unions in the early 1980s, when in 1982, two large-scale amalgamations took place. SOGAT and NATSOFA re-amalgamated (after an abortive attempt in the mid-1960s)

to form SOGAT'82; and the NGA and SLADE merged to create the NGA'82. Both mergers brought to fruition long term restructuring plans by the respective unions, and were largely, although not entirely, a response to the growing problems and potential difficulties that changing technology was presenting to the trades unions throughout the printing industry. (Both mergers will be discussed more fully in Chapters 7 and 8).

In respect of changing technology specifically, two factors need exploration regarding their influence on the industrial relations climate in the 1980s. Firstly, external to the industry, has been the impact of the Conservative governments industrial relations legislation, in particular the 1980 and 1982 Employment Acts. The second and more important factor, internal to the industry, has been the growing impetus on behalf of the newspaper publishers, to put into effect the radical new technology potential of DI. In dealing briefly with the former issue first, it is noticeable that the use of the law has only been reverted to by employers in extreme and limited circumstances, and has not been generalised. Thus to date, there have been only three major instances of recourse to legislation by an employer against one or more print unions: Messenger Group Newspapers during the 'Stockport Messenger' dispute; Wolverhampton Express & Star in a dispute with the NGA'82 in 1985; and by News International during the 'Wapping' dispute in 1986 [43]. It would of course be naive to ignore the wider implications of legislation as applied to set-piece confrontation situations [44]. In particular, these laws have had a notable effect on the type of industrial action that the NGA'82 has been increasingly involved in since the 1970s, i.e. picketing, blacking work from 'unrecognised' sources, and putting pressure on third parties not to handle work emanating from an employer in dispute with the Union [45]. And there is little doubt from the perspective of worker perceptions, the industrial relations legislation of the 1980s have had a marked impact [46]. Nevertheless, it remains fair to argue, that from an empirical perspective, the use of the law has been the exception rather than the rule.

The second factor will be looked at in more detail, that is the increasing impetus to introduce DI on behalf of the newspaper employers. This has been reflected both in the provincial press since 1982, and in the national press, since 1983. The introduction of new technology had continued steadily throughout the 1970s in the provincial press, but given the far reaching potential of computerisation, it was generally felt by the NS that progress had not been fast enough. An NS circular written in 1984 in response to a NGA'82 initiative on DI, commented:

"It was pointed out to the NGA that although it says it is not opposed to new technology, little progress has been made in this direction since discussions commenced on OCR in 1972. Employers can no longer accept delay if they are to protect their businesses and the jobs they provide."

[NEWSPAPER SOCIETY Ref. PB47 14.5.84 : para 10]

Williams & Steward 1985 note that the 1982 'Information Technology Survey' for the printing and publishing industry showed that 87% of managements surveyed said that they would like to utilise more advanced new technology: 40% stating that labour problems restricted its use (mostly in larger firms); 33% stating that financial constraints inhibited technological progress (mostly in smaller firms); whilst 11% of employers said that they possessed new technology equipment which was unutilised (p.76). Hence in 1982, the NS initiated 'Project Breakthrough' (PB), which rather like the 'Programme for Action' of 1976, attempted to devise an industry wide plan for the introduction of DI technology, only this time in the provincial press, "to facilitate commercial competitiveness of provincial newspapers, the use of technology to its full, to cut costs, improve existing publications and introduce new publications" [47]. Not least in the minds of the employers in the provincial press was the growing competition from 'free sheet' newspapers [48], and local radio in the 1980s. The main thrust of the NS plan was to develop an industry wide framework, within which each individual paper could work out its specific requirements in respect primarily of the changeover to DI, "where technology disturbs the traditional allocation of duties and responsibilities between unions or existing departments" [49]. For the NS, the crux of the matter was "that where technically possible, duplicate operations shall be eliminated" [50], an obvious reference to the double keystroking function that the craft workgroups had retained into the early 1980s. Examples of the specific nature of changes envisaged by the NS were given in 'PB', reflecting the serious intent of the employers to finally break out of the keyboarding control exercised by the NGA'82 [51]:

- a) single keyboarding including remote terminals by editorial staff and contributors and by marketing staff, leaving specific kinds of copy to be keyboarded by a composing section;
- b) operation of full page make-up by editorial and marketing staff;
- c) direct input from advertisers;
- d) direct input without limit of wire service copy.

The NS's 'PB' initiated a long running series of discussions with the newspaper unions, especially the



NGA'82, which for its part responded in 1984 with a policy document entitled 'The Way Forward' (TWF). The latter quite clearly reflected a profound change of attitude undergone within the craft union during the 1980s to the question of DI, with an overt acceptance that the days of the labour intensive composing room were at an end. The experience of the 'Stockport Messenger' dispute, and the concomitant realisation of the difficulties of using industrial action (due partly to unfavourable legislation, together with more long term changes taking place in the industry as a whole), no doubt played a part in this new attitude towards the introduction of DI. Thus clause 2.6 of 'TWF' stated:

"The introduction of new technology (single keystroking) will combine what are at present entirely separate occupations, ie tele-ad staff and typesetters, editorial staff and typesetters, and will...completely obliterate traditional demarcation lines throughout the industry."  
[NGA'82 1984 : p.2]

The wording of this clause is instructive, as the NGA'82 National Executive saw not the elimination of the necessity for craft workers per se, but a general blurring of all job tasks. The logic of the NGA'82s 'follow the job' policy was to attempt to create an 'origination' area, within which the three main print unions - the NUJ, SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82, would have an equal share in the representation of 'origination' workers [52]. Furthermore, in order to solidify what had been relatively less well organised areas of production, such as the editorial and advertising workgroups, and also to maximise trade union representation, the NGA'82 proposal contained the clause that only trade union members would be allowed to operate the DI technology [53]. Non-union workers, outside contributors and Institute of Journalist (IoJ) members could continue to produce editorial or advertising matter for the newspaper, but their original material would have to be double-keystroked by a NUJ, SOGAT'82 or NGA'82 trade union member [54].

The NGA'82 proposals proved problematic on two fronts. Firstly, although the NS welcomed the fact that the NGA'82 accepted that it could no longer retain a monopoly on the keyboarding function, the newspaper employers were unable to accept the principle that only union members of one of the three 'bone-fide' TUC affiliated unions could use the DI technology [54]. The de facto closed shop that the NGA'82s proposals would create, plus the inefficient use of available technology both figured in the NS's opposition to clause twenty-eight of 'TWF'. Moreover, even the principle of a three way split in union membership for 'origination' workers did not appear practical to the NS, particularly as it failed to take into account IoJ members, most of whom were highly placed journalists at their respective newspapers [56].

The second area of dispute concerning 'TWF' was at the inter-union level. In short, neither the NUJ or SOGAT'82 felt it desirable to allow the NGA'82 into what the former regarded as their traditional areas of recognition and recruitment. On the whole, it was this inter-union area of contention that was to prove the most difficult to overcome. The first round of conflict in this respect took place between the NGA'82 and the NUJ (primarily because newspaper managements generally attempted to obtain an editorial DI deal before going onto reorganise the advertising area), and revolved around conflict at three newspapers. In its desire to reach agreement with at least one major provincial newspaper group, so as to demonstrate its willingness to negotiate and be flexible, the NGA'82 signed what it hope would be a trend setting DI agreement with Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers (PSN). Stage one of this agreement was actually signed in September 1981, but it was stage two, signed in October 1984 [57], that led to protests from the NUJ at national level, as the deal allowed for NGA'82 recognition and negotiating rights for the ex compositors who transferred into the editorial room (three at that time). A NUJ statement spelt out its objections:

"It is not in the interest of NUJ members or indeed trade unionism for the NGA to organise on the editorial floor...We do not accept that there is any case behind the argument that editorial staff are taking over the jobs of compositors and readers. It has always been the job of subs [sub-editors] to read and correct copy. The new technology takes out a function - it does not transfer it."  
[The GUARDIAN 27.10.84 : p.3, emphasis added]

The NUJ's preference, in the light of the PSN deal, was the establishment of a 'joint union chapel', leading eventually to possible merger of the two unions [58]. Interestingly, the NUJ chapel at PSN endorsed the agreement to allow NGA'82 transferees to retain their membership of the craft union, but the NUJ's National Executive overrode the former's 'acquiescence', arguing that only eighteen out of seventyseven chapel members had attended the meeting which voted in favour of the NGA'82/PSN deal [59]. The NUJ chapel responded to its national officials directive, and refused to cooperate with the new agreement. This lead to PSN management locking-out seventyfour NUJ chapel members in January 1985 [60] over their refusal to handle DI technology. This dispute lasted for nineteen weeks before a return to work was negotiated [61].

As the PSN dispute continued, a second NUJ/NGA'82 wrangle broke out at the Wolverhampton Express & Star (WES) in February 1985. This time the issue was reversed, after the NUJ chapel negotiated a DI agreement with WES management, after the latter had locked-ou the NGA'82 chapel after

failure to reach an advertising DI deal with the craft union [62]. The WES situation highlighted the problematic nature of introducing DI, even within a highly planned and negotiated framework. By chance, Williams & Steward 1985 had investigated the introduction of new technology at the newspaper shortly before the dispute broke out, and give a detailed account of events prior to February 1985 [63]. A three stage plan had in fact been agreed to by management and the unions for the phasing in of DI, the first stage being agreed to in October 1979. At this point, management negotiations were primarily with the NUJ, as the NGA were not particularly affected by stage one proposals, and had tacitly consented to the plan. Indeed, stage one was generally seen as little more than 'glorified typing', and thus posed few problems. The second stage of implementation (to come on stream by early 1980, but actually implemented in April 1983) was viewed positively by most journalists, given the favourable outcome of stage one, although this phase of 'story management' was to prove more problematic. Essentially, the journalist workgroups who were most keen on further developments of DI were those who were not pressurised by tight deadlines (eg the sports and feature writers). On the other hand, those journalist working on the 'news desk' found themselves under increasingly tight schedules, and were thus less enthusiastic about the changes in the editorial production process. In general however, WES management's plan to introduce DI progressed well, and allowed management to secure an open-ended commitment re stage three of the plan from the unions without the latter being pinned-down to a specific time table. Overall, the perceptions of the journalists involved to this new technology were summed-up thus:

"...the majority of journalists welcomed the technology. At the same time, these respondents felt that the computerised editorial system had only a minor impact on the quality of their working lives. The computer was seen as merely a sophisticated tool, ancillary to the central function of a journalist."

[WILLIAMS & STEWARD 1985: p.92, emphasis added]

Clearly then, NUJ members felt that they had something to gain from the introduction of new technology at the WES, but for the craft workers, initial acceptance of the early stages of the management/NUJ agreement came unstuck when the crunch came to introduce DI in the other key area, the advertising department.

The problems at PSN and WES were obviously complex, but eventually the folly of entering an internicine battle over DI was realised by the NUJ and NGA '82. In March 1985, the Annual Conference of the NUJ responded to an approach by the NGA '82s Executive, and passed a motion calling on the NUJ's leadership to start joint negotiations with the NGA '82 over DI. Although the complexity and ambiguity in

the attitude of the NUJ membership was reflected in the fact that the Conference defeated a motion calling for mutual respect of picket lines and the formation of 'Federated House Chapel' by fortythree to twentyone votes [64]. As a result of this reduction of tension, at least nationally, between the NGA'82 and the NUJ, the latter's Executive asked the NUJ chapel at the WES not to go ahead with operating the DI technology, until the national executives of both unions had time to work out a joint approach to the problem of demarcation [65]. At the same time, the NUJ agreed to NGA'82 recognition in the PSN editorial department, but not for collective bargaining purposes [66]. A compromise agreement was finally reached at PSN between the NGA'82, the NUJ and PSN management, and the NUJ chapel returned to work in April 1985 after nineteen weeks on strike [67]. However, in the same month, NUJ members at the WES narrowly decided by 42-39 votes to go against the NUJ Executive's instruction, and signed a deal with the WES for the direct inputting of editorial material [68], and continued, along with SOGAT'82 machine minders, to cross NGA'82 picket lines [69].

The third DI dispute between NGA'82 and NUJ members also began in April 1985, at the Kent Messenger Group (KMG) of newspapers. After being instructed by its National Executive, the NGA'82 chapel refused to handle new technology equipment from 'Press Computer Systems' (PCS), the same firm that had supplied the WES with its computerised production system [70]. This dispute resulted in the sacking of 144 NGA'82 chapel members, who to date have failed to gain reinstatement. Whilst the NUJ chapel showed some degree of sympathy for its NGA'82 colleagues, the continuing crossing of the latter's picket line, made more difficult the already problematic attempt at unity between the NUJ and NGA'82 at national level.

By the summer of 1985, the overall position of the three main print unions had reached a contradictory stage. The above mentioned inter-union wrangles at PSN, WES and KMG, had exacerbated tension at national level between the NUJ and NGA'82. But it was not all bad news for the craft union, as by July 1985 it had managed to reach interim agreements with four large NS members over the introduction of DI: Westminster Press, the Northcliffe Group, United Newspapers and Thomson Regional Newspapers [71]. Furthermore, talks had got underway between the NGA'82 and the NUJ over a joint approach to new technology. These talks had been given further impetus by a dispute at the 'Brighton Evening Argos' (BEA) in April 1985, in which a pay dispute involving the NUJ chapel had been given strong support by the NGA'82 chapel, who refused to cross NUJ picket lines, although members of SOGAT'82 continued to work [72]. Partly as a result of the solidarity action shown in this dispute, the NUJ and NGA'82 set up a federated house chapel to monitor developments at BEA re new technology. In fact, the simplistic sectionalist picture often painted of the print

unions, had by July 1985, been further offset by joint NUJ/NGA'82 approaches to new technology being agreed at six major provincial press houses in: Brighton (BEA), Ipswich, Sunderland (PSN), Blackpool, Birmingham and Basingstoke [73].

However, whilst the NUJ and the NGA'82 appeared to be making progress in working out their demarcation problems caused by DI, SOGAT'82 was becoming increasingly antagonistic to what it saw as encroachments by the craft union into its territory - the advertising and clerical departments. Relations between the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82 reached a low point in the summer of 1985, after a series of acrimonious articles had appeared in the unions' respective journals in July of that year [74], reflecting growing antagonisms between the two unions over events in the provincial press in the early months of 1985. In particular, SOGAT'82 had been angered by a NGA'82 agreement with Northern Counties Newspapers for DI in the advertising area. The latter deal had come about largely because the NGA'82, untypically, had jurisdiction over the twenty strong tele-ad sales workgroup [75]. But even at this stage, whilst tension remained high between SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82, there was a distinct underlying stance that argued for the necessity of the two unions (and the NUJ) combining to form one union. For instance, the General Secretary of the NGA'82, Tony Dubbins wrote:

"If forced, the NGA will stand and fight for its corner. But I feel sure the vast majority of NGA members would prefer closer working relations with SOGAT and the NUJ which will protect the job, terms, conditions and trade union organisation for all from whatever union. In the end that's the only road. From the other path only the employers will win. We still have a little time if others will recognise this."

[PRINT July 1985 : p.4]

And Danny Sergeant, the then President of SOGAT'82 also stressed the centrality of amalgamation, because of, not in spite of, inter-union problems raised by DI:

"I don't accept that there is a more important issue at the present time than amalgamation between us [SOGAT & NGA] - to strengthen our membership, to increase our ability to negotiate the agreements that we so desperately need with employers and to save the jobs of all our members."

[SOGAT SPECIAL Special Issue, July 1985 : p.6]

Despite the overriding imperative of union amalgamation, tension increased between SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82, and at the end of July 1985, SOGAT'82 announced that it would be holding talks with the EETPU over a joint approach to new technology in the newspaper industry, obviously posing a threat to the NGA'82, who feared being squeezed out of the

newspaper industry by just such a development. At the same time, SOGAT'82 stated that it would be willing to negotiate a move out of Fleet Street with News International, even if the NGA'82 could not reach an agreement with Rupert Murdoch [76].

Towards the end of 1985, the situation between the NGA'82 and the NUJ had began to resolve itself. In September, at the East Anglia Daily Times' in Ipswich, the NUJ chapel had insisted, against the advice of its National Executive, to press ahead with a joint approach with the NGA'82 chapel over editorial DI. The agreement reached allowed for the transfer of five craft workers into the editorial room, and the adoption of a joint NGA'82/NUJ union membership system [77]. Eventually, the NUJ nationally accepted the deal, under the auspices of a joint approach agreed upon with the NGA'82 to cover all provincial newspapers. For its part, the NGA'82 had run down the WES and KMG disputes, thus alleviating a long running sore between the two unions [78]. The new unity between the NUJ and NGA'82 was further demonstrated in October 1985 when management at the 'Liverpool Post & Echo' announced that the craft union must lose eighty-five jobs at the paper, due to direct inputting of editorial and advertising matter [79]. Both the NGA'82 and the NUJ pressed SOGAT'82 into forming a united front at Liverpool to tackle the problems raised by new technology [80]. But as events in the provincial press were beginning to settle down, the situation in Fleet Street was reaching a climax.

Since the demise of the 'Programme for Action', only slow progress had been made with the introduction of new technology in the national press. For example, by 1985, three Fleet Street papers were still totally hot-metal, and five were using a hybrid hot and cold system of production [81]. And in 1979, News International announced its plans to move 'The Sun' and News of the World' out of Fleet Street, and into a new site being developed in London's old docklands area. But only in 1983, did serious talks get underway with the trades unions over the move [82]. Overall, the apparent inability of the Fleet Street publishers to achieve their aims, was demonstrated in November 1983 when Fleet Street workers stopped work for one night in support of their union, the NGA'82, which had had its funds sequestered during the 'Stockport Messenger' dispute. However, the NFA's call for united action against this secondary/solidarity action by the Fleet Street printers initiated an immediate split in the former's ranks. The 'Mirror', 'Sun', 'Express/Star', 'Times' and 'Sporting Life' stuck to the lock-out called by the NFA, but the 'Mail', 'Guardian', 'Financial Times' and 'Daily Telegraph' all reached independent deals with the chapels concerned; thus nullifying any effective coordinated NFA action [83]. By 1983, most national newspaper publishers had (apparently independently) decided to move out of Fleet Street and into London's docklands, partly in an attempt to break out of the 'Fleet

Street culture' of 'high wages', and union restrictions on new technology and staffing levels [84]. Only the 'Financial Times' and the 'Daily Express/Star' planned to stay in Fleet Street at that stage.

The single most important factor behind this resurgence in the impetus for change in the national press was the discovery that 'Reuters', the international news agency, could be floated on the Stock Exchange, yielding millions of pounds to most of the national newspaper publishers, as each owned shares in 'Reuters', which by the early 1980s had become a very profitable company [85].

In May 1985, events started to accelerate. Robert Maxwell announced plans to move Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) out of Fleet Street by July 1987, and in August 1985 threatened the NGA'82 with closure of all MGN titles if no agreement was forthcoming [86]. Under much pressure, the NGA'82 had already agreed to the installation of new technology at 'The Daily Telegraph' and at the 'Daily Express' in Manchester, partly due to the EETPU reaching an agreement with Eddie Shah in July 1985, for a single union deal for all production workers, at the latter's new national paper 'Today' [87]. The Shah/EETPU deal thus breaking the organisational hold on national newspapers by the traditional printing unions. Both the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82 made concessions to Rupert Murdoch in August 1985, although not in unison, with SOGAT'82 offering Murdoch a single union deal a la the EETPU [88].

With the introduction of DI causing inter-union friction in the provincial press, Eddie Shah's apparent successful move into the national press sector, and the EETPU move into organising production workers in the national press, the planned launch of several new national papers for the following year added to the pressure that both NGA'82 and SOGAT'82 felt by late 1985. Within a few months, in January 1986, the most bitter newspaper dispute (probably in the private sector in the 1980s) erupted, when News International unilaterally moved its entire operation to a new printing plant in Tower Hamlets (Wapping), which very much influenced both the structure of the national press, and trade union perceptions of their position within it.

At this juncture, it appeared that the print unions worst fear that other newspaper publishers would follow the lead of News International in taking unilateral action, were not realised. Tony Dubbins for example, expressed the following points, during a television interview:

"...there are employers such as the 'Daily Telegraph' and a number of others who have been prepared to negotiate change with us [NGA'82], to allow us to phase in the introduction of new technology, and indeed on the basis of that I think to share the rewards with their workforce, to ensure that people do not lose their employment as a result

of technological change. There are others who appear to be using the new technology as a platform to go on from there, to seek the actual reduction or indeed elimination of any effective trade union presence in the industry."  
[PANORAMA, BBC1 : 20.1.86]

As far as the restructuring of the national press is concerned, two factors are most prominent: firstly, the marked increase in the number of new national titles being published; and secondly, the demise of 'Fleet Street' itself as a printing entity. Looking at the former factor briefly first, in March 1986, 'Today' was launched by Eddie Shah; in April 'The Racing Post' came out, published by a non-traditional publisher; in October 'The Independent' was launched by leading ex-journalists from the 'Daily Telegraph'; in December Robert Maxwell set-up the 'London Daily News' to rival United Newspapers 'Evening Standard'; and in April 1987, the left of centre trade union backed 'News on Sunday' was launched. Overall, however, the air of optimism of early 1986 in the ability of new papers to make a healthy profit on relatively limited circulation figures using state of the art technology proved naive. Only 'The Independent' proved viable, with 'Today' never getting out of the red, and was soon out of Shah hands first by the owner of 'The Observer' - Tiny Rowlands Lonhro, which in turn sold it soon after to News International.

Regarding the second point, whilst the move out of Fleet Street was planned by most national publishers in 1983, only News International envisaged converting to a fully computerised system of printing once the move to docklands was completed. All other newspapers believed they would be using only a non-direct input photocomposition system [89], thus raising some doubt as to the rationale behind the move out of Fleet Street, and supporting the contention that it was more to do with other costs incurred in production in Central London, than with the unions 'intransigence' over new technology. Perhaps there was also a vague feeling of wishing to leave the 'Fleet Street industrial relations climate' behind. As the 'Financial Times' commented:

"...talk of a golden age in Fleet Street sounds premature...Taken together...three factors - more stable profitability, new owners and perhaps a consequent improvement in managerial morale, plus the spur of increased competition - have at the very least created an opportunity for change. It remains to be seen whether an industry chronically attuned to the skills of muddling along is ready to take it."

[FINANCIAL TIMES 25.11.85]



Hence the News International dispute would certainly have appeared to have played a major part in both accelerating the move out of Fleet Street, and also more importantly enabling the employers to negotiate much more radical agreements with the unions in respect of new technology and staffing levels, averaging approximately a 33% reduction in employment at most national papers. For example, in January 1986, just after the News International dispute had begun, United Newspapers (owners of the 'Daily Express' and 'Star') announced plans to reduce its workforce by 33%, making 2,000 workers redundant [90]. (Although United Newspapers still envisaged remaining in Fleet Street at that time). In February, Associated Newspapers (owners of the 'Daily' and 'Sunday Mail') stated its intention of speeding up its already existant restructuring plans [91]. In the same month, 'The Guardian' also announced major staffing reductions in its 1,000 strong workforce [92]. In July, the 'Financial Times' issued a statement outlining its blueprint for the move out of Fleet Street, shedding 63% of its total workforce (72.4% of its composing staff) [93]. In August, 'The Observer' announced an unspecified job reduction plan, which appeared to herald the ending of all its part-time staffing requirements (numbering 650) [94]. And in December 1986, the 'Daily Telegraph' stated it wanted to make redundant 30% of its workforce [95]. All the national newspapers by the end of 1986 had, except for United Newspapers, formulated plans for the move out of Fleet Street, major workforce reductions, and the implementation of DI technology at new sights, mostly in London's East End docklands. In July 1987, United Newspapers finally put the last nail in the coffin of 'Fleet Street', when it announced that it too would be moving the 'Daily Express' and the 'Star' to a new plant in docklands, and shedding a further 2,000 jobs in the process [96].

However, it is important to note that the very worst fears at national level of the unions were not realised, and no other proprietor attempted to follow the path trodden by Rupert Murdoch, but rather continued negotiating with the unions instead, albeit with the balance of power considerably shifted towards the employers. Three possible reasons can be offered behind the rationale of the publishers attitude to industrial relations during and after Wapping. Firstly, there were few, if any, publishers who had the financial ability to invest in the type of operation that Murdoch had undertaken over the move out of Fleet Street. Secondly, the Wapping scenario had by no means a pre-determined outcome, the entire venture was extremely risky for the proprietor. And thirdly, perhaps most important of all, there remains a reasonably strong commitment to pluralist industrial relations structures and philosophy amongst national newspaper publishers. Thus the idea of attempting to completely de-unionise their industry would not find much favour, even if it seemed a practical proposition, which is doubtful. Indeed, even News

International found it expedient to cooperate with at least one union - the EETPU. Whatever one thinks of the EETPU's involvement in Wapping (see Melvern 1986), it does illustrate the overall difficulty of a total non-union philosophy towards industrial relations in the newspaper industry. Further evidence to support the contention that pluralism' is still a strong underlying principle in newspaper industrial relations, comes from Frank Barlow, the Chief Executive of the 'Financial Times', who spelt out his company's policy when announcing the 'Financial Times' restructuring programme in July 1986:

"I do not intend to do a Wapping. I intend to do the very opposite of a Wapping. I intend to do exactly what the print trade union leaders have always said is the proper way to achieve change. I intend to negotiate the introduction of frontending [DI] and the introduction of a modern web-offest printing plant using the existing four printing and maintenance unions and drawing the workforce from among our existing employees. I intend to do an anti-Wapping...Instead, we have decided to negotiate the future with our own workforce, and within the traditional print union structure. Our aim is to keep as many of our existing employees with us as is practical."  
[FINANCIAL TIMES & ST.CLEMENTS PRESS, 1986 : pp.3 & 4, emphasis added]

Accepting the above, it was clearly the case however, that the experience of Wapping had shifted the balance of power towards the employers, and it is worth stressing that all above mentioned radical changes met with only a minimum of opposition from the trades unions. Moreover, the most notable evidence of the long term trend in this shift of power, came in 1986, when the NFA announced unilaterally that industry wide collective bargaining would cease, thus further weakening the unions position in the hitherto ability to exert pressure on an industry wide basis during periods of industrial conflict [97]. The impact of Wapping on inter-union relations has been harder to assess, and in many ways is paradoxical. Despite most members of the NUJ voting to work throughout the dispute, relations between the NUJ and the NGA'82 have continued to improve since the low point of early 1985. This is reflected in the provincial press by the continuation of a pre Wapping agreement to negotiate on a joint basis any introduction of DI technology [98]. Indeed, the latter initiative has been viewed with alarm by four of the largest provincial newspaper chains - Thomson Regional Newspapers, United Newspapers, Northcliffe Newspapers and Reed International (who between them employ approximately 50% of all local newspaper employees), all of whom have to date, refused to enter into joint NUJ/NGA'82 discussions over DI [99]. In fact in December 1987, the 'South Wales Argus' (published by United Newspapers) entered into a dispute with the NGA'82 and NUJ over DI, in an attempt to break the joint

union accord [100]. The relative efficacy of this joint approach to DI was outlined in a survey conducted by the NUJ in the summer of 1986. The latter found that in 15 newspapers where DI had been introduced in the editorial area with joint NUJ/NGA'82 agreement, only 100 jobs had been lost. Whilst in just two newspapers - the WES and the 'Liverpool Post & Echo' - where a joint union agreement was not secured, approximately 200 jobs had been lost (all in craft areas) [101].

This further demonstrates that the trades unions are still of major relevance in the newspaper industry as a whole, and suggests the potential increase in strength if the unions formulate a united front approach to new technology, and indeed to collective bargaining in general. However, the possibility of amalgamation between the NUJ and NGA'82 remained by mid 1988 some way off, and when spoken about officially by the NUJ tended to be mentioned in the framework of a broad ranging merger of all media unions. Thus Lionel Morrison, outgoing President of the NUJ, told the Union's ADM in April 1988 that there is an alternative to reactive tactics employed by the NUJ in recent years towards the attack from employers in various sectors of journalist employment:

"But that desperately needs a new input of political energy and skill to move forward, and start the process of meaningful inter-union relations leading to a federation of all media, print and broadcasting unions, namely NGA, SOGAT, ACTT, BETA, Equity and the Writers' Guild. That is the only answer to our survival in the future... "  
[JOURNALIST April 1988 : p.2]

A 'united front' appeared to have eluded the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82 at national and chapel level until very recently. Whilst the News International dispute brought the two unions together in the short term, even during the course of the dispute, relations became strained over conflict in the provincial press re the introduction of DI in the advertising area, most notably at the 'Birmingham Post & Mail' and the 'Liverpool Daily Post & Echo'. For its part, the NS, in a confidential circular at the beginning of 1985, made clear its preference as to which of the two unions should gain recognition in the clerical sections of local newspapers. The NGA'82s 'TWF' proposal for a 50/50 split in membership for clerical and advertising staff, was not acceptable as it meant a de facto closed shop in the latter areas. Moreover, where the NGA'82 had made inroads into this non-craft department, wages and conditions had tended to be noticeably better than that secured by SOGAT'82:

"Where substantive agreements have been negotiated these invariably produce an increase in terms and conditions over those provided by the national clerical agreement and the minimum grade rate for NGA production workers is often the target. It is interesting to note however that the NGA has not always been able to retain its membership, particularly where it has only a recognition."  
[NEWSPAPER SOCIETY, 1985]

Thus for the NS, it was clearly preferable to have SOGAT'82, if any union, organising clerical workers. Although in fairness to the NS, this was not just for economic reasons, or of the fear of greater trade union strength resulting from membership of the NGA'82. The above mentioned circular also made clear the industrial relations problems that the NGA'82s unilateral attempt to recruit in 'traditional' NATSOFA/SOGAT'82 areas could potentially cause.

Throughout 1987, tensions remained over this issue at newspapers in Reading, Liverpool, Sunderland and Preston [102]. Attempts to settle the demarcation problems caused by DI of advertising matter met with little success. The NGA'82 s 'TWF' remained unacceptable to SOGAT'82 [103], and a similar deal put forward under the auspices of the TUC in May 1987 was again rejected by SOGAT'82 [104]. Nevertheless, amalgamation talks between the two unions, opened up in March 1986 in the context of the Wapping dispute, continue albeit in a problematic context. In June 1987, a meeting of SOGAT'82 branch secretaries was told that recent merger discussions with the NGA'82 had centred around difficulties over financial matters, and also over the office/branch structures of the two unions [105].

However, by mid 1988, there appears to be growing optimism again about the possibility of a successful merger, with SOGAT'82 announcing in an 'Interim and Progress Report' published in April 1988, that agreement had been reached with the NGA'82 over the national structure of the new union, the senior officers, and election of the national executive and delegate conference. It is perhaps reflective of the still problematic relationship between workgroups at the chapel level that the Report also stated that whilst "it is hoped...that the amalgamation of chapels will progress in a positive manner", there would be no compulsory merger, but rather this would be left to the chapels themselves to decide on a voluntary basis [106].

## D/ Summary

In examining newspaper industrial relations since the early 1970s, there has undoubtedly been a sea-change, in terms of both employer/union, and inter-union relations. However, qualitatively assessing this change is highly problematic, particularly in respect of shop-floor perceptions. It has been suggested in this chapter that the high-profile industrial disputes since 1973 over the introduction of new technology, have been atypical of general trends, although it would be naive to conclude that the various set-piece confrontations have had no impact or influence on newspaper industrial relations. Most importantly for the purposes of the present study, shop-floor chapel perceptions have certainly been affected by disputes such as at 'Stockport' and 'Wapping'. At the national level, industrial action by the trades unions has proved of limited efficacy in combating what many see as the negative aspects of changing technology, such as job losses and a weakening of the trade union presence in newspaper houses. The NGA achieved some success in new technology disputes at 'Sharmans' in 1975, and during 'The Times' lock-out in 1978-79. But conflict in the 1980s has tended to highlight the weakness and divisions between (and within) print industry unions. Generalising, one can argue that the more radical an impact changing technology has, the less efficacious is industrial action. In other words, what is needed from the unions' point of view is a long term strategical structural change, rather than falling back on short term reactive tactics of industrial action. And given the radical implications of state of the art technology, together with the current unfavourable industrial relations legislation, there is no *a priori* reason to assume that industrial action will prove of any greater efficacy than it has been in recent years.

Nevertheless, despite all the changes that have taken place in the newspaper industry over the last fifteen years or so, this has not led to an easily definable shift in the balance of power between capital and labour. This is not to say that there has been no shift in the balance of strength between class forces, the latter has been clearly demonstrated in the mid 1980s, most notably in the national press sector. But whilst the trade unions may have suffered numerically, there is no mechanical relationship between numbers and power. It now seems clear that the majority of newspaper publishers, both in the provincial and national press, have not followed the lead of either Shah or Murdoch by attempting to take away the recognition and negotiating rights of the traditional printing unions. Thus the underlying principle of 'pluralism' appears to be a prevailing factor in the world of newspaper industrial relations. However, given that radical technological change is now an existing reality, few would disagree that restructuring must be the major task facing the unions in the late 1980s and into the 1990s.

Within this organisational change, trade union amalgamation is both long term and problematic, but offers at the very least the potential for a breaking down of what has persistently threatened to become an increasingly divisive sectionalism between the various unions and workgroups, and a chance to create a more cohesive and homogenous newspaper/print industry workforce. Furthermore, 'one union for the print' would also provide a realistic basis for the possible development of a single union for the communications/media industry, within which the printing industry is becoming increasingly complementary. As Marshall 1983 argues:

"The British print unions must wake up to the fact that the industry is not dying in the way that has been predicted throughout the past decade. The industry is changing, and the future of print workers within a bigger communications union depends on this being made clear to every mother and father of the chapel and every full-time union official."

[MARSHALL 1983 : p.110]

Within this overall context then, few can deny the overriding imperative for union merger. In fact the trades union leaderships have for some years acknowledged this, as can be seen for instance in the opening of merger talks between the NGA and the NUJ in 1981, the print union amalgamations of 1982, and the current merger talks began in 1986 between SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82.

It is in an attempt to contribute to an understanding of the problems, complexities and possibilities of how a greater unity may develop at the most important level, the shop-floor, that the following chapters now turn to, in an exploration of the interrelationship between changing technology and inter-workgroup relations.

References (Chapter Five)

1. See Marshall 1983, p.18; and Financial Times 18.2.86 p.20.
2. Cockburn 1983, pp66-67.
3. ibid, p.56.
4. The Royal Commission on the Press 1962 and the Economist Intelligence Unit 1966 also make the same point regarding the low level of efficiency in labour utilisation.
5. Hunter et al 1970, pp.74 & 93.
6. For brief reports on this dispute, see Financial Times 21, 26, 27, 29 & 30 June 1973.
7. Financial Times 9.7.73.
8. The NUJ 1980 for example, claim that T.Bailey Forman had planned the introduction of new technology on this basis since 1967 (p.33).
9. NUJ 1980 (p.35) comment on Outram's in Scotland attempt to follow the Nottingham Evening Post's lead in new technology, but with union agreement. However, the unions at Outram's had formed a united front enabling the composing room to successfully resist the introduction of direct input.
10. See for instance Winsbury 1976, p.10-11 on the use of OCR technology.
11. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) 1980, p.22.
12. Journalist Charter 1976, pp.7 & 13.
13. ibid, pp.8-10.
14. Royal Commission on the Press: Interim Report 1976, p.1.
15. For a more ambivalent perspective on the apparent 'crisis' in Fleet Street see Journalist Charter 1976. pp.8-9 & 14.
16. See for instance New Statesman 3.11.78, p.568.
17. SWP op.cit., p.14.
18. ibid.
19. ibid.

20. See for example RCP op.cit., pp.49-50. The Mirror Group had in fact proposed less drastic staffing cuts than the other 'quality' newspapers, particularly in the composing room, reflecting the greater relevance and efficacy of DI of editorial and advertising text to broadsheet as opposed to tabloid size newspapers - see Chapter 4 of present thesis.
21. The Joint Standing Committee (JSC) was made up of the following union and employer representatives:  
Chairman: WH Keys (SDGAT)  
Vice-Chairman: MJ Hussey (Times Newspapers Ltd)  
Trade Unions: A.Gray (EETPU)  
                W.McLoughlin (AUEW)  
                K.Morgan (NUJ)  
                D.O'Brien (NATSOPA)  
                J.Wade (NGA)  
Publishers: GH Dunn (Thomson Withy Groove)  
                A.Hare (Financial Times)  
                R.Harrison (Observer)  
                J.Evans (Daily Telegraph)  
                B.Matthews (News Group)  
                F.Roberts (Mirror Group)  
                J.Stevens (Beaverbrook)  
                G.Taylor (Guardian)  
                EJ Winnington-Ingram (Assoc. NPs)  
Joint Secretaries: TUC   NPA  
                                    K.Graham                     J.Dixey  
                                    J.Monks                         J.Le Page
22. See the Programme For Action 1976, p.5.
23. Financial Times 2.12.75.
24. ibid.
25. The Times 25.11.75.
26. Statistics taken from SWF op.cit., p.15 and Goodhart & Wintour 1986, p.53.
27. For a full account of NATSOPA's internal divisions in the 1970s see Martin 1981 ch.4.
28. ibid, ch.6.
29. Storey 1978, pp.47-48 states: "In fact only three newspapers in the whole of the country have introduced and are able to make the optimum use of the most modern methods available, and they have achieved this ability by confrontation with the unions, leading in one case, to the closure of a local paper...Management...is willing to live with the out-of-date methods it has got and rely, during the camouflage of an inflationary age, on raising advertising rates and cover prices in order to maintain profitability."



30. For a brief account of these events see SWP op.cit., p.21.
31. For a full account of industrial relations in the newspaper industry in the 1970s see Martin op.cit.
32. See for example The Times 12.3.77, p.15; Sunday Times 7.5.78, p.3; Guardian 20.5.78, p.1.
33. For Fleet Street in particular, the orientation of industrial relations towards the chapel in the 1970s was so notable that several commentators argued that this plant level bias should be taken to its logical conclusion, and that the chapel and management should collectively bargain totally free of any wider national organisational influence (see Dixey in Henry 1978, pp.57-58; and Jenkins 1981). Since the rank & file rejection of the 'Programme for Action' in 1977, it was felt by many that any further attempt to create a highly centralised industrial relations system for the national press was doomed to failure. Thus the autonomy of the Fleet Street chapel vis-a-vis its national union, should be accepted, and the de facto focus of industrial relations at the chapel level should be institutionalised. For some, the latter would induce a less conflictual relationship between management and chapels: "This would be to create industrial entities within which employees would come to recognise the needs of their company, and would bargain accordingly" [Dixey in Henry 1978, p58]. This decentralisation viewpoint was given further emphasis in the wake of the 'Times/Sunday Times' dispute in 1978/79, with most commentators agreeing the one definite outcome of the conflict was to consolidate chapel autonomy in Fleet Street, in relation to the unions nationally (eg Jacobs 1981; and Routledge 1980). Jenkins 1981 argued that management should treat the chapel as an ally rather than an enemy, and harness the latter contractually to the production process, by tying the chapel to profit and loss performance of the newspapers. Managers may see this as a reduction of management prerogative, but..."in so many areas of newspaper production the relationship of manager and chapel is contractual in all but name...The classic employer-employee relationship simply does not exist" (p.65).
34. SWP op.cit., p.2
35. Table taken from Martin op.cit., p.340

36. Pagination refers to the total number of pages in any one edition of a newspaper. During 'The Times' dispute rival newspapers increased their pagination in order to increase advertising revenue, tapping into the lost revenue of 'The Times/Sunday Times' - an example of the fierce Fleet Street competition, which has traditionally made it unprofitable for employers to take united action against the unions.
37. This merger between SOGAT and the SGA somewhat offsets the critique that print union amalgamations have tended to strengthen craft sectionalism rather than reduce it, ie because the unions have tended to merge on a craft/non-craft basis. However, as will be seen in Chapter 8, the former amalgamation has not necessarily had a positive impact in respect of reducing sectionalism.
38. This factor has played an important part in the industrial relations of the late 1980s, especially over the issue of direct input of advertising matter. This will be discussed in Chapter 8 more fully.
39. For a fuller account of the NGA tactics in the 1970s see Gennard/Dunn 1983.
40. Thus the NGA'82, SOGAT'82 and AEU lost their negotiating rights at News International. Although the NUJ, despite being involved in the dispute at national level, retained recognition because most of the NUJ chapel members on all News International titles continued working during the dispute. The NUJ National Executive finally called off its fight against Rupert Murdoch in February 1987, after the two main print unions ended their dispute officially.
41. It is, of course, problematic assessing how influential the 'Messenger' and 'Wapping' disputes were historically. In part, they both certainly demonstrated the weakness of the trade unions in taking industrial action in pursuit of a trade dispute against determined employers. However, even before 'Wapping', Goodhart in the Financial Times (16.7.85) wrote about the NGA'82 under the heading 'All Change for a Once Proud Union', denoting the apparently weak position of the craft based union in the contemporary printing industry.
42. The BPIF and NS had for many years negotiated as a joint body representing employers in the general/periodical/book printing and provincial newspaper sectors respectively. Scotland and Ireland have their own employers associations. A description of the relevant Associations for the purpose of the present thesis is given in Appendix 3.

43. See for example Financial Times 11.5.85; 5.2.86; and the Glasgow Herald 15.2.86.
44. On this point, Gennard 1984.
45. See for instance Gennard/Dunn 1983.
46. Chapters 6-8 will illustrate this point from the perspective of the workers surveyed in this thesis.
47. 'Project Breakthrough' - Summary of NS draft proposals for a National Enabling Agreement. In NS Circular Ref: PB47 14.5.84.
48. See for example Radio 4 15.7.86 'The Tuesday Feature - A Free Press?'
49. 'Project Breakthrough' op.cit.
50. ibid para 3.
51. ibid, 'Examples of Change Covered by Clause 4'.
52. NGA'82 1984 'The Way Forward' clause 2:7.
53. ibid clause 2:8.
54. ibid clause 2:17.
55. NS Circular Ref: FB47 op.cit, clause 2.
56. ibid clause 15.
57. NS Circular Ref: L.7239 16.7.85 and also Financial Times 16.10.84.
58. The Guardian 27.10.84.
59. ibid 22.10.84.
60. Financial Times 17.4.85.
61. ibid.
62. ibid 12.4.85.
63. Williams/Steward 1985, p.87-89.
64. Financial Times 29.3.85.
65. Socialist Worker 30.3.85.
66. ibid.
67. Financial Times 17.4.85.
68. Socialist Worker 30.3.85.

69. *ibid* 16.7.85 and *The Guardian* 9.4.85.
70. *Financial Times* 11.5.85.
71. *ibid* 16.7.85.
72. *Socialist Worker* 13.4.85.
73. *The Guardian* 29.7.85.
74. SOGAT Journal Special Issue July 1985 entitled 'Sogat & the NGA - a Future for All'; and *PRINT* July 1985.
75. *Financial Times* 4.4.85.
76. *The Guardian* 1.8.85.
77. *Financial Times* 2.9.85.
78. *Socialist Worker* 10.8.85.
79. *The Guardian* 22.10.85.
80. *Financial Times* 24.10.85.
81. Goodhart/Wintour *op.cit.*, p.54.
82. *ibid* p.243.
83. *Socialist Worker* 15.2.86.
84. Goodhart/Wintour *op.cit.*, p.242.
85. See for example *Sunday Times* 12.5.85 and Goodhart & Wintour *op.cit.*, p.243.
86. *Socialist Worker* 25.5.85 & 31.8.85; *Glasgow Herald* 27.8.85.
87. *The Guardian* 30.7.85 & 10.8.85.
88. *Socialist Worker* 17.8.85 & 10.8.85.
89. *Financial Times* 25.11.85.
90. *Financial Times* 30.1.86.
91. *The Guardian* 7.2.86.
92. *Financial Times* 5.2.86.
93. *ibid* 10.7.86.
94. *The Guardian* 14.8.86.
95. *ibid* 17.12.86.

96. Financial Times 22.6.87.
97. ibid 31.10.86.
98. The Journalist January 1986, p.6-7.
99. The Guardian 12.8.86.
100. The Journalist January 1987, p.1.
101. Reported in The Guardian 12.8.86 (see also The Journalist October 1986, p.3).
102. The Guardian 1.7.87.
103. ibid 10.6.85.
104. ibid 29.5.87.
105. Sogat Journal July/August 1987, p.10.
106. Sogat Journal May 1988, p.4.

JOURNALISTS in the NUJ

|   | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| A/ Structure of Chapter   | 113         |
| B/ Organisational Structure of NUJ                              | 113         |
| C/ Some Historical Aspects of Journalist Unionisation           | 115         |
| 1. Formative Years: 1907-40                                     | 115         |
| a) Introduction   | 115         |
| b) Relations within the Occupation                              | 115         |
| c) Relations within the Industry                                | 119         |
| d) Relations within the Labour Movement                         | 121         |
| 2. Mature Years: 1962-88  | 123         |
| a) Introduction   | 123         |
| b) Wages Militancy & the Closed-Shop                            | 124         |
| 3. New Technology & the NUJ:                                    |             |
| 3 Perspectives in the 1970s                                     | 132         |
| a) Introduction   | 132         |
| b) 'Sectionalist perspective                                    | 132         |
| c) 'Workers Control'  | 134         |
| d) 'Official'   | 135         |
| 4. New Technology & the NUJ:                                    |             |
| Developments in the 1980s                                       | 139         |
| D/ Contemporary Character of Journalists in NUJ                 | 142         |
| 1. Introduction   | 142         |
| 2. Intra-Occupational Differentiation<br>Within Journalism      | 143         |
| 3. Profile of Journalists Surveyed                              | 148         |
| 4. Work Orientation of Journalists                              | 149         |
| 5. Perception of Changing Technology                            | 155         |
| 6. Attitudes Towards Print/Newspaper Trade Unions               | 162         |
| 7. Attitudes Towards Other Workgroup Categories                 | 173         |
| 8. Attitudes Towards Women Workers                              | 182         |
| 9. Summary  | 186         |
| E/ Conclusion: Sectionalism & Solidarity<br>Amongst Journalists | 187         |

National Union of Journalists (NUJ)

Membership 1988 : 32,000  
Female members : 11,560 (29%)  
Newspaper members : 5,500 (16%)  
Other areas of  
membership  
jurisdiction : periodical/book publishing  
& broadcasting

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A/ Structure of Chapter

The following chapter is structured around four main themes. Firstly, a brief outline of the Union's organisational structure is given. Secondly, the history of the NUJ is examined, based not on a chronology of events per se, but rather focussing upon specific events and issues pertinent to the thesis. As was stated in Chapter Two, the rationale for presenting a historical account of the NUJ, is to create a sociological 'benchmark' by which to assess the extent of change manifested by the union's membership. The third part of this chapter focuses upon the various perspectives within the NUJ since the 1970s towards new technology. The fourth section concentrates in depth on the contemporary field work data collected by the researcher during 1986. And a final section of the chapter will summarise the main theoretical implications of the concept of 'sectionalism' as applied the journalists in the NUJ; arguing that the historical tension that exists within the Union between the ethos of 'professionalism' and the reality of 'trade unionism', manifests itself in contemporary terms as an acute factor during a time of radical restructuring of both the labour process and inter-workgroup/union relationships.

B/ Organisational Structure of the NUJ

The NUJ has a four-tier organisational structure: (i) the **chapel**, headed by an M/FOC and a Clerk. Under the rules every office where there are four or more members must have a chapel; (ii) the **branch**, which usually covers a geographical area. There is something like 200 branches in the NUJ; (iii) the **Area Council**, which consists of representatives of the branches in an area; and (iv) the **National Executive Council**, consisting of 35 members, and is made up for the most part of members elected by postal ballot from groups of branches. This is the central administrative body of the Union. To carry out its

## C/ Some Historical Aspects of Journalist Unionisation

### 1. Formative Years : 1907-1940

#### a) Introduction

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) began life in 1907, when a small group of journalists centred in Manchester, broke away from the Institute of Journalists (IoJ), to create a union that was to be, in the opinion of an early general secretary, 'a fighting machine for wages' [1]. Some indication of the tensions and contradictions within the character of the NUJ in its formative years, can be seen on three interrelated levels: in an occupational context; in an industrial context; and in a class context. We shall now look at each of these in turn.

#### b) Relations Within the Occupation

Political and technological developments in the first 75 years of the 19th Century, created the conditions in which 'journalism' became a distinct paid occupation, rather than a pastime indulged in by a relatively small number of 'wealthy' social commentators. The growth of periodical publishing at the beginning of the 1800s, turned this 'litterati' into full-time editors. By the mid-19th Century, the introduction of steam printing had enabled daily newspapers to replace periodicals as the main public opinion formers, during a period when public opinion was perceived to be increasingly important politically, after the Reform Acts of 1832 & 1867 had enfranchised a sizable proportion of the middle and skilled working classes [2].

1884 saw the first organisation of journalists established, under the title of the National Association of Journalists (NAJ), with a membership of approximately 250 in 1886 [3], being incorporated by Royal Charter six years later, becoming the Institute of Journalists (IoJ) in 1890 [4]. In 1892, membership of the IoJ had reached 3114 [5] 15 years later, a minority, based in Manchester, broke away from the IoJ to form the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) in 1907. At this stage, the respective membership figures were 738 in the NUJ, and 2575 in the Institute [6]. Table 6.1 below compares the contrasting fortunes of the two unions in membership terms during this early period of journalist unionisation, and maps out the steady relative marginalisation of the IoJ in this respect.



table 6.1 comparison of NUJ-IoJ Membership 1886-1940 [7]

| Year | NUJ   |    | IoJ   |     |       |
|------|-------|----|-------|-----|-------|
|      | No.   | %  | No.   | %   |       |
| 1886 |       |    | 250   | 100 | (NAJ) |
| 1900 |       |    | 2,930 | 100 |       |
| 1907 | 738   | 22 | 2,575 | 78  |       |
| 1910 | 1,907 | 46 | 2,400 | 54  |       |
| 1915 | 3,127 | 61 | 1,989 | 39  |       |
| 1920 | 4,888 | 70 | 2,119 | 30  |       |
| 1925 | 4,827 | 70 | 2,036 | 30  |       |
| 1930 | 5,574 | 72 | 2,164 | 28  |       |
| 1935 | 5,919 | 71 | 2,465 | 29  |       |
| 1940 | 7,092 | 72 | 2,758 | 28  |       |

However, the impetus behind the development of organisation amongst the ranks of journalists is complex, and by no means heralded a direct movement towards 'trades unionisation', although the formation of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) in 1907, was, in large part, a response to what some members of the IoJ at the time felt was a lack of 'trade union orientation' amongst the majority of the latter's membership. FJ Mansfield (an early General Secretary of the NUJ) for example, wrote, in a thinly veiled attack on the 'professional' aspirations of the IoJ:

"In the first decade of this Century an experiment of high consequence to the body politic of journalism was hazarded by a few daring spirits. It was nothing less than a call to the workers to form themselves into a trade union, in what was politely called a profession, but what in fact was an art and craft that yielded many of its rank & file nothing more, and often something less, than the subsistence of menial labour."  
[MANSFIELD, 1943 p.13]

As well as pouring scorn on the IoJ, Mansfield's remarks may well have been aimed at convincing the NUJ membership of the need for a coherent 'trade union' emphasis within the Union. For example, some indication of the NUJ's complex character can be seen in the diverse role models it used in its formative years: the title National Union of... was taken from the recently formed white collar/semi-professional body, the National Union of Teachers; the NUJ's rules were adopted in large part from the skilled blue collar union the Amalgamated Society of Engineers; and, somewhat more debatably, it has been noted that the style of the early NUJ followed closely to that of the newly formed clerical unions [8].

Furthermore, the formation of the NUJ in 1907 did not in itself, totally constitute a clear cut break with the IoJ, there being several attempts at some form of re-alliance

in the years before the Second World War: in 1916, 1921 and 1927 [9]. Even in the post-War years, when the NUJ had firmly established itself as a relatively small but viable print union, and the IoJ had for many people, ceased to be an effective force [10], there have been various efforts to merge the two unions. It is worth looking briefly at the history of merger attempts between the two journalist unions to illustrate the complexity of the character of journalist organisation.

In 1916, the IoJ initiated talks regarding merger, but was rebuffed by the NUJ, as the latter's Executive still regarded the Institute as being too influenced by press employers:

"In stating the union case frankly, we are equally sincere in our desire for a complete organisation of journalists, on a basis which is best suited for the calling. So far none of the Institute's advocates of fusion appears to admit the case for the elimination of proprietors, managers or manager editors from membership. It must be said firmly and definitely that upon this point there can be no compromise so far as the union is concerned."  
[The JOURNAL, October 1916 (NUJ NEC Statement) - quoted in MANSFIELD 1943 p.343]

The following year, 1917, the Annual Delegate Meeting (ADM) of the NUJ endorsed the Executive's position, and voted against amalgamation with the IoJ on the grounds of it being unnecessary and undesirable, apart from the efficacy of joint action on a few general issues [11]. In 1921, the question of merger was raised again, but met with too many problems to bear fruit, particularly as 1920 marked the beginning of a notable shift within the NUJ as whole to pursue a harder line over the issue of the closed shop [12].

However, a few years later, the 1926 General Strike was to send shock waves through the journalist unions, which inter alia, led to more serious and detailed merger discussions between the Institute and NUJ in 1927. Some have argued that the General Strike had exacerbated a tension within the NUJ between a generally more 'conservative' rank & file membership and the Union's more trade union oriented Executive, although this probably presents too clear-cut a dichotomy. At the onset of The Strike, the NUJ set-up an 'Emergency Committee', which issued a directive to all NUJ Branches instructing them that they were not on strike, and were to continue working normally. However, despite the fact that the NUJ had dis-affiliated from the TUC in 1924, branches were also instructed not to undertake any duties normally done by members of those unions that were on strike, or indeed to work with any non-union labour introduced by employers during the course of The Strike [13]. Perhaps in part, reflecting the majority decision to leave the TUC two

years earlier, branches and many rank & file NUJ members ignored Union policy, denoting a certain similarity in attitude to the General Strike (or at least the printing industry's part in it) to that of the IoJ, whose members willingly followed the Institute's instructions to assist the employers in producing newspapers [14]. Nevertheless, the differing response of members regarding NUJ policy, can perhaps be illustrated by taking Scotland as an example of nation wide feelings within the NUJ towards the General Strike. A circular issued by the then General Secretary HM Richardson, outlining the NUJ's position in asking its members not to supply 'copy' to 'blackleg' print workers, met with a mixed response. The Dundee branch completely ignored it; the Edinburgh branch issued a statement "claiming complete liberty of action for all members"; whilst Glasgow branch obeyed the Union's instructions, and 66% of the Aberdeen branch were still on strike until the 12th May [15].

The overall effect of the General Strike pushed the NUJ generally (at least in the short-term) more in the direction of accommodation with the 'moderate-conservative' IoJ. A mutual membership plan was agreed, and the delimitation of functions between the two Unions was drawn-up, based on the IoJ handling all professional and educational related matters, whilst the NUJ would essentially be responsible for wages/conditions issues. However, this set of agreements were to founder on the rock of the Institute's Charter, which made it structurally impossible for the joint cooperation plans to be implemented [16]. Whilst merger with the IoJ continued to prove elusive largely for occupationally based reasons, global political developments in the 1920s provided the impetus for NUJ affiliation to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in 1926. Whilst membership of the IFJ implied lofty ideals, such as the promotion of 'peace' and combating the rise of 'fascism' in Europe (by maintaining accuracy in news reporting during a period when 'propaganda' use of news was perceived to be distorting the role of the press) [17], it is doubtful whether the 'average' rank & file member of the NUJ felt IFJ affiliation to be on the same level of importance as the merger with the IoJ.

Taking membership figures as one important factor in attitudes and relationships between the unions generally, less than a decade after its formation, the NUJ organised the majority of unionised journalists, and by the mid-1920s, the IoJ membership was less than half that of its fellow union. Although in relative terms, the ratio of membership in the respective unions hovered around a 70% - 30% split for two decades (1920s/30s), the number of organised journalists increased significantly, giving the NUJ an ever increasing numerical advantage over the IoJ. By 1940, the respective figures were 7092 to 2758 [18], thus giving the NUJ approximately 72% of all organised journalists.

### c) Relations with the Broader Industrial Labour Force

Whilst for twenty years or so after its formation, the issue of merging with the IoJ had constantly been raised, two other key issues regarding the NUJ's position within the 'labour movement' were manifest in these early years, which essentially clashed with the effort to achieve greater cohesion with the IoJ: these being affiliation to the Printing & Kindred Trades Federation (PKTF), and to the Trades Union Congress (TUC). Both of these questions raised much controversy within the Union, reflecting the continuing tension within the NUJ between the desire to attain a 'professional' status, and the perceived need to adopt actions and develop strategies that were based partly on 'trade unionism'.

The years around the First World War - 1913-19 - Mansfield 1943 has labelled 'the period of affiliation controversy' (p.296), in respect to arguments within the NUJ over whether or not to join the printing industry trades union federation, the PKTF, founded in 1901 by the main manual unions. At its formation, the PKTF consisted of 13 individual unions comprising some 43000 members; by 1914, the Federation had grown to include 23 affiliated unions covering 82000 members [19]. As will be seen in later chapters, print union amalgamation had been a constant fact of life throughout the 19th Century and before; thus once the NUJ had been established as a bonafide trade union organisation, there was a natural tendency on the part of some of its members to look towards the older, established and larger print unions for some form of merger, or at least greater cohesion of all workers in the industry. Although this attitude was by no means universal. Mansfield cites five main reasons why many journalists argued against print union merger (p.303): i.it was a leap in the dark; ii.an absence of any real unity of interest between the manual and white-collar unions; iii.journalists had unique occupational problems; iv.the NUJ was at a relatively embryonic stage compared to the long established craft unions; and v.affiliation obligations (ie solidarity support during disputes) would be difficult for the NUJ to deliver given the lack of editorial closed shops. (In 1915 for example, the NUJ organised approximately only 40% of all journalists [20]). In other words, for the anti-affiliation lobby, the NUJ was neither ready, willing nor able to take part in a wider print industry union. This latter viewpoint was held particularly by journalists in Central London and the South East, in part reflecting the high ratio of national newspaper journalists in London, many of whom were specialist correspondents, who saw very little in common with blue collar production workers [21].

Nevertheless, in 1913, Delegates at the NUJ's ADM in Manchester, voted by 1298 to 1106 in favour of approaching the 3 main craft unions at the time - the Typographical Association (TA), the London Society of Compositors (LSC)

and the Scottish Typographical Association (STA) [22] - to discuss the possibility of some form of affiliation. Whilst the NUJ's membership itself was much divided over the issue, a pro-merger Executive was rebuffed by the 'skilled' printing unions, who were only prepared to support the NUJ on pragmatic grounds during disputes with the employers, and did not want a formal merger to take place. The idea of a 'United Newspaper Workers Union' was raised again in 1915, but could not gain enough support. Mansfield argues that many journalists perceived any form of 'industrial union' as being synonymous with the syndicalist idea of 'the general strike', and were thus against a structural unity with the other print unions [23]. Given the large scale increase in industrial action in Britain (and elsewhere) between the years 1910-14, inspired in part by the anarcho-syndicalist belief of the 'great general strike' bringing down capitalism [Hinton Ch5], Mansfield makes a fair point. However, fear of industrial militancy clearly wasn't held by all NUJ members, or if it was, many journalists seemed prepared to accept that factor, for after four more years of argument, the NUJ decided to affiliate to the recently restructured PKTF in 1919.

The question of affiliation to the PKTF was in fact of a slightly lesser magnitude than a complete merger of all print unions, as the PKTF was a loosely knit federation of unions, which may partly explain the eventual large majority in favour of affiliation - 1192 for/192 against [24]. Even so, PKTF affiliation had been raised formally at each ADM in the intervening years between 1915-19 without success. In 1916 a motion favouring a ballot on affiliation was defeated. In 1917, Delegates voted to support a ballot on the issue, but despite a long statement issued by the NUJ Executive in the October issue of the 'Journal', stressing the 'moderate' nature of the PKTF, the 1918 ADM voted against affiliation by 1618 to 1235 [25]. One possible factor in this decision seems to be the distinct possibility of London based journalists on national papers seceding from the NUJ should affiliation take place [26].

What finally seems to have swung the argument in favour of affiliating to the PKTF in 1919, was the latter's decision to set up a Joint Industrial Council (JIC) with the employers under the auspices of the Liberal Government's Whitley Council industrial relations strategy [27]. The conciliation function of the JIC was seen as particularly useful by the NUJ, and Mansfield argues that it was this factor that persuaded the NUJ membership to remain in the PKTF after the 1926 General Strike, when the issue of membership was raised again in the turmoil of the Strike's immediate aftermath. This time, the ballot in favour of retention of membership was 1532 for to 756 against (on a 50% turnout) [28].

The NUJ were to remain in the PKTF until the latter's demise in 1974, when its role was taken over by the 'Print Industry's Committee' of the TUC (PIC-TUC), in which the NUJ played an active part.

table 6.2 : NUJ affiliation ballots to the PKTF 1918-1926  
[29]

| Year | Conference Vote |      | Membership Ballot |      |           |      |         |      |
|------|-----------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------|------|---------|------|
|      | For             | (%)  | Against           | (%)  | For       | (%)  | Against | (%)  |
| 1918 | 1,235           | (43) | 1,618             | (57) | None held |      |         |      |
| 1919 | 3,075           | (95) | 118               | (5)  | 1,192     | (86) | 192     | (14) |
| 1926 | No card vote    |      |                   |      | 1,532     | (67) | 756     | (33) |

#### d) Relations with the Wider Labour Movement

The division between the NUJ Executive and its grass roots membership, has been noted regarding the 1926 General Strike. But perhaps the NUJ's relationship with the TUC in the years prior to the Second World War, illustrates most vividly the tension existant in attitude and perception within the ranks of the NUJ, regarding their social/economic class position as workers. Mansfield 1943 argues that although to some extent it appeared a logical step to join the TUC, there was also a feeling that it would be unfair to bond a politically mixed group of workers, such as journalists, to an organisation which supported the Labour Party, and which was also perceived to be 'militant' in its use of industrial action (p.318). However, at the 1920 ADM in Cardiff, assent was won to put TUC affiliation to the ballot of the membership. Despite a rearguard action being fought by specialist journalists in London, (particularly the 'Parliamentary Lobbyists' based on national newspapers), the ballot for affiliation was won by 1380 votes to 816 (approximately a 50% turnout) [30]. Almost immediately, the anti-affiliationists launched a campaign to reverse the decision, with a motion put forward at the 1921 ADM to withdraw from the TUC, which was defeated by 3241 to 596 [31].

The complexity of journalist attitudes towards the TUC however, was again highlighted by a ballot decision in 1924 not to financially support the TUC drive to fund the labour based newspaper - the 'Daily Herald'. Only 25% of the membership voted, but the result was 738-399 against funding the 'Daily Herald' [32]. This appears to have shifted opinion within the NUJ over TUC affiliation, with the 1923 ADM deciding to put the issue to another ballot to be held in 1924. This time, the membership voted to dis-affiliate, by 1180 to 1094. A break down of the major area/ branch votes (see table 6.3 below) reveals that whilst a small majority of national newspaper journalists in Central London and Manchester voted to retain

affiliation, the Parliamentary Lobbyists (and thus probably most specialist journalists) voted by a large majority against TUC membership. Interestingly, a majority in both Leeds and South Wales also voted against affiliation. It is beyond the scope of the present thesis to explore the reasons for the differences in branch voting however.

table 6.3 1924 NUJ Branch ballots over affiliation to TUC  
[33]

| <u>Branch</u>  | <u>For</u> | <u>Against</u> |
|----------------|------------|----------------|
| Glasgow        | 53         | 47             |
| Leeds          | 21         | 49             |
| Liverpool      | 31         | 26             |
| London Central | 231        | 211            |
| Manchester     | 44         | 40             |
| Parl.Lobby     | 21         | 51             |
| S.Wales        | 40         | 70             |

During the 1930s, longer term trends within the NUJ were difficult to ascertain, and although no merger/cooperation talks between the NUJ and the IoJ were to take place after 1927 until the late 1940s, the former Union continued to manifest a tension between the concepts of 'professionalism' and 'trade unionism'. This factor was reflected in the affiliation of the NUJ to the non-TUC white-collar National Federation of Professional Workers (NFPW) at the start of the decade (1930) [34], and its re-affiliation to the TUC at the end of the decade (1940) [35]. In fact, membership to both organisations raised controversy in the NUJ. In respect of the NFPW, some journalists, saw affiliation as another means of broadening alliances outside of the printing industry, with white-collar workers whose attitudes and workplace problems were perceived to be similar to those of journalists, without necessarily being anti-TUC; whilst others believed that NFPW affiliation implied an anti-TUC bias, and were in favour of joining partly for that reason [36].

It was not until 1940, that the NUJ decided to re-join the TUC, after the short-lived membership in the early 1920s. This time, journalists voted by 1949 to 865 for re-affiliation [37]. Christian stresses two factors behind the vote to re-join the TUC: firstly the experience of high levels of unemployment throughout the 1930s; and secondly the intensification of press commercialisation, inducing a feeling of insecurity re employment in the industry [38]. It would also seem reasonable to argue in a wider historical sense, that the journalists' decision was influenced within the context of the World War which had created the perception of a need for greater work-place

unity. Clearly, TUC affiliation was still not fully accepted, as ten years later another ballot was held over the issue, with approximately 40% of those voting deciding against membership.

table 6.4 details of NUJ affiliation ballots to the TUC 1920-1950 [39]

| <u>Year</u> | <u>For (%)</u> | <u>Against (%)</u> |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1920        | 1,380 (63)     | 816 (37)           |
| 1923        | 802 (46)       | 943 (54)           |
| 1924        | 1,094 (48)     | 1,180 (52)         |
| 1931        | 1,224 (42)     | 1,663 (58)         |
| 1934        | 987 (45)       | 1,194 (55)         |
| 1936*       | 2,870 (59)     | 1,977 (41)         |
| 1936*       | 1,425 (47)     | 1,600 (53)         |
| 1939        | 2,020 (59)     | 1,376 (41)         |
| 1940        | 1,949 (69)     | 865 (31)           |
| 1950        | 3,037 (60)     | 2,034 (40)         |

(\* Mansfield 1943 gives figures for 2 ballots in 1936, the second one being held in December)

This brings the study into the post-War years, and with the 1950s being relatively uneventful for the NUJ, attention is now turned to the early 1960s, and what was the start of a 'militant' wages campaign within the Union.

## 2. Mature Years: 1962-1987

### a) Introduction

In the post-War years, two main themes are prevalent in the history of the NUJ: firstly, a period of 'wage militancy', most notable in the 1970s, and concomitantly, attempts to create post-entry closed-shops in the editorial area of newspapers.

Since the mid-1970s, however, another issue had come increasingly to the fore, which overshadowed (and interacted with) the NUJ's attempt to improve wages and conditions, and presented, in some journalists opinion, the opportunity for enhancing the relative position of journalist without recourse to industrial action - this being the introduction of changing technology, a subject that will be looked at in detail in the next section of Chapter 6. But firstly, a background sketch will be presented of attempts in the post-War years to improve the absolute and relative wages and conditions of members of the NUJ.



b) 'Wage Militancy' and the Closed-Shop

Throughout this section, figures will be presented comparing selected journalist rates of pay to that of craft and clerical grades. Whilst the present thesis is not directly concerned with pay levels, it is important in analysing the concept of 'sectionalism' to gain some approximation of this particular issue so as to gauge the importance of wage differentials in producing a differentiated labour force in the newspaper industry. It should however be stressed at this stage, that the researcher makes no claims of statistical expertise, and a comparative examination of wage levels in the newspaper industry is a complex skill. Thus whilst the figures given will be relatively accurate, being drawn mostly from secondary sources, the comparative analysis should be understood only in approximate terms.

To some extent, it is misleading to single out any particular period in the history of the NUJ with the label 'wage militancy'. For some, the very formation of the NUJ in 1907 was largely to create an organisation capable of radically improving the wages (and conditions) of the bulk of poorly paid members in the provincial press [40]. Given the historically low rates of inflation in the 1920s/30s, with a fall in the overall retail price index between 1920 and 1935 [41] it would seem that the NUJ achieved some early success in this goal: in 1913, one estimate puts the average weekly pay of reporters and sub-editors in the provincial press at £1.15s, whilst by 1933, the corresponding figure had risen over three-fold to £4.7s.6p [42]. However, the period 1962-78 certainly marked an upturn in activity over the wages question, with two sub-periods standing out: 1967-72 and 1974-78.

The NUJ's first contemporary period of 'wage militancy' began soon after the 1962 Royal Commission on the Press published its Report, which, whilst being based on a perceived crisis in the newspaper industry, had inter alia, in the view of the NUJ, highlighted the relative weak position of journalists in terms of wages and conditions compared to their fellow blue-collar print workers. Looking at the figures presented in the RCP however, (and it will be argued throughout this section using data from other sources), figures reflecting relative pay differentials present a complex picture. Particularly in terms of worker perceptions, a priori one can argue that feelings of 'unfair' wage structures would centre around comparisons between, and knowledge of, workgroups in daily contact with each other. On a wider scale wage differentials could be interpreted very differently.

At the shop-floor level, worker perceptions may well have revolved around comparisons between the highest paid craft workgroup - case hands (on piece rates), and the lowest paid journalist grades - reporters and sub-editors.

Certainly these workgroups would have had some daily contact in the work process, unlike many other journalist/craft workgroups, and at individual newspapers would probably have had a rough idea of each others earnings. Average actual weekly earnings (gross) given for these three groups were case hands £35, reporters £31 and sub-editors £35 [43]. (The figure for sub-editors includes section heads, so the average for most non supervisory sub-editors would certainly be lower). Hence based on selective criteria, NUJ members may well have thought they had cause for complaint. However, comparing other individual grades produces different results. Most notably, stone-hands (page make-up compositors) averaged £23 per week, markedly below both reporters and sub-editors. Moreover, in comparing a broader selection of journalist grades to selected craft workgroups, the actual earnings (gross) per week were £37.40p and £27.80p respectively (adjusted from pre-decimalisation currency) [44]. Both selected groupings include workgroups whose earnings were at the top end of the respective pay structures: for journalists - specialist writers and foreign correspondents; and for craft workers - typesetters on piece work (case hands and linotype operators). Furthermore, there is little doubt that nearly all clerical workers would have earned considerably less than both journalist and craft workers. A similar compilation of clerical pay grades given in the RCP produces a figure of £15.60p gross earnings per week [45]; with editorial assistants earning an average of £14 per week, less than half the average for the lowest paid workgroup of journalists (reporters). Table 6.5 below set out these figures in more detail.

table 6.5 : comparison of journalist actual weekly earnings to that of craft and clerical workers - 1961 [46]

| <u>journalists</u>   | <u>£</u>  | <u>craft</u>     | <u>£</u>  | <u>clerical</u>   | <u>£</u>  |
|----------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
| reporter             | 1         | stone-hand       | 23        | editorial         | 14        |
| sub-ed               | 5         | reader           | 24        | advert.           | 14        |
| correspondent        | 8         | lino-op          | 28        | admin             | 16        |
| specialist           | 41        | foundry          | 29        | library           | 17        |
| <u>foreign corr.</u> | <u>42</u> | <u>case-hand</u> | <u>35</u> | <u>copyholder</u> | <u>17</u> |
| all journos          | 37.4      | all craft        | 27.8      | all cleric        | 15.6      |

Nevertheless, perhaps partly out of a genuine belief that a wage disparity unfavourable to NUJ members existed, and partly in an attempt to raise absolute levels of pay, the NUJ defined three main aspects underlying its apparent low standing in the industry: i. the lack of a closed shop system for journalists in most national and provincial newspaper establishments; ii. no guarantee against what it saw as often arbitrary dismissal; and iii. a sectionalised union structure divorcing journalists from production

workers [47]. A priori, the 'closed-shop' issue was the key to improving the journalists relative position, as it underpinned the problem of dismissal, and played an important part in determining the relationship between the production unions and the NUJ. (This was not a new issue within the NUJ however, as in 1920 the Union had embarked on a closed-shop campaign, but with little success 48]).

Cleverley 1976 argues that the NUJ's post-1962 strategy borrowed heavily from the print craft unions apprenticeship system, which from the unions point of view, had enabled a high degree of control over restricting entry into the labour market (p.142). For the NUJ, the key to creating the conditions for this 'control' lay in the strengthening of the 'National Council for the Training of Journalists' (NCTJ), set-up in 1953, sometime after the 1949 Royal Commission on the Press had expressed concerns over journalist recruitment and training [49]. In fact, from the mid-1960s, the NCTJ underwent a rapid development, although the researcher has not come across any direct evidence of the efficacy of the latter body in acting as a mechanism for union 'control' over recruitment. However, in 1965, the NUJ won an agreement with the newspaper employers, that no new staff could be recruited directly from college into the editorial rooms of the national 'Fleet Street' papers, until they had served a three year 'experience' period on a provincial paper [50]. As a secondary tactic in the attempt to create a 'closed-shop', the NUJ argued for the elimination in the use of 'ghost' writers by newspapers, for example sports personalities signing their names to articles, which were in fact written by professional journalists; and the use of non-union photographs [51]. It would appear however, that these tactics have met with only limited success, although it is beyond the scope of the present study to examine the impact of the above in more detail.

This first round of 'wage militancy' (1962-72) did not however, mark a clear-cut shift towards 'trade unionsim' and away from 'professional' aspirations within the NUJ. In 1966, the NUJ and IoJ agreed to a 'trial marriage', introducing the concept of compulsory dual membership, with a view to eventually amalgamate fully [52]. However, once again the 'trial marriage' ended in separation. In many ways, it was more surprising that the NUJ considered merging in the first place, than the fact that the attempt came to nothing. Tunstall 1971, argues that long before the mid-1960s, the IoJ had ceased to be an effective organisation, and quotes the relatively low IoJ membership rate - only 8% - amongst specialist newsgatherers on national newspapers, "the kind of fairly senior journalists whose support a 'professional' body would presumably require" (p.67). In contrast, Tunstall claims roughly 87% of London based specialist journalists belonged to the NUJ.

Table 6.6 below illustrates the continuation of the pre-War trend in the respective union membership figures to date.

table 6.6 : NUJ-IoJ membership 1945-1986 [53]

| <u>Yr</u> | <u>NUJ</u> |          | <u>IoJ</u> |          |
|-----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
|           | <u>No.</u> | <u>%</u> | <u>No.</u> | <u>%</u> |
| 1945      | 8,400      | 74       | 2,878      | 26       |
| 1955      | 13,364     | 84       | 2,619      | 16       |
| 1965      | 19,621     | 89       | 2,400      | 11       |
| 1975      | 28,274     | 92       | 2,396      | 8        |
| 1986      | 32,260     | 94       | 2,000      | 6        |

Whilst the continuation of 'wage militancy' made even more difficult any further attempts at merger with the IoJ in the 1970s [54], this should not be directly equated with the idea of an exacerbated dichotomy between NUJ 'trade unionism' and IoJ 'professionalism'. Moreover, the constant tension between the NUJ leadership/activists and its rank & file manifested itself again in 1971, over the controversy of 'registering' under the 1970-74 Conservative Government's 'Industrial Relations Act' (IRA). In a national ballot over the issue, the Executive, in line with TUC policy, recommended the membership to vote for de-registering, in order to demonstrate non-compliance with the Government's legislation. The membership however, voted by 6384 to 3887 in favour of remaining registered, thus voting against NUJ recommendations. Despite the ballot result, the 1972 Annual Delegate Meeting, decided to de-register [55]. The minutae of the implications of the 1971 IRA, and the arguments for and against de-registering are not important here, the event being mentioned only to illustrate the continuing complex character of the NUJ, to offset the belief that journalists within the NUJ were progressively developing a 'trade union' oriented consciousness during the period of 'wage militancy'. Nevertheless, it does seem probable that for many IoJ members, the NUJ in the 1970s was viewed with increasing disdain, as the latter embarked on a series of industrial actions in the provincial newspaper industry.

To the extent that absolute wage levels reflect the success of the NUJ's tactic, it would appear at first sight that the period of 'wage militancy' bore some fruit for journalists overall, with the basic wage rate more than doubling between the years 1965-75. However, in this same period, the retail price index also rose 100% [56] thus nullifying any real increase at the level of basic rates, (although actual earnings may have been relatively higher than inflation, given bonus and shift payments etc). Given the overall rise in the RPI of approximately 45% between the decade 1960-70 [57] the average journalist

may well have experienced a higher real increase in earnings in the 1960s with an increase in minimum rates of some 61%, than that experienced in the early 1970s.

Table 6.7 below illustrates how the minimum basic rates for journalists working on both provincial (Newspaper Society) and national newspapers (Newspaper Publisher's Association) increased in absolute terms over a twenty year period from the mid-1950s to mid-1970s.

table 6.7 : journalist minimum pay rates (£ annual) [58]

| <u>Year</u> | <u>NS</u> | <u>NFA</u> | <u>All</u> |
|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1955        | 540       | 874        | 707        |
| 1960        | 689       | 1,118      | 904        |
| 1965        | 949       | 1,326      | 1,138      |
| 1970        | 1,261     | 1,700      | 1,481      |
| 1975        | 2,130     | 3,200      | 2,665      |

Whilst the above table and statistics places emphasis on absolute increases in journalist pay, an equally (perhaps more) important aspect of the wages drive was perceptions of comparative pay levels re production (and to a lesser extent, clerical) workers. Again, the reality of wage differentials is complex, and the researcher has been unable to find any independent source of statistical evidence to support the NUJ contention that journalist wage levels were generally lower than for production workers. Any indications found by the researcher tend to go against the claim that journalists were relatively worse off in salary terms during this period.

Assessing the situation by comparing basic rates for example, in 1970, the overall average basic minimum for provincial and national journalists was £1481, whilst an estimation of the NFA negotiated minimum for Fleet Street craft print workgroups gives a figure of approximately £1219 per annum [59], less in fact, than the minimum basic for provincial journalists. Of course, actual earnings in both the provincial and national press would be considerably higher than basic rates, for craft and journalist workgroups. For instance, Sissons 1975 presents figures for actual gross weekly earnings of craft workgroups in the national press some 3 times higher than the above estimated minimum rates of pay. Given this factor, it is extremely unlikely that a typical wage for a journalist working in a provincial newspaper house would be anywhere near to that of a Fleet Street craft worker, but this would not be comparing like with like. Nevertheless, large wage differentials between these two groups may well have been partly responsible for the NUJs focus on wage levels in the 1970s.

Whilst Cleverley claims that by the early 1970s, only a few craft workers were better paid than journalists (p.145), (he offers little detailed statistical evidence for this however), it would appear that this was debatable from the NUJ's point of view, as in the mid-1970s it embarked on its first ever nationally organised industrial action plan to improve what it continued to perceive as the relatively poor position of NUJ members (notably in the provincial press) in terms of wages and conditions, compared to fellow blue-collar print union members [60]. This led to a series of disputes in the provincial press, involving not only wage claims but also the broader strategy of attempting to create post-entry closed shops in the editorial area of newspapers [61].

This second round of 'wage militancy' coincided with the 1974-76 Labour Government's 'social contract' industrial relations legislation. Under the auspices of Michael Foot's Bill, amending the 1974 Trade Union & Labour Relations Act (TULRA), the Government had agreed to the TUC's argument that the pro closed-shop provisions in the Act needed strengthening. The Bill amending TULRA became law in March 1976, but was much fought against by the newspaper employer's associations [62]. For the NUJ, the legal framework supporting the closed-shop was very much welcomed, and seen as a basis for building-up the closed-shop in editorial areas of newspapers, which in part was seen as a pre-requisite for improving the relative and absolute wages and conditions of journalists in the industry. This was not to prove easy for the Union, despite the relatively favourable industrial relations law.

In June 1977, an NUJ closed-shop dispute at the Darlington Press (part of the Westminster Press chain) led the Newspaper Society to set-up an anti closed-shop fighting fund, making £80,000 available to any single newspaper involved in this type of dispute with the NUJ [63]. A year later, NUJ members struck over a pay claim at the Hemel Hempstead 'Evening Post & Echo', part of the Thomson Regional Newspaper (TRN) group. The dispute, initially involving 77 NUJ members, led to wider action being taken by some 500 journalists in the TRN chain [64].

The wages campaign was by no means universally supported by journalists within the NUJ, and again reflected the diverse attitudes of journalists within the Union. During the Darlington Press dispute, a group of NUJ members came together under the name 'Allied Journalists Against Extremism' (AJAX) [65], condemning the NUJ Executive's decision to pay the fines of journalist arrested for picketing the Darlington Press offices (and for those arrested at Grunwick's as well) [66]. In general, the wages campaign in retrospect, appears to have been fairly patchy in the long term, although the period 1977/78 appears to have been particularly eventful.

At the other end of the political spectrum, Beloff 1976 argues that the 1970s witnessed the increasing infiltration of marxist elements within the NUJ, symbolised somewhat conspiratorially by a document entitled the 'Internal Bulletin', issued by the then 'International Socialist' (IS), group (now the Socialist Workers Party - SWP). Beloff claims the 'Bulletin' noted the IS's achievements within the NUJ, which included winning two seats on the National Executive, seven IS members delegated to the Annual Conference one year, and IS 'control' over three London based NUJ branches (pp.46-47). Beloff offers little other evidence for IS 'infiltration', the evidence she does present is hardly conclusive, and her tone is generally crudely anti left-wing and simplistic. Most notably, Beloff ignores a longer-term historical perspective when discussing so called left/right wing tendencies within the NUJ, putting the wages/closed-shop campaigns into broader framework. No doubt small groups like the IS/SWP would enjoy having the influence so often ascribed to it but nevertheless, Beloff's views perhaps indicate a more generalised perception within the occupation of the apparently increasing left-wing domination of the NUJ in the 1970s, and influenced both journalists in the IoJ, and in the NUJ itself, leading to factions such as 'AJAX' to be formed.

The wages campaign of the later 1970s, culminated in the sacking of 32 NUJ members from the then notoriously anti-trade union employer's - T.Bailey Forman, who published the Nottingham Evening Post (NEP). This event led to mass demonstrations in Nottingham, supported by all printing trades unions. It was to be another decade however, before the sacked journalists were to be reinstated by the company [67]. By 1979, the slowly fading NEP/NUJ dispute was followed by a period of relative calm in respect of the NUJs wage campaigns in the newspaper industry, although during the 1980s, journalists' absolute and relative pay rates were still an important issue within the NUJ. Evidence of a disparity in relative earnings in the 1980s is contradictory. On an industry wide scale, figures given in the New Earnings Survey (NES) cast doubt on the journalists' claim that relative comparability with craft workers still hadn't been achieved. Thus in 1980, journalists averaged a weekly gross income of £170.60p, compared to compositors' earnings of £126.70p; and in 1985, comparing journalists to skilled production workers, the respective NES figures were £277.70p to £207.80p. However, evidence gathered at the plant level at one large provincial newspaper researched for the present thesis in 1986, cast doubt on these NES figures, with the annual rates for night staff journalists and compositors being £12398.50p and £13178.36p respectively [68]. Even allowing for complexities in the make-up of these figures, clearly journalists earned less than their fellow production workers at this one plant.

It is perhaps not surprising that the NUJ at national level implicitly rejects the type of evidence produced by the NES on this question. Returning to Sheffield for the first time since 1915 to hold its ADM in 1986, the NUJ commented in its Preliminary Agenda:

"All those years ago the issues were not...entirely different from those that absorb us now. For one thing, a Manchester inspired motion aimed at establishing a minimum wage for journalists equal to the standard wage of members of the Typographical Associations in the various districts - the forerunners of the NGA. In many places we are still waiting."  
[NUJ 1986 ADM, Preliminary Agenda : p.1, emphasis added]

Of course, absolute levels of pay constitute another issue, and it is beyond the scope of the present study to examine this aspect of wage rates. But it is worth noting that in January 1987, journalists in the provincial press voted by 2209 to 336 to reject the NS £4-5 per week pay offer (3-3.5%) in the annual negotiating round. More importantly than the money offer, was the attempt by the NS to introduce an 'ability to pay' clause, which would have eroded nationally defined levels of journalist pay and have had a detrimental effect on the lower paid members of the NUJ [69]. With a number of individual newspaper managements indicating that they were opting out of the 1987 NS/NUJ agreement at the end of 1986 [70] national level collective bargaining in the provincial press was effectively wound up, and this remains the position at the time of writing (mid 1988).

Whilst journalist disgruntlements over wage levels remained an important aspect of union concern, a more problematic issue was developing in the printing industry, in particular the newspaper sector - this being the increasingly sophisticated development of computerised techniques of printing, and the concomitant pressure placed on all the print unions to adopt policies for its implementation. It is on this subject that the study now concentrates.



### 3. NEW TECHNOLOGY & the NUJ

#### a) Introduction

An overview of the impact of changing technology in newspaper industrial relations has been given in Chapter 5, therefore, for the purpose of clarity, this section of Chapter 6 will in part constitute a brief recap on the recent history of technology and industrial relations, but will expand on this by presenting a more detailed theoretical framework in which to understand the complex response to changing technology manifested by various elements within the NUJ.

By the mid 1970s, the issue of changing technology had become a key question in newspaper industrial relations. Already by 1973, a 'new technology' dispute at the NEP involving principally the craft production unions (supported by NUJ members) had demonstrated the potential for radical change in the newspaper production process. With the setting-up of the Royal Commission on the Press (RCP) in 1974, creating a consensus amongst the print union leaderships of the need for radical changes to be made, *inter alia*, in respect of inter-union relations and demarcation structures, the NUJ joined with the majority of other print industry unions and the Newspaper Proprietors Association (NPA) in 1975 to form the 'Joint Standing Committee for National Newspapers' (JSC) [71]. The JSC policy document 'Programme for Action' published in November 1976, however, failed to win the support of rank & file trade union members in Fleet Street, putting into abeyance any further 'industry wide' negotiations concerning the introduction of changing technology until the mid 1980s.

However, the NUJ was not slow in seeing that radical change was going to come within the industry, and various informal groupings within the Union set about devising policy documents and issuing general statements on how the NUJ as a whole should approach the issue of changing technology. For heuristic purposes, one can isolate three distinct viewpoints, which can be characterised as: i. the workers control perspective; ii. the sectionalist perspective; and iii. the official perspective.

#### b) Sectionalist Perspective

In 1975, from a 'sectionalist' viewpoint, Rex Winsbury published a report compiled for the 1974-77 RCP [72] arguing for the benefits of computerisation to the journalist, albeit at the expense - "the opportunity cost" - primarily of the craft worker (p.7). Winsbury's enthusiasm for the eventual introduction of direct input was balanced by a reasonably critical appraisal of the advantages of the British press in not being the

innovator, but rather being able to learn 'lessons' from the American experience since the early 1960s (p.8). The following year Winsbury published 'New Technology & the Journalist' 1976, which as the title implies, was more directly aimed at working journalists. Although based largely on his research carried out for the 1977 RCP, interestingly, Winsbury's 1976 publication played down the necessity (or indeed technical desirability) of completely eliminating craft jobs in the composing area (p.22-24), and played up the need for journalists and their representatives to get involved in the planning and implementation stages of technological change:

"It is not mere 'consultation' that is required, although it may be convenient to smuggle it in under that label. Rather it is requirement for a new and different relationship between the editorial department and the central management of the newspaper, in which the old sharp division between the two breaks down and a new inter-active relationship develops in which journalists, or their representatives, or people drawn from the ranks of journalists, become an integral part of the team that designs and installs new technology."

[WINSBURY 1976 : p.42]

As for the role of the craft workgroups in the production process, Winsbury was careful in balancing long-term goals with shorter term practicalities (see ch.4). Thus in the first stage of technological change from 'metal' to 'electronics', seven criteria of 'balance' should be assessed in the design of the electronic newsroom (p.22), which essentially boiled down to three factors:

- 1/ the efficacy of using different categories of workgroup (ie journalist or craft) in keying in varying kinds of editorial matter;
- 2/ the efficacy of using new or traditional equipment;
- 3/ the efficacy of using new or old methods in respect of the particular kind of material being processed.

On the first point, the continued use of keyboarding compositors may in some instances prove more efficient, as the latter already have experience of working electronic qwerty keyboards, whilst many journalists do not. Furthermore, a proportion of journalists on any one paper needed to retain a 'real creative function', and not have this interfered with re the technicalities of manipulating a computer wordprocessor. On the second point, the use of mechanical typewriters could sometimes prove both more efficient and cheaper than having every piece of editorial matter typeset into a computer. Most notably, although in theory, all matter could be called up 'on screen', 'hard-

copy' was often required in practice, thus necessitating either the constant use of a print-out from the computer, or to have the material at hand in typewritten form on paper.

Probably most importantly from Winsbury's type of perspective, the third point laid emphasis on the fact that a number of categories of editorial matter were received in the first instance from non journalist sources, eg letters to the editor, and articles from outside contributors, the sort of material that was probably more efficiently keyed into the system by compositors than journalists. Therefore, in stressing the need for a balance to be struck between the desire to introduce 'state of the art' technological methods and the practical efficacy of keeping the production process 'simple', Winsbury argued that the elimination of the composing room may not be functionally desirable in many newspapers (p.23). Nevertheless, this was clearly a short term requirement for Winsbury, leading eventually to the origination production process being located entirely in the editorial room:

"...the concept of editorial input systems implies shifting work, responsibilities and control of the final product away from the traditional printing works and back down the chain to the editorial department. As the technology develops, it is fair to expect that there will one day be no human intervention between the editorial department (or advertising department) and the plate being put on the printing press..."  
[WINSBURY 1976 : p.6]

### c) Workers' Control Perspective

Also in 1976, from the 'workers control' perspective, a group formed within the NUJ called 'Journalist Charter' (JC), and issued a document under that name entitled 'New Technology & Why We Should Resist It', outlining what it believed to be the way forward for the NUJ regarding the introduction of new technology generally, and direct input keyboarding specifically.

Despite its ostensibly anti-technology title, this marked the start of a campaign aimed at pressuring the NUJ at national level to adopt a systematic and coherent new technology policy, which was some way from arguing for the total rejection of technological change. Rather, the main contention of the JC group was that new technology should not be introduced on the employers terms:

"It's clear that the new technology means redundancy on a massive scale. It is being used to attack our right to work and, therefore, to oppose the new machinery and the way it is being railroaded through union defences is by no means destructive...We are in favour of new production techniques - but only if they are introduced for the benefit of the workforce and under its control."  
[Journalists Charter 1976 : p.15, original emphasis]

Underlying the JCs position was the fear that the NUJs Executive was drifting into a wait-and-see stance over the introduction of new technology, involving a 'conspiracy of silence' (p.2), after the print unions' leadership had failed in its attempt to introduce computerised technology on a Fleet Street wide basis through the mechanism of the unions/NPA 1976 plan 'Programme for Action' (see Chapter Five). A lack of a coherent and systematic NUJ policy on technology was seen as being extremely dangerous, particularly given the experience of technological change in the American newspaper industry (pp.10-12), and the modular nature of computerised typesetting technology, which could be introduced initially in a 'benign' way, but was easily adaptable to more 'radical' use in the production process (p.3). Arguing that large scale redundancies and a loss of 'control' over the production process would result from a tacit acceptance of management's terms for the introduction of computerisation, the JC offered a strategy of inter-union cooperation and rank & file pressure to "dictate the pace and method of technological innovation" (p.15) so as to harness 'technology' in the interest of the workers within the industry.

#### d) The Official Perspective

In many ways, the 'official' position on new technology, as it developed in the late 1970s/early 1980s was a compromise between the 'workers control' and 'sectionalist' perspectives. In 1977, the NUJ Annual Conference imposed a one year ban on the introduction of new technology, and set-up a committee to produce a technology policy document - the 'Advisory Committee on Technology' (ACT), which included several journalists from the JC faction. To this extent, the 'left-wing' JC group had considerable influence on the policy making body of the NUJ. However, at its 1978 Annual Conference, the 'sectionalist' viewpoint was also noticable to some extent, after the ACT recommendations were adopted in a watered down form by the NUJ [73]

Reflecting the basic position of the 'workers control' perspective, the NUJ defined five main rationales for the desire of employer's to introduce changing technology:

- 1/ to rationalise & re-equip -  
rather than there being a 'financial crisis'  
Fleet Street, employers were attempting to  
shift the burden of the real problem - rising  
cost of newspaper print - into savings made by  
new technology;
- 2/ to create manpower savings -  
mostly in composing areas, but also editorial  
assistants;
- 3/ to deskill -  
not only of craft workers, as journalists were not  
immune to this factor, particularly with the  
introduction of full-page make-up on screen,  
facsimile production and direct input of agency  
copy;
- 4/ to undermine trade union power -  
hence the need for inter-union cooperation and  
support;
- 5/ to increase management control -  
hence the tendency for loss of worker control  
over the production process.

Whilst the main thrust of the NUJs 'official' viewpoint very much echoed the JC perspective on new technology, some consideration was given to Winsbury's arguments, particularly concerning the problematic nature of using journalists as mainstream typists, which even from the management's point of view, may not prove functional or indeed cost saving. However, unlike Winsbury, the NUJ also pointed out that it may well be the case that employers would use journalists for typesetting purposes in the first instance to break the hold of the NGA craft workgroups over the keyboarding function, rather than being too concerned about saving on the cost of skilled labour (pp.21-22).

Partly with the above in mind, and the more general feeling that employers would instruct management not to worry too much about the quality of the newspaper whilst undergoing radical changes in the production process, it was recommended that individual NUJ chapels should build into their new technology agreements safety/review clauses over the following issues: start & finish times; deadlines; copy flow & presentation; typographical and editorial style; proof reading & corrections; picture handling; stone subbing; and page changes (p.26-28). More importantly, it seems fair to argue that at this point, the NUJ national policy towards the introduction of changing technology very much emphasised a joint inter-union approach, rather than an overtly 'sectionalist' stance, and directly called for national level inter-union talks over technological change:

"...one important result of computer technological developments has been to make unions realise the need to work more closely together to protect jobs and coordinate responses to management plans - in some cases ultimata. Whether at national or local level, unions are realising that this is not the time to go it alone. The NUJ's comprehensive policy declaration of 1978 was a major stepping stone to cooperation as the other unions were sure of the attitude of at least one of the participants."  
[NUJ 1980 : p.47]

Whilst the above summaries may appear to reflect a fairly clear cut 'right wing/left wing' dichotomy over the question of new technology, both contained within them similar starting points and methodologies. Firstly, that the experience drawn from abroad re changes in newspaper technology (notably the USA) was directly applicable to the British situation. This belief reflected a 'technological' methodology which drew on empirical evidence from the experience of one country to directly 'prophesise' future trends in another (ie Britain). All streams of thinking within the NUJ (and other print unions) have tended to adopt this approach in a fairly uncritical fashion, taking little account in differences in the industrial relations traditions of different countries, or differences in economic/social underpinnings of industrial sectors (ie newspapers) between different countries.

Of course, Winsbury and the JC draw very different conclusions from the American experience, with the latter highlighting the dangers to all newspaper workers (including journalists) in respect of massive job reductions, a diminution of control over the work process, and in general de-unionisation; whilst the former emphasised the 'probability' of an overall contraction in the newspaper industry (and the closing down of particular papers) should the introduction of new technology not be accepted by the unions. But nevertheless, the changes that had taken place in the American printing/newspaper industry have been constantly quoted by various journalist/NUJ factions to illustrate the 'future' of the British industry.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, both 'sectionalist' and 'workers control' perspectives were underpinned by the belief that any radical changes in production technology could not be achieved without the positive consent of journalists, and by implication the NUJ. Again this perspective concerning the centrality of journalists to computerised printing methods is in fact a consistent theme running throughout all the various approaches within the NUJ, and revolves around a perceived logic that direct input technology lay in the province of the editorial rather than the composing room (see Chapter 4).

Whilst the above two points reflect the common ground of the kind of perspectives put forward by Winsbury and the JC, one important difference of opinion concerned the economic situation of the newspaper industry, and hence its ability to offset the reductions in staff that ultimately the logic of new technology introduced within a capitalist framework seemed to imply. For Winsbury, there was little doubt not only that Fleet Street had a 'financial crisis' but where the problem lay, not in the income generated by the press (over £300million a year), but in its labour costs (1975 p.7).

In the opinion of the JC however, the perceived financial 'crisis' in the newspaper industry was in fact misleading, being centred on the flawed approach adopted by the RCP 1977 that took no account of the interconnections between ownership of different parts of the press (and media generally) and the impact on profitability that followed from this broader analysis:

"When asked at the press conference staged on the day of the report's publication what account had been taken of the profits made by provincial groups owned commonly by national newspaper proprietors, the Commission's chairman, Prof.D.R.McGregor, at first failed to comprehend the question, then...passed it quickly to a colleague, Mr.R.R.F.Chorley, who said they had ignored any relationship between national and provincial groups."  
[JOURNALISTS CHARTER, 1976 : p8-9]

Hence, there was no actual need for the radical reduction in full-time jobs advocated explicitly by the RCP (and implicitly by Winsbury), amounting to some 7,000 out of a 20,000 workforce in the national press (p.8).

To some extent, it appears that the 'official' viewpoint developed within the NUJ in the late 1970s/early 1980s, compromised over the issue of 'financial crisis' in the press, by arguing that it was not staffing levels that was the primary cause of these problems, but rather the rapidly rising cost of newsprint, a factor over which the employers had little control. Thus a convenient scape-goat for the problems of Fleet Street increasingly became the trade unions' resistance to new technology, which the employers were advocating was the panacea for curing newspaper ills [74].

#### 4. Developments in the 1980s

By the early 1980s, the dominant stance of the NUJ at national level was one of joint consultation, both with management and other print unions, before technological change was to be introduced. Those journalists who believed that 'control' over the keyboard would give the journalist union the type of 'power' that they often perceived the craft unions as having, were "short-sighted, selfish and naive" [75].

In attempting to take negotiations away from the minutiae of shop-floor problems, the NUJ met with some success in discussions with the NGA and Sogat, particularly over the problems of direct input, facsimile transmission and viewdata systems [76]. Nevertheless, whilst believing that 'one union for the print' in Britain was not a pipe dream, and indeed realising the growing need for international union cooperation (highlighted during the 'Times dispute' 1978/79), the NUJ clearly understood that union amalgamation was some way off at that point in time [77].

As was stated in Chapter Five, the period between the 'Times' dispute at the end of the 1979, and the 'Stockport Messenger' (SM) dispute in 1983, was one of relative calm in respect of new technology and industrial relations in the newspaper industry, but events behind the scenes were continuing to take place. In 1981, the NUJ entered into discussions with the NGA over the possibility of merger, but to no avail. Soon after this, and before the onset of the SM dispute, the NS had initiated an industry wide plan for the introduction of direct input in 1982, under the umbrella label of 'Project Breakthrough' (PB). The NGA '82s response to PB - 'The Way Forward' (TWF) - launched in 1984, inter alia, met with NUJ resistance due primarily to a clause that allowed for NGA '82 craft members to transfer into the editorial room and undertake what the NUJ saw as NUJ/journalist work. NUJ/NGA '82 relations reached a low point in 1984 and early 1985, with three important inter-union disputes erupting at 'Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers' (PSN) in Portsmouth, the 'Wolverhampton Express & Star' (WES) and the 'Kent Messenger' (see Chapter Five), all over the basic issue of which union/workgroup should have jurisdiction over the keyboard in a direct input system.

With the election of Harry Conroy to the post of General Secretary of the NUJ in July 1985, who was generally perceived at the time to be a hard-liner over the issue of allowing craft workers into the editorial room, inter-union relations between the NUJ and NGA '82 looked like they were to become increasingly 'sectionalist'. As far as the character of the NUJ was concerned, the ballot result tended to stress two things: firstly, that the 'left-wing' perspective on changing technology had failed to gain ground in the 1980s, with a single transferable voting system producing a run-off between a 'right-winger'



(Stephen Turner) and the 'centrist' Conroy, with the latter winning by 3608 votes to 3089 [78]. The second aspect of the character of the NUJ highlighted by the ballot was the apparent apathy shown by the mass of the membership, with less than a 27% turnout [79].

Conroy however, was to prove more of a conciliator than suspected once in the post of General Secretary, although it was also undoubtedly the case that the attitudes of individual NUJ chapels to some extent pressurised the Executive into adopting a more cooperative stance vis-a-vis the NGA'82. Thus by latter half of 1985, relations between the journalist and the craft worker's unions had improved, with joint negotiation deals being struck at six major provincial newspaper houses (see Chapter 5), paving the way for a formal NUJ/NGA'82 joint negotiation policy being agreed to in the Autumn of 1985.

The beginning of 1986, was to mark the start of one the most bitter industrial disputes (probably the most bitter in the private sector) during the 1980s - between all three main print unions (and the then AEUW) and Rupert Murdoch's News International (NI)\*. Given the extreme nature of the situation facing the News International journalists in January 1986, and the complex character of journalist attitudes towards the idea of trade unionism, it is perhaps not surprising that only 30 NUJ members had refused to transfer to Rupert Murdoch's new 'Wapping' plant by the end of January (out of some 600 journalists working on the five NI titles). More instructive of the dualistic consciousness of organised journalists, were the arguments that developed within the NUJ over the following twelve months, over what the Union's attitude should be towards those members who obeyed NI instructions and were working at 'Wapping'. With history repeating itself to some extent, divisions within the NUJ were manifest between the National Executive, 'left-wing' activists. Thus whilst the NUJ ADM in Sheffield in April 1986, voted, by 158-146, to instigate rule 18 on disciplinary action against those NUJ members working at 'Wapping', the NEC narrowly rejected by 13-12 immediate disciplinary action against the 600 or so 'Wapping' journalists [90]. The NUJ NEC finally implemented disciplinary action in November 1986, which resulted in the imposition of fines rather than the mass expulsions that some groups within the Union were calling for. With the calling off of the dispute by the NUJ in February 1987, this issue died down, although arguments still persisted within the Union over the

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\* The research conducted amongst NUJ chapels for the present thesis took place during the 'Wapping' dispute, and thus it should be understood that to some extent, perceptions and attitudes of the journalists taking part in the research had been both heightened and perhaps accentuated in this period.

correct course of action. In the same month, disciplinary hearings resulted in 93 of the 600 'Wapping' journalists being fined £1000 [81].

The details of this dispute have been thoroughly researched by Melvern 1986, and will not be looked at any length here. However, it can be reasonably argued that events within the NUJ during this time, further illustrated the tensions existant within the Union, tensions which in many way were/are a continuation of the complex historical character of the NUJ.

The thesis now turns its attention towards a detailed examination of the contemporary character of organised journalists, and manifestations of 'sectionalism and solidarity' in the consciousness of the latter.

## 1. Introduction

Bearing in mind the high profile that inter-union/workgroup relations had during this period, we now turn our attention away from the historical benchmark developed in the first two parts of Chapter 6, and towards an examination of the field research amongst NUJ chapels conducted in 1986, centring on the themes of 'sectionalism' and changing technology.

This section of Chapter 6 is in fact sub-divided into five main parts. Firstly, occupational sub-divisions within the field of journalism will be explored to assess the extent of intra-occupational differentiation and status hierarchy, before going onto examine inter-occupational sectionalism. Secondly, a brief comparative profile will be presented regarding the age, sex, and training of the journalists surveyed. Thirdly the work orientation of journalists will be explored. Fourthly, the attitude of the journalists towards changing technology will be examined. And fifthly, attitudes towards other newspaper industry unions/workgroups will be analysed. As was stated in Chapter 2, the statistical material, as far as possible, will be presented in a comparative form, so as to compare and contrast the findings for NUJ members to those for all categories of worker researched. However, in the case of clerical workers this was not always possible or relevant, so in some instances, the comparisons are between journalist and craft workers only.

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\* Given the structure of this thesis, with each category of worker being surveyed separately, explanations for the questions asked in the questionnaire will be given prominence in the present chapter.

## 2. Intra-Occupational Differentiation of Journalists \*

Before one can delve into the relationship between the journalists, clerical and craft workers, it is useful to differentiate between sub-occupational groupings within journalism itself, so as to challenge any simplistic assumption the sectionalism is only an inter-union phenomenon. The occupation of (print) journalism is in fact highly segmented, and has a clearly defined status hierarchy at both 'horizontal' (external labour market) and 'vertical' (internal labour market) levels.

### a) Horizontal Differentiation

On the horizontal level, Tunstall 1971 (p.11) distinguishes a five-tier hierarchy re journalistic status:

- a) national press (high status, critical journalism)
- b) provincial press (training ground for nationals)
- c) trade/technical journals (lower level, non-critical journalism)
- d) consumer magazines (appendage of advertisers, not real journalism)
- e) in-house magazines (very low status)

Given developments in the national press during the late 1970s/1980s, one may question the extent to which the term 'critical journalism' is truly valid for the national press. But Tunstall's basic hierarchy would still be accepted by most workers in the industry. Hence it is still the career goal of many journalists working at the 'lower' end of the external labour market, to work for a national newspaper eventually.

Thus, given the areas of journalism selected for the present research, ie national and provincial newspapers, the research findings relate to journalists at the 'upper' end of the external industry labour market. It is difficult to assess the importance of this factor in respect of the data. But a priori, one can assume that to the extent that journalists are 'sectionalist' in character, whose primary goal is to maximise their terms and conditions irrespective of the interests of other groups of workers, journalists working in either the national or provincial press, will probably be more inclined to perceive the need to improve 'their lot' in their existing jobs, compared to other journalists 'lower' down the hierarchical labour market who may put more emphasis on moving on into better paid/higher status areas of print journalism.

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\* This section draws heavily on Jeremy Tunstall's 'Journalists at Work' 1971

This horizontal occupational hierarchy also has an influence on newspaper journalists' attitudes towards craft workers transferring into the editorial room. Essentially, it is argued by some that given the few journalistic jobs that become available generally in the newspaper industry, they should go to either unemployed journalists or NUJ members in other sectors wishing to 'break into' newspaper work. This argument will be discussed more fully later in the chapter.

Finally, it should be noted at this juncture that the horizontal occupational hierarchy has a direct influence on 'sectionalism' between journalists. Mansfield 1943 for instance, commented on the historical status differentiation between 'Fleet Street' and the provinces:

"Fleet Street bore the palm, and the provinces, apart from a few papers of national note, stood on a lower plane of credit and salary."  
[MANSFIELD 1943 : p.15]

This status differentiation tended to lead to the NUJ adopting national policies aimed at improving the salary and conditions of its relatively lower paid members in the provincial press (see Ch.6 Section A), at the expense, some would argue, of national newspaper journalists [82]. Even so, in the perceptions of many provincial newspaper journalists, the 'fat-cats' of Fleet Street are a pampered elite:

"One of the big problems I reckon with the Union is that it's based in London and revolves around London...but has very little relevance to some of the provinces...as Wapping has demonstrated quite clearly. I can't get fired-up with fighting the cause of Wapping when Fleet Street [journalists] have their problems... I think that in the same way, we haven't had any of the benefits of Fleet Street, [therefore] we shouldn't take part in any of the rubbish that goes their way as well. They've brought it upon themselves and they can sort it out."  
[PAPER 2 : interview 28.10.86]

Whilst the above view was by no means a majority one, it does accurately reflect a widespread feeling of differentiation between provincial and national newspaper journalists.

## b) Vertical Differentiation

Vertically, the internal labour market is also highly segmented in respect to status hierarchy. All newspapers essentially have two distinct groups of journalists, news **gatherers** (sub-editors) and news **processors** (reporters) (see Chapter Four for job descriptions). On a national or large provincial paper, the gatherers and processors will be further sub-divided hierarchically. A fairly non-contentious status (and salary) hierarchy would be as follows [93].

### News gatherers -

feature writers (background analysis of 'news', less reliant on news sources than specialist writer);  
columnists (have a 'name', usually senior staff);  
diary writers (have a 'name', oriented to sources);  
specialist correspondents (some analysis)  
general reporters (low rung of ladder)

### News processors -

news editor (usually senior executive)  
assistant editor (news)  
editors  
desk editors  
sub-editor

In respect of the present study, all of the surveyed journalists fall into one of the above rank & file categories: 40% are general reporters, and 50% are sub-editors. The remaining 10% are journalists in supervisory roles, but at the same time are also working journalists. Thus, whilst this hierarchy is important in itself, it will not be a focus for the present study. More relevant to this thesis is what Tunstall 1971 sees as a tension existant between two main groups, revolving around differences in work function, work orientation and career patterns between the 'gatherers', who have largely non-routine patterns of work, are oriented towards their sources of news information, and very often go straight into national newspaper journalism from university; in countradistinction to the 'processors', whose work is very much 'routinised', whose orientation is towards the newspaper's readership and who normally would have to serve an 'apprenticeship' on an often small provincial newspaper before gaining access to the national press (pp.25-41):

"In many departments either the gatherers or the processors are dominant. But a latent structural conflict exists - not merely between some people who work at the desk at night and other people who work 'outside' in the day. Not is it merely a conflict

between people with educational or career (or personality) differences. The conflict is about something more basic - between an audience orientation and a news source orientation. It is a continuing dispute about the overall goals and purposes of the news organisation itself."  
[TUNSTALL, 1971 : pp.41-41]

Tunstall's definition of 'routine' and 'non-routine' is derived from the work on bureaucracy of the American sociologist Charles Perrow (pp.25-26). For Perrow, the criteria for assessing the degree to which work is routinised or non-routinised lay firstly in the number of exceptional cases encountered in the work (the greater this percentage the more non-routinised the work), and secondly the nature of the search process undertaken when exceptions occur (the more logical and systematic the search, the more the work becomes routinised; the more the search is based on experience, intuition and guesswork, the more it is non-routinised) [ibid]. For Tunstall, Perrow's description of routine/non-routine work closely corresponds to the work of sub-editors and reporters respectively (pp.26).

Whilst Perrow's/Tunstall's framework present a useful tool in analysing job content, empirically, Tunstall's work is now somewhat dated, and it is worth considering how changing technology may have exacerbated or eased this tension between the reporter and sub-editor. The NUJ itself in the late 1970s saw changing technology as partially eroding hitherto clear cut job tasks as "there is likely to be a great deal of pressure on reporters to make copy as clean as possible and cut across the traditional demarcation lines between sub [editors] and reporters" [84]. Given the job descriptions in Chapter 4, there is little doubt that the work of both groups is becoming increasingly routinised, with the work of the sub-editor being even more geared up to the requirements of tighter edition deadlines, whilst the job content of the reporter has become more defined by the time factor (getting stories into the editorial room faster), and less investigative [85]. This aspect is echoed by Thurley/Wood 1983, who argue that editorial management is increasingly important as 'news' has become more organised (to fit limited space because of the growing emphasis on advertising revenue) and more institutionalised (i.e. less investigating, more court reports and council meetings), 'thus both sharpening and revealing the distinction between journalistic work and its management' (p.21). Moreover, given the high profile inter-union conflict that has manifested itself in the industry over the last decade or so, it may well be that intra-union/occupational differentiation is viewed as less critical by the workers themselves. Nevertheless, this basic differentiation between news gatherers and news processors is still an

important factor, and one NUJ FOC suggested to the researcher that on the question of union merger:

"I have a fear of a split in the NUJ between the reporters, who class themselves as journalists, and sub-editors. I could see a situation arising where sub-editors broke away to become a new NGA... It's also more likely that sub-editors are 'trade unionists', because we work night shifts, and we work in the office [which] always makes you much more a concentrated union."  
[PAPER 1 : interview 25.6.86]

Inter alia, the above statement emphasises the need to analysis carefully the interrelationship between structural change in the production process, and perceptions of job content. This factor becomes critical later in this chapter, when the journalists' attitudes are analysed regarding job demarcation, and the transference of ex-craft workers into the editorial room.

Having established the main lines of intra-occupational differentiation concerning the journalists surveyed for the present research, attention is now focussed specifically on inter-occupational and union differentiation between journalists and the two other main categories of worker - clerical and craft.



### 3. Profile of Journalists Researched

#### a) Age

table 6.8 : age of repondents

|     | <u>35 &amp; under</u> | <u>36-45</u> | <u>46 &amp; over</u> |
|-----|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| NUJ | 50%                   | 30%          | 20%                  |
| ALL | 39%                   | 27%          | 35%                  |

The journalists responding to the questionnaire tended to be younger compared to all workers surveyed. 50% of the former were aged 35 or under, whilst the corresponding figure for all workers was 39%. A similar proportion of journalists (30%) and all workers (27%) were in the middle age range - between 36-45. At the older age level, journalists were clearly under-represented, with only 20% of their number being over 46, and none were over 56. This compares with figures of 25% and 10% respectively for all workers. However, this breakdown of the data is slightly misleading, as the overall figures for all workers is very much influenced by the relatively aging group of craft workers. SOGAT clerical workers in fact constitute an even younger group of workers than the journalists (see Chapter 7).

#### b) Sex

table 6.9 : sex ratio of respondents

|     | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> |
|-----|-------------|---------------|
| NUJ | 85%         | 15%           |
| ALL | 82%         | 18%           |

The sex of the NUJ respondents was predominantly male (85%), only 15% being female. However, given the small sample numbers involved, it is difficult say whether this this ratio accurately reflects the proportion of women journalists in the newspaper industry. Nationally, approximately 29% of NUJ members are female, whilst 16% of the total NUJ membership work in the newspaper industry. Thus if the figure of 15% does approximately reflect the ratio of women to men in the latter industry, relatively few women in the NUJ must work on newspapers. Comparisons of the sex structure between all categories of workers is only of marginal use, as all the craft workers were male (accurately reflecting the sex ratio in the latter areas in the newspaper industry). However, the largest percentage of women respondents (59%) were from Sogat clerical chapels. Overall, 18% of respondents from all categories of worker were female.

c) Apprenticed/Indentured

table 6.10 : % of respondents who have served an apprenticeship

|     | Yes        | No         |
|-----|------------|------------|
| NUJ | <u>75%</u> | <u>25%</u> |
| ALL | 88%        | 12%        |

Only NUJ, NGA and SGB craft members were asked whether or not they had served an apprenticeship (being indentured is the more common term amongst journalists), as from the pilot questionnaire given to clerical workers, all responded 'no' to this question. (It is in fact unusual for any clerical worker to serve an official apprenticeship). 75% of journalists responded that they had been indentured, which compared to an overall figure for all workers of 88%, either indentured or apprenticed. Thus whilst most journalist have undergone some form of official training, they are slightly less likely to be indentured/apprenticed than craft workers

In summary then, journalists surveyed for this thesis tended to be younger, with a slightly higher percentage being males, than all workers, and were relatively less likely to be indentured than their craft counterparts.

4. Work Orientation and Perceptions of Changing Technology

Given the underlying analytical approach of the present study - exploring the interrelationship between sectionalism and changing technology, it seemed appropriate to begin the survey by examining both orientations to work, and perceptions of how technological development is affecting the latter.

In an attempt to discover whether or not journalists had a significantly different approach and attitude towards their jobs vis-a-vis other categories of worker\*, one set of questions in the questionnaire was designed using a traditionalist/instrumentalist dichotomy. By 'traditionalist' is meant an orientation that emphasises an intrinsic satisfaction with the job itself. And by 'instrumentalist' is meant an emphasis on 'bread and butter' aspects of work, and an orientation towards the worker's environment 'outside' of the workplace. In other words, the classical dichotomy put forward in the Lockwood

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\* However, at the sample survey stage, the clerical workers clearly felt this set of questions to be irrelevant to them, and thus it was decided to compare only journalist and craft groups on this issue.

and Goldthorpe 'Affluent Worker' studies in the late 1960s. Thus each category of worker was asked the following question:

Question -

"Number in order of priority (from 1-5) those factors that you feel were/are most important in your job in respect of both old and new technology - skills, control over the work process, wages, job security and job satisfaction".

The criteria is somewhat arbitrary, and in themselves problematic concepts, and it is not meant to indicate a strict division between individual workers who are either 'traditionalist' or 'instrumentalist'. But rather it is envisaged that this question will give a rough approximation of both the differences between groups of worker - ie journalist and craft, and to give some indication of the changing workgroup perception of the meaning of work given the radical impact of technological change.

The methodology employed for this question, interprets a high score (1-2) for the first two criteria (skills, and control over the work process) as indicating a traditionalist orientation to work. On the other hand, a high score for the last two criteria (wages and job security) indicate a more instrumentalist approach to work. The criterion of 'job satisfaction', the most problematic concept, is used to give some overall measurement of the worker's orientation towards his/her job.

a) Skill

table 6.11a : traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation to work re 'old' and 'new' technology

a) the importance of skill in the job

|     | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|     | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| NUJ | 38%        | 44% | 13%        | 22% | 50%       | 34% |
| ALL | 46%        | 28% | 15%        | 26% | 38%       | 46% |

The criteria of skill within an old technology environment was given a lower priority by journalists than all workers combined. Thus only 38% of NUJ members gave the 'skill' factor involved in the jobs a grading of 1 or 2, whilst 50% of the latter felt that the 'skill' factor was a low priority (grading 4-5) under hot-metal methods of production. 46% of all workers felt that the 'skill' content of their work was important (grading 1-2), whilst perhaps a surprisingly high proportion (38%) gave 'skill' a low rating (4-5). However, journalists felt that the

introduction of new technology enhanced the importance of the skill factor to their work, with 44% giving 'skills' a high rating, whilst only 34% gave it a low rating. In comparison, all workers clearly felt the skill factor to be less important to their work with the introduction of new technology, with only 28% recording a high grading, whilst 46% gave 'skills' a low grading under new technology.

Two factors are of note here. Firstly, there is a clear (if not unsurprising) contrast between the attitude of journalist toward new technology enhancing the relative importance of skills, and craft workers who saw new technology as reducing the priority given to skill in the labour process. But secondly, a rather more surprising finding is the relatively high percentage of both journalists and craft workers who record a low priority rating for 'skill' under both old and new technologies, thus arguing against any simplistic/idealistic conceptualisation of traditionally oriented print workers.

b) Control over the work process

table 6.11b: traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation to work re 'old' and 'new' technology

c) the importance of control over the work process

|     | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|     | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| NUJ | 6%         | 28% | 31%        | 17% | 63%       | 55% |
| ALL | 10%        | 15% | 20%        | 19% | 67%       | 66% |

The most striking aspect to note re the question of control over the work process, is the absolute low priority recorded by both journalist and all workers to this question, in respect of both old and new technologies. Thus this third criteria of a 'traditionalist' orientation to work, tends to challenge the idea that print workers exercised a high degree of 'control' over the labour process, at least as it is perceived by the workers themselves. More importantly for the purpose of the present section, judging by the journalist self-perceptions of this question, few see new technology as enhancing their ability to gain a greater 'control' over the labour process, an issue that has been much discussed within the union and print industry generally.

c) Wages

table 6.11c : traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation to work re 'old' and 'new' technology

d) the importance of wages in the job

|     | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|     | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| NUJ | 50%        | 50% | 19%        | 17% | 32%       | 34% |
| ALL | 43%        | 57% | 24%        | 19% | 32%       | 24% |

50% of journalist gave wages a high priority re importance to their work, in respect of both old and new technology. Whilst a slightly lower percentage of all workers (43%) gave a high priority to wages under old technology, but a larger proportion gave wages a higher priority under new technology (57%). Thus for journalist compared to other workers, there is little change in the relative importance of money wages to their work situation re changes in technology.

d) Job security

table 6.11d : traditionalist/intstrumentalist orientation to work re 'old' and 'new' technology

d) the importance of job security in the job

|     | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|     | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| NUJ | 19%        | 17% | 31%        | 28% | 50%       | 55% |
| ALL | 49%        | 49% | 15%        | 12% | 36%       | 38% |

It is on the issue of 'job security', that perhaps present the most stark comparison in attitude between journalists and all workers. Less than 20% of the former group give security a high priority within either an old or new technology context, whilst the corresponding figures for all workers is 49% on both occasions. Conversely, journalists give security a slightly lower priority under new technology compared with an old technology environment. Interestingly, one ex-craft worker who had recently transferred into the NUJ and editorial room at Paper 2, casually dismissed any suggestion that job security was a major factor in his transference, "I don't think I took that into consideration at all...as regards job security one is rather blaise about that nowadays anyway - any firm, in any place...I don't think job security comes into it..." One implication of this attitude was manifested by an NUJ FOC on Paper 1, who felt that the NGA' position on the maintenance of jobs was short-sighted, and was designed to create/save jobs for its own sake, as opposed to the NUJ's philosophy of creating meaningful jobs:

"I can see [the NGA FDC's] position from it. He's faced with losing 60% of his members and the more jobs he saves the better it is. I believe that is a short term view...You are then creating or allowing to go on a continuation of the problems you have had in the industry over the last God knows how many years...And I think you have to look in the end and say 'what is left in this business is worthwhile, is important, and a job...needs to be done...It's not just that jobs are being created, it's old working practices being re-introduced."  
 [PAPER1 : interview 25.6.86]

Thus on the basis of this criteria, it can be argued that journalists probably regard job security as a relatively unimportant aspect of their jobs because of a perceived greater mobility within the industry, and perhaps reflects a high level of job mobility prior to gaining entrance into the newspaper sector of printing. It could also be the case that journalists feel relatively secure in their position anyway compared to other workers, and thus job security is taken for granted somewhat.

e) Job satisfaction

table 6.11e : traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation re 'old' and 'new' technology

e) the importance of job satisfaction in the job

|     | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-----|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|     | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| NUJ | 100%       | 89% | 0%         | 6%  | 0%        | 6%  |
| ALL | 52%        | 49% | 21%        | 21% | 28%       | 30% |

The rather problematic term 'job satisfaction' was given a high priority by journalist using both old (100%) and new (89%) technology, but only about a half of all workers gave job satisfaction a high grading to both old (52%) and new (49%) technology. In fact, whilst only 6% of journalist gave 'job satisfaction' a low priority under new technology (and none at all under old technology), almost a third of all respondents felt that 'job satisfaction' was relatively unimportant to their working lives. Interestingly, there was only marginal change between old and new technology on this question for both groups, but clearly for journalists, this factor has been/is an important factor in their work. Furthermore, many journalists perceive a definite contrast of attitude in respect of craft workers, who it is felt manifest little evidence of 'job satisfaction'. This issue clearly created a tension between journalist and craft workers who had day-to-day workgroup contact with each other:

"There's a difference in attitude more than anything, and you notice this particularly if you're working downstairs late at night, when you've got a minimum staff on, and you're just hanging around in case something happens - a big story breaks... And there are a few printers downstairs who are setting the type and putting it in the paper for you...When you go down you want to change a story, or you want to put a new story in the paper, and all the printers do is moan about why they have got to change the paper; and you frequently hear them say 'why have we got to put this in, why have we got to do this'...As far as they are concerned you're interrupting what they are doing. They're just waiting to go home and they're really very irritated if something puts them off their stride. Whereas in many ways we're sitting around hoping that something's going to put us out of our stride...we're hoping for the big picture or the big story...Because that's what we're here for."  
[FAPER 1 : group discussion 20.6.86]

#### Summary

Generally, the five criteria used in this research to gain an approximate understanding of the 'traditionalist-instrumentalist' orientations of journalists, compared to other categories of worker, has produced a complex picture. Only on the problematic overall question of 'job satisfaction' are the journalist clearly more 'traditionalist' orientated within an old technology than are all workers combined. On the criteria of 'skill' and 'control' re old technology, journalist recorded a lower orientation than did all workers. However, a clearer pattern emerges with the introduction of new technology, with journalists increasingly giving 'traditionalist' aspects of 'work' orientation a higher priority, both compared to attitudes under old technology, and also compared to the falling priority given by all workers to 'traditionalist' aspects of work. However, given that 50% of journalist gave 'wages' a high priority within both an old and new technology context, a simplistic interpretation within the framework of a strictly delineated dichotomy between 'traditionalist' and 'instrumentalist' oriented worker should be avoided. But rather one should view the above dichotomy as two ideal type formulations, of what is in actual fact the extreme ends of a continuum. Moreover, in the perception of the worker, there will be no clear-cut delineation between the criteria selected here. For example, it may well be that the question of 'wages' not only feeds into the worker's general feeling of job satisfaction, but even 'skill' content. What the above statistical evidence has attempted to illustrate is the relative difference in attitude both between categories of worker and in relation to changes in attitude between old and new technology environments.

## 5. Perceptions of Changing Technology

Given the above complex picture of the orientation of journalists towards their working environment, attention is now turned to the ways in which journalists have perceived changes in work in respect to the introduction of new technology. Two questions were asked in the survey to ascertain both the experience of, and future expectations of changes in technology. The question asked was:

### Questions -

"What has been your experience of previous introductions of new technology (if any), and what are your expectations of future changes in technology, in respect of the following factors - skills; wages; stress; and job satisfaction. Has each criteria been improved, had little impact, or worsened."

Thus questions seven and eight were designed to develop further the understanding of the perceptions that journalist hold vis-a-vis their job content compared to other workers. But instead of examining the absolute level of importance given to the respective criteria, attention is focussed on relative changes in perception given the introduction of changing technology.

### a) Skill

table 6.12a : attitude towards changes in technology

#### a) impact on skill

|     | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-----|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|     | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
|     |          |        |               |        |          |        |
| NUJ | 78%      | 63%    | 14%           | 32%    | 7%       | 5%     |
| ALL | 37%      | 38%    | 26%           | 20%    | 37%      | 42%    |

Although there was a somewhat surprising tendency on the part of journalists to record a low priority towards the concept of skill in their job content, journalists still clearly felt that both previous and future changes in technology would enhance the skill content of their work (78% and 63% respectively). This was in sharp contrast to all categories of worker (including both craft and clerical), a large percentage who tended to feel that technological change has had/would have a 'deskilling' affect on their jobs (37% and 42% respectively). This general trend is not surprising given the very different immediate impact that the introduction and use of technological change was having on the differentiated categories of worker (as explained in Chapter 4). Even so, it is interesting to note that in the context of all workers assessed together, only 37% felt that new



technology acted as a 'deskilling' agent. In other words, a majority believed that technology had either improved, or had little impact on the skill requirement of their jobs. Even more interestingly, whilst the absolute percentages are high in both cases, despite a very positive experience of previous changes in technology re skill requirements, a slightly lower percentage envisaged such a positive impact on skills given any further changes in production technology. The complex nature of 'skill' content involved in any labour process is illustrated by the following remark made during a group discussion, by a journalist who emphasised the critical factor of the use of, rather than the fact of new technology:

"If the system operates correctly, it will free people to think more clearly about the product, it will free people to be more creative, but only if the system operates properly...The sub-editor as we know him may become more like the American re-write man...and perhaps some people will just tick-off copy that's produced from the re-write..."  
[PAPER 1 : group discussion 20.6.86]

Another journalist from a different paper made a more direct attack on management re the introduction of new technology:

"...I think when the employers bring in this type of technology they expect more in less time. And I personally feel it reduces quality...New technology doesn't mean quality control, that's manually done. And with new technology coupled with the employers demand for more, both to cover their outlay and viability as a firm, this doesn't give better quality control, in fact it reduces the quality."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 22.10.86]

Thus implicitly and explicitly in the above two quotes, one can see the complex intertwining of the concept of 'skill' with both the way managements implement change, and the quality of the final product.

This contrasts with all workers, who whilst recording basically pessimistic attitudes in respect of skill and technological change, in relative terms were surprisingly optimistic about future possible changes in technology. Nevertheless, at the end of the day, there was a fairly consistent attitude from both journalists and all workers regarding past experiences of technological change, and future expectations [86]. Moreover, there were clear differences between the journalists' positive perception of the relationship between skill and technological change, and all workers largely negative response to this question.

b) Wages

table 6.12b : attitude towards changes in technology

b) impact on wages

|     | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-----|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|     | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| NUJ | 43%      | 41%    | 50%           | 47%    | 7%       | 12%    |
| ALL | 51%      | 32%    | 40%           | 46%    | 9%       | 23%    |

Journalists tended to be split fairly evenly between those who thought that wage levels had improved as a direct result of changes in technology (43%), and those who felt that the latter had had little real impact on wage rates (50%). Predictions on this question for future changes in technology were equally divided, with a slight decline in the percentage of journalists who felt positively about this issue. Figures for all workers were of a similar pattern, with 51% responding that previous technology changes had in fact improved wage rates, although a significant minority were pessimistic on this criteria for the future (23%). Out of the four criteria examined in this section, the direct impact of changes in technology on wage rates is relatively easy to measure, resting as it does on empirical evidence. For instance, many 'new technology' deals in the newspaper/printing industry have resulted in 'new technology payments' as a specific element in the wages structure. The latter was a specific NUJ policy recommendation from the late 1970s for example [87]. There is no scope in the present thesis to assess the degree of success in obtaining these payments, but just as an example from one provincial newspaper, day shift sub-editors (5 year seniors) received a new technology payment equalling 8.5% of their annual gross salary, after a direct input deal had been signed at the paper [88].

Nevertheless, workgroup perceptions, even on this relatively straightforward matter should not be taken as absolute proof, as for example, some workers may well perceive a decline in overall union ability to gain 'high' general wage increases given the negative aspects of technological change, such as the 'deskilling' factor for some workgroups.

c) Stress

table 6.12c : attitude towards changes in technology

c) impact on stress

|     | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-----|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|     | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
|     |          |        |               |        |          |        |
| NUJ | 8%       | 11%    | 61%           | 47%    | 31%      | 42%    |
| ALL | 18%      | 8%     | 32%           | 38%    | 49%      | 53%    |

The criteria of stress was introduced into the survey, as it became apparent that for many of the workers themselves, this was an important issue, and one that a priori can be said to interact with other criteria used to assess the work orientations and attitudes to changing technology re the various workgroups, such as 'skill' and 'job satisfaction'.

For the journalists, although a majority felt that previous introductions of new technology had had little impact on stress levels in their work (61%), almost a third (31%) thought that the degree of stress in their jobs had worsened. Indeed, a larger percentage (42%) felt even more pessimistic about the future extent of stress using updated technological systems. This 'stress' criteria in fact produced amongst the journalists the most negative response of all four criteria used in the survey, suggesting that whilst in other aspects of the job, NUJ members felt relatively content, they had definite fears about the growing pressure that computerisation would place upon their work as journalists. For example, during a group discussion at Paper Two, it was stated:

"...the biggest thing is the stress, because there's so much more responsibility on us to get things right first time. You have this 'what you see is what you get' (WYSIWYG) drummed into us...Whereas before you used to write the stories and think 'well it doesn't matter really about spelling mistakes...somebody will notice it and the error will get caught'. Now it doesn't, and you're very much aware of that especially in the mornings when there's much work and...you're under pressure to work faster."

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 28.10.86]

At the same Paper, the problem of older workers adapting to changing work processes, and certain health and safety problems such as "feeling nauseus" when first working the VDUs, were also mentioned in the context of increasing stress. Summing-up future fears re new technology in this respect, a NUJ chapel representative at Paper 1 warned:

"Under new technology...the scene changes... but where I think it's going to be different for us [sub-editors] than it is for other groups of workers is...in that you have people ...who are using VDUs...for long periods. But also doing creative work on them...therefore they're going to be under more stress, in a sense they're going to have to be fitter, or they're going to have to have very special conditions of work."  
 [PAPER 1 : interview 20.6.86]

For all workers, the same trend is apparent, although in a more extreme form. Thus 53% felt that future introductions of new technology would worsen stress levels in their jobs.

d) Job Satisfaction

table 6.12d : attitude towards changes in technology

d) impact on job satisfaction

|     | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-----|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|     | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| NUJ | 50%      | 47%    | 43%           | 42%    | 7%       | 11%    |
| ALL | 30%      | 28%    | 34%           | 27%    | 36%      | 45%    |

For journalists, perceptions divided fairly evenly between those who felt that previous introductions of new technology had improved 'job satisfaction' (50%), and those that felt it had had little impact (43%). There was a correspondingly mixed belief that future changes in technology would be either positive (47%) or neutral (42%) re job satisfaction. Given the very high absolute importance that journalists attach to this criteria (see table 6.11e), it can only be assumed that journalists get a high degree of job satisfaction working new technology systems. As one NUJ member put it concerning the 'creative' element in journalistic work:

"I know when I was writing features...you know you you sort of re-write things and re-write things, and in the end you couldn't be bothered. But on screen it's much easier to move parts around and change things, so you tend to work them over more. Another good thing as well - it's frustrating if you're subbing and you make a lot of corrections, and send them out onto the floor and they don't get made...but at least now if they don't get in there's nobody to blame but ourselves."  
 [PAPER 2 : group discussion 28.10.86]

There was a much more diffuse set of perceptions from all workers regarding the effect that changes in technology had on job satisfaction. Thus only about a quarter of respondents felt that new technology had had or would have a positive impact on job satisfaction, whilst a sizable minority believed that changes in technology had been and would be to the detriment of job satisfaction (36% & 45% respectively). The findings here are predictable, as for groups other than journalists, the whole question of the introduction of new technology is problematic in the extreme, especially for the craft workgroups. Thus 'job satisfaction' will obviously be intertwined with general attitudes and perceptions about a large range of issues connected to 'new technology'.

e) All Four Variables Considered

The four previous tables have attempted to show in detail the attitudes and perceptions of journalists to changes in technology, contrasted to those of all workers. The figures below summarise the four criteria of skill, wages, stress and job satisfaction in order to illustrate in very broad terms the extent to which the journalist workgroups perceive past and future introductions of changing technology.

table 6.12e : attitude towards changes in technology

e) skill, wages, stress, satisfaction

|     | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-----|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|     | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
|     |          |        |               |        |          |        |
| NUJ | 45%      | 41%    | 42%           | 42%    | 13%      | 18%    |
| ALL | 32%      | 27%    | 34%           | 33%    | 35%      | 41%    |

As can be seen in table 6.12e, taking all criteria into account, journalists tended to view both previous and future introductions of changing technology as being either positive (45%/41%) or neutral (42%). Only a minority of NUJ members felt that new technology was on the whole a negative influence on their working environments. However, there was some shift in opinion emphasising the negative aspects of changing technology, in respect of expectations of future changes (18%), compared to experiences of previous change (13%). But clearly, the most important contrast in the statistics occur in contrasting the attitudes of journalists to those of all workers, the latter of whom were much more divided over perceptions of the impact of new technology. However, as with the journalists, all workers responded slightly more negatively to future changes in technology (41%) compared to the response for previous changes in technology (35%). Nevertheless, the absolute figures for the negative column

journalists who responded negatively, and the large minority of all workers who responded in the negative towards changing technology. The generally optimistic journalists view of new technology albeit within a complex framework of uncertainty, can be seen in the statement of an NUJ FOC who put it thus:

"I have fears for the ability to sub on screen... for someone like me who's been subbing for 10-15 years...So how much it takes to change I just don't know...Whether you sub as hard; whether the advantages that it brings are going to be outweighed by the disadvantages I just don't know...All I can say is that most people who have worked it love it, they think it's great fun."

[PAPER 1 : interview 25.6.86]

## 6. Attitudes Towards Newspaper Trades Unions Nationally

At this point, attention is turned directly towards the concept of 'sectionalism', and its manifestation amongst the ranks of NUJ members, compared and contrasted to all workers.

### a) Involvement/Importance of Union

It seemed a useful exercise to ascertain in the first instance, the attitude of the journalist workgroups towards involvement in their own union - the NUJ. Two questions were asked in this respect: firstly from a factual point of view:

Question -

"Have you held/do you hold a trade union position at any of the following levels - national, regional/branch/chapel."

table 6.13 : degree of trade union involvement

|     | <u>National</u> | <u>Local</u> | <u>None</u> |
|-----|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| NUJ | 5%              | 55%          | 40%         |
| ALL | 1%              | 45%          | 53%         |

The response to this question revealed a high level of involvement of rank & file union members in their unions, for both the NUJ and all unions. Hence 60% of journalists surveyed had held, or currently hold, a union post either at national or local level (primarily at the chapel level). This compares to a figure of 46% for all workers. Thus a significant majority of journalists, and a large minority of all workers are not only union members, but union activists as well.

The second question to be asked concerning the workers orientation towards his/her own union was designed to gain an approximate measure of how important the workers perceived their union to be in respect of their daily working environments:

Question -

"In respect of your working life in general, do you feel that your union is: very important; fairly important; or not very important."

table 6.14 : how important is your union

|     | <u>Very</u> | <u>Fairly</u> | <u>Not<br/>Very</u> |
|-----|-------------|---------------|---------------------|
| NUJ | 45%         | 40%           | 15%                 |
| ALL | 46%         | 42%           | 11%                 |

The response to this question again showed similar trends between the journalists and all workers, with both groups recording a reasonably high priority vis-a-vis their union's importance. 85% of NUJ members felt the Union to be either very or fairly important, whilst an even higher 89% of all workers felt similarly towards their respective unions. To some, the NUJ member's response may sound surprising, given its history and the tensions existant between the concepts of 'professionalism' and 'trade unionism' within the ranks of the Union's membership. Indeed, many journalists have internalised the commonly held belief that the NUJ membership is not trade union oriented on the whole, as is illustrated by the following comment by a NUJ branch representative:

"The NGA is a much stronger union than the NUJ. The NUJ by its very nature of having in many respects middle class people belonging to it... because of that they tend not to be so union oriented. One of the things the NGA said about our union is that you've got people who are non-union - the IoJ which is another organisation - and they can't understand why that is. But I think the reason is purely because journalists are not so union oriented."  
[PAPER 2 : interview 28.10.86]

This perception of the 'weakness' of journalist unionism is in many ways misleading. Firstly, it implies a rather folk-lawish view of the 'strength and orientation of craft trade unionism in print. But secondly and more importantly, it reflects a one-dimensional perspective of the nature of 'trade unionism' in general. Donald MacIntyre, a 'Wapping refusenik', wrote during the strike that for many journalists, belonging to 'George Orwell's union' (the NUJ) meant more than just the important instrumental reasons for joining any union, but also "for many new recruits there was a touch of magic about the NUJ press card that went beyond that" [89].

Whilst the latter may be an interesting partial insight into the meaning of union importance re many NUJ members, more importantly it could be argued that the member's perception of the NUJ reflects the belief that the Union can act as a vital mechanism in securing either a strong 'trade unionism' within the newspaper/printing industry, or an agency for promoting the occupational status of journalists along 'professional' lines. In other words, there is no simple or straightforward understanding of the relevance of a particular union (ie the NUJ) to the lives of its membership. In short, the Union means different things to different people. Another journalist for instance, whilst believing firmly in the importance of collective organisation, argued that:



"One of the reasons I went abroad I must admit was because I suffered the strikes of 1977-78, which were a total waste of time...I always had a double opinion of the union - I don't think it should be a closed shop...But secondly I think everyone should choose to join. I think that the general attitude should be that I feel that my part is to be a member of the union and try and make it work for me."

[PAPER 2 : 28.10.86]

Hence, the figures given in table seven have to be interpreted with care. However, the above qualifications notwithstanding, it is clear from both sets of figures that newspaper workers in general are both active and have a high regard for the place of their unions in the newspaper industry. Given this factor, the following sets of statistics primarily concerning attitudes towards other unions should be interpreted as reflecting the attitudes and perceptions of not just unionised, but union oriented workgroups. Of course, this should not be read as implying that one should expect a less sectionalist and more 'solidaristic' response from the workgroups surveyed, but rather that any patterns that do emerge in the following tables should shed some light on the relationship between between workers who are highly union oriented, and the degree to which this leads to either sectionalism or solidarity regarding other union memberships.

#### b) National Unions Approach

Moving on from the workgroup's attitude to and involvement with their own union, the third question in this section of the questionnaire asked the following:

Question\* -

"What do you think of the print unions approach (nationally) towards changing technology: too defensive; about right; not defensive enough."

table 6.15 : journalist perceptions of national unions approach to new technology

|       | <u>Too Defensive</u> | <u>About Right</u> | <u>Not defensive Enough</u> |
|-------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| NUJ   | 21%                  | 68%                | 10%                         |
| NGA   | 63%                  | 31%                | 6%                          |
| SOGAT | 61%                  | 31%                | 8%                          |

-----  
 \* Given the nature of this question, whilst all categories of worker were asked this question, it is not possible to compare NUJ members response to those of all workers. (Following chapters will examine the attitudes to this issue vis-a-vis the other workgroups involved in this study).

Of course, the word 'defensive' is itself a loaded term, it would be difficult to find any term used in this context that would be value-free. Thus careful attention should be paid when interpreting the quantitative response to this question. Generally, journalists felt that compared to other unions, the NUJ had got a reasonably correct attitude towards the issue of new technology (68%). The latter finding is perhaps not surprising, as the following quote indicates:

"The NUJ...have not done a bad job, because they haven't gone overboard in just defending journalist's jobs, or just defending their union's position. They have tried to look at what it means to the NGA. They haven't run away from their responsibilities...I think it's right that they consider what's happening to all the print unions in the industry...at the end of the day, journalists themselves will carry responsibility for what happens to people in the industry, we can't run away from it. We may all feel sad we behaved like a lot of pigs in the farm yard...So I think we have to behave in a civilised way about it."

[PAPER 1 : interview 20.6.86]

Concomitantly, journalists believed that the other two main print unions - the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82, had been too defensive in their approach to new technology (63% & 61% respectively). About a third (31%) of NUJ members felt that the other two unions had adopted the right approach, whilst only a small minority believed that the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82 had not been defensive enough - 6% and 8% respectively.

At first sight, it appears that only two interpretations on the above findings are possible. That is, either the NUJ in an objective sense has a more 'correct' approach to new technology than the other two print unions; or that journalists tend to be 'sectionalist', and subjectively perceive the other unions as having the 'wrong' attitude to the introduction of new technology. However, the situation is more complex than the above findings would at first indicate. Attitudes towards the NGA'82 in particular were far from straight forward, and although much negativity was expressed re this craft union, many journalist's held a grudging respect towards the NGA'82:

"There are two sides of the coin to the NGA. On the one hand...they are very conservative ...like an animal guarding its territory...On the other hand that does have a very positive aspect, because in fact they have defended their jobs very well. You can criticise them towards their attitude towards new technology, one could say it's over defensive etc. But in fact by being 'over defensive' they have in fact managed to

preserve their jobs for a decade or longer, which few other unions would have managed to do...It may be a bugger for everybody else in the industry, and I would have thought that...its been a fairly successful policy. Certainly I think they've strengthened our union [NUJ] in a lot of ways, because they have got a very good attitude towards trade unionism...If the idea of a trade union is to safeguard the interest of its members, then I think they do that rather well."

[PAPER 1 : interview 20.6.86]

Furthermore, the NUJ member's apparently positive view of their own union is an over-simplification. Many journalists interviewed for instance, argued that there was much criticism of the national leadership of the NUJ amongst rank & file members. This criticism however manifested itself in two opposing ways. Firstly, a number of NUJ members felt that the Union had been too defensive in its approach to changes in technology (21%). In other words, that the NUJ national officials had not been 'open' enough in their negotiations with management towards a joint approach with other unions, particularly the NGA'82. For example, one FOC from Paper Two argued that nationally, the NUJ leadership had tried to prevent the local NUJ chapel from negotiating jointly with the local NGA'82 chapel over management's proposals to introduce direct input technology. This was counter to the majority wishes of the NUJ chapel, who felt that the best way forward for all the workers at the newspaper was a joint new technology agreement between journalist and craft chapels:

"We were in a position where we felt time was running out, we felt through indications from the company...if they didn't reach agreement with us, then they might try to reach agreement with one of us [chapels], and we foresaw one of us being locked out...but at the same time nationally our officers were telling us not to reach agreement because they wanted us to wait for the 'Accord'\*..."

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 28.10.86]

Eventually, the NUJ chapel decided not to accept the NUJ's Executive's recommendation to delay signing an agreement with the NGA'82, and implemented a chapel/plant level joint agreement over the introduction of direct input. As another NUJ representative at the newspaper put it:

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\* The national level 'Accord' re joint NUJ/NGA negotiations over new technology, which at the time that the FOC is referring to (c.1985) was still being negotiated between the two unions. See Chapter 5 for details.

"They [NUJ Executive] just didn't seem to know what the situation was here...our Managing Director was going to get this new technology in somehow... He [MD] wouldn't have hesitated, he would have locked us out. We had to get the best deal possible, and the best deal possible was to go for it with the NGA."

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 28.10.86]

This then, was the attitude towards the NUJ from one NUJ chapel, which saw the national officialdom of the union as being too defensive in its approach to inter-union relations. But opposing this viewpoint, a number of journalists at Papers One and Two (10%) argued that the NUJ leadership had not been defensive enough over the question of inter-union relations, particularly re the problem of job demarcation. A NUJ FOC at Paper One, had this to say about the relationship between the NUJ's leadership and its rank & file:

"Loyalty to the NUJ is a pretty delicate commodity... The opportunity that new technology gives for ordering a newspaper to editorial rather than production requirements is something that people want to maximise...We're very wary of the national leadership, which has already been approached by the NGA with a view to some development along the lines of the provincial agreement...Don't think we're too keen on that position, we want to do things that suit us in here."

[PAPER 1 : interview 17.6.86]

Despite the large majority of NUJ members seemingly being in accord with the official Union's policy towards new technology, the two opposing manifestations of divergence within the the NUJ illustrates the continuation of a historical tension within the Union. For instance, Carr-Saunders/Wilson 1933 commented that the 1926 General Strike brought to a head tension between the more 'progressive' trade union oriented NUJ leadership, and the predominantly 'conservative' rank & file (p.269). More recently, Clerverley 1976 argued a similar point, "for NUJ militancy is soundly based in bourgeois capitalistic self-interest. This may not be true of their leaders, but it is certainly true of the supporters from whom they derive their power" (p.146).

Whilst both Carr-Saunders/Wilson and Clerverley offer little empirical (or theoretical) justification for their views, and almost certainly present an over-simplified dichotomy, certainly there is much evidence of a constant divergence of attitude within the NUJ, although by no means in the above framework. Perhaps the News International (Wapping) dispute demonstrated most clearly the complex nature of attitudes within the NUJ, and the continuing existence of rank & file/activist/leadership divergence. For example all the 'Wapping refuseniks'

present at the NUJ's 1986 ADM (bar one) spoke against disciplining those journalists who had gone into work at Rupert Murdoch's new plant. The General Secretary also advised against this course of action, but the ADM voted in favour of disciplining the Wapping journalists, many making it clear that they wanted mass expulsions to take place [90]. That the Union's National Executive overrode this decision (as well as an equally contentious policy decision over the American bombing of Libya in 1986), was for one journalist a clear indication "that channels of policy formulation have been split asunder from the channels of implementation" [91]. This particular NUJ member went on to argue that:

"Policy is formulated by individuals who choose to attend branch meetings who pass motions onto an annual delegate meeting made up largely of the same individuals. But policy is implemented by a collective, the chapel, via industrial councils and the national executive. At no point do the two structures mesh."  
 [JOURNALIST July 1986 : p.14]

This is of course a familiar 'union democracy' theme, but it does illustrate the wide held perception within the NUJ of a major divergence of opinion within the hierarchy of the Union. However, it is far from clear historically how this divergence is likely to manifest itself. Thus from both the quantitative and qualitative evidence given above, it can be argued that tension existant within the NUJ between the rank & file, the Union's activists, and leadership, reflect both sectionalist and solidaristic streams within the Union, which have no clear-cut organisational delineation.

c) Attitude Towards Union Merger

Attention is now turned to one of the central questions in the study, this being the question of print/newspaper industry union amalgamation.

Question -

"Bearing in mind the impact of changing technology, what is your opinion of amalgamation of the three main print unions (NUJ/SOGAT/NGA): a good thing overall; a necessary evil; unnecessary."

table 6.16 : attitudes towards the merger of the 3 print unions: the NUJ, SOGAT '82 & the NGA '82

|     | Good thing | Necessary evil | Unnecessary | Not Sure |
|-----|------------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| NUJ | 50%        | 14%            | 36%         | -        |
| ALL | 63%        | 16%            | 16%         | 4%       |

The most outstanding point to note in the response to this question was the very large majorities of both journalists (64%) and all workers (83%) who felt that the creation of 'one union for the print' was a necessity, given the radical changes that had taken place in production technology during the 1980s. However, within these overall figures, 14% of journalists, and 16% of all workers still saw union merger as 'a necessary evil' rather than a good thing in itself. Indeed, a sizable minority within the NUJ believed that amalgamation was unnecessary (36%), even given the radical impact of technological change. Only 16% of all workers responded negatively to this question, reflecting the very real problems that were currently being experienced by newspaper workers, particularly over job demarcation, and the apparent common sense logic that trade union merger would ease many of these problems.

In many ways, it would make more sense to analyse the figures given in table 6.15 as a dichotomy between those basically in favour of union merger as a good thing in principle (column one), and those who feel that ideally the existing unions should retain their autonomy and identity (columns two and three). For this latter grouping, the question becomes one of pragmatism as opposed to principle. For the former group, 'one union in the print' was both logical and desirable:

"I don't know whether it's likely but it will be a good thing...when I first joined the print trade there were fourteen separate unions involved in negotiations, and I think the negotiations have got easier as gradually the number has been reduced. I can't understand why there isn't one print union..."

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 22.10.86]

A number of journalists advocated some form of 'federalism', at least in the short-term, whereby each existant union maintained a degree of self-identity, "I would like to see both unions working side by side, almost a merger, but still with some kind of distinction between what is traditionally a NGA job and traditionally a NUJ job" (Paper 2 : autumn 1986). The above quotes clearly manifest a positive approach to the idea of union merger, but there were other journalists with equally clear opinions against amalgamation in principle. One aspect that was highlighted by a number of journalist was the theme of occupational sectionalism:

"[Union merger] would lump us in with the production side...(my father was in fact a compositor)...and I would say that we are the more...a profession...Traditionally journalists are perhaps more academically minded...and I think the production side... the nature of their jobs is entirely different, and I'm concerned that we keep our own

identity...The actual unions...should remain separate...journalists are a different breed of people than printers."

[PAPER 2 : interview 28.10.86]

In a similar vein, only emphasising more of the antagonisms that exist between journalist and craft workers, another journalist had this to say:

"I don't think they're two professions or activities that would mix very well really. There's a long standing traditional sense of difference and even hostility amongst the journalists towards NGA people; a lot of it borne of frustrations in the past over the disputes and even delays over the introduction of new technology. A lot of journalists think that the NGA has been 'luddite' over new technology and that now things are beginning to move, the NGA largely deserves the pasting it's getting from people like Murdoch, and that the journalists are therefore rather out of sympathy with them. And the idea of joining with them in the union, although...it would have industrial/negotiating benefits, wouldn't make sense for ...the majority of journalists I believe, in a sort of social and personal and newspaper sense."

[PAPER 1 : interview 23.6.86]

The theme outlined in the above quote regarding the antagonisms between journalists and craft workers was apparent in group discussions with a number of journalists. In more specific terms, many NUJ members still felt hostility towards NGA '82 members for crossing NUJ picket lines during past disputes:

"I can remember being on a picket line [in 1978] outside here...and the printers [NGA members] had a bridge which goes over between the personnel office and the same building as...over looks the gate. I can always remember the printers coming out on that platform area there and jeering and laughing at us. And we didn't get virtually any support from the printers...And we always said at the time that one day you are going to need our help, because new technology will mean that we will be able to do your job..."

[PAPER 2 : interview 28.10.86]

Clearly then, much antipathy exists on behalf of NUJ members towards the 'production' workers. However, given that there exist within the ranks of the NUJ an approximate 50/50 split between those generally favourable towards union merger, and those essentially against, it can be argued that journalists are very much divided over the

issue of amalgamation with the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82. When analysing the qualitative research material, it becomes apparent that it is not just the case that one distinct group of journalists favour merger, whilst an equally distinct group are against amalgamation, but rather a tension also exists within each grouping. This tension is brought to the surface directly over the question of union amalgamation, but indirectly reflects the workers perceptions and attitudes towards other groups of workers in general. In other words, attitudes towards merger highlight the concepts of 'sectionalism' and 'solidarity' in the most salient form.

Attitudes towards union amalgamation in the printing/newspaper industry then, are complex. For example, accepting the many sided imperatives for merger during a group discussion, it soon became apparent that there was much mistrust as to the NGA'82s motives for amalgamation:

"In the past I've always felt very strongly that there's a case for one media union, for lots of reasons - for political reasons, for straightforward trade union reasons, and for practical reasons because we're all in the same business...But when you get down to the grass roots level...I'm not too crazy about the idea. When you start analysing what's involved, when you start reading what the NUJs trying to hammer out with the NGA: the NGA for obvious reasons are very keen to protect its own people's jobs, as we are...But I've got a strong feeling that the NUJ would be swamped by the NGA, and whereas there's a great argument for trade union solidarity... I think there's a big danger that the NGA is concerned with its interests, and not with the wider interests of print unions; whereas I think the NUJ - its leaders certainly, have got a more idealistic view of amalgamation..."  
[PAPER 1 : group discussion 20.686]

A similar dilemma was echoed in the statement of a NUJ FOC on the same paper:

"...what the hell do we have...in common with electricians, or copy takers, or library or tappers, except that we work for the same paper. If I were to leave [Paper 1]...I would go somewhere else as a journalist, and that is the body of people I'm involved in. We have particular needs, particular problems...If you are asking me as a trade unionist whether I think we ought to have one union, then the answer is yes, it's



obviously the right thing to do. But whether it will ever actually be done, or whether it will be wise to do it, is another question, and that I'm not sure about"

[PAPER 1 : interview 25.6.86]

The above two quotes then, illustrate the tension existant amongst journalists over the question of union amalgamation, but also reflect more generally on the complex character of 'sectionalism' within the NUJ.

## 7. Attitudes Towards Other Workgroups

If the large scale question of union amalgamation produced a problematic response, what then of the smaller scale issues that union merger raises in practice at the shop-floor level? Three issues appeared particularly crucial in this respect: firstly, the question of pay differentials; secondly the problem of job demarcation; and thirdly male trade unionist's attitudes towards women workers. The first two issues are perhaps of more obvious relevance to the question of inter-union/workgroup relations in the newspaper industry, given the long standing traditions and complex pay structure of newspaper workers (see for instance Sisson 1976), and the impact that changing technology is having on traditional demarcation structures in the industry (see Chapter Four). However, the question of women in the newspaper production process is both historically important, and also of increasing contemporary relevance, particularly in its interrelation with 'sectionalism' (see Cockburn 1983).

### a) Impact of New Technology on Inter-Chapel Relations

Before turning attention to the above three issues, it seemed worth asking the respondents what their general impressions of the impact of new technology had been regarding inter-chapel relations:

Question -

"What in your opinion has been the impact of new technology in respect of inter-chapel relations at the shop-floor level."

table 6.17 : impact of new technology on inter-chapel relations

|     | <u>Improved</u> | <u>Little Impact</u> | <u>Worsened</u> | <u>Not Sure</u> |
|-----|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| NUJ | 66%             | 22%                  | 11%             | -               |
| ALL | 40%             | 30%                  | 25%             | 5%              |

Perhaps not surprsingly, journalists tended to view new technology as having a beneficial effect on inter-chapel relations (66%), whilst only 11% felt that it had worsened chapel relations. NUJ members were more positive about this compared with all workers, who had mixed feelings on this issue. Hence only 40% of the latter felt that new technology had improved inter-chapel relations, and a sizeable minority (25%) thought that relations had worsened because of changes in technology. Again, these figures need handling with care, as it is by no means clear that each worker will use the same criteria for assessing the impact of technology on inter-chapel relations. For example, one NUJ FOC argued that his chapel

had more contact with other non-journalist chapels in recent years than would have been the case five or more years ago, but this didn't not necessarily mean relations were getting easier:

"I have perfectly reasonable contact with the NGA officials, which perhaps five-ten years ago would never have been the case. But our interests are fundamentally divergent. This is a great problem for us."

Emphasising just how divergent the chapels interests can be perceived to be, the same FOC went on to say:

"I think that in terms of the way the system is actually structured and operated, there is a great deal of room for our members to plan it themselves. But in so doing they can be planning other people out of jobs. How many printers do we want? How much will we still want to rely on paper? If we take the 'Atex' ethic all the way, and say we don't want any paper on news desks...then you don't have anybody to carry it off and deliver it. Do we make that decision on the grounds of what we want editorially, or what will preserve a few more jobs for SOGAT messengers. We are in a horribly difficult dilemma there, we actually have to take decisions that involve other people's jobs...That's what you discover consultation means..."

[PAPER 1 : interview 17.6.86]

Many newspaper houses (and print shops generally) have 'Federated chapels', which means that most (if not all) unionised workgroup representatives meet at regular intervals to discuss collective bargaining issues, and for purposes of swapping information generally. However, the existence of 'Federated house chapels' is only a partial indicator of inter-chapel relations. Indeed, during times of stress, these 'Federations' can often be viewed with suspicion by the individual chapel members, who see its existence as a possible prelude to a fully fledged union merger. Given the position of a sizeable minority of NUJ members to the question of union mergers, it is likely to be the case that 'improved' chapel relations for the journalists, often involve a sense of growing NUJ importance vis-a-vis chapel relations with management, and the concomitant declining position of dominance once enjoyed by the craft and production trade unions in plant level bargaining. Another NUJ FOC from Paper One summed this factor up thus:

"I know there are members of my chapel who are very suspicious of 'the Federated', because they believe this is the thin end of the wedge towards one union. If I could be shown that it would work, that is the way we ought to go...But certainly what happens after technology, and it's already started to happen, is the increased power of the NUJ..."

[PAPER 1 : interview 25.6.86]

Thus whilst perceptions amongst the journalists tend to be positive re the impact of changing technology on inter-chapel relations, this should not be simply equated with the erosion of sectionalism, but rather a realignment of perceptions of relative union strength, and structural changes in collective bargaining procedures brought about by the changes in the production process.

#### b) Pay Differentials

On the issue of pay differentials, the following question was asked in order to gain some idea as to how the workgroups might respond to inter-chapel relations after one union in the print had been created:

Question -

"In a situation where there was only 1 union in the print industry, what would your attitude be to pay differentials: should they be maintained at present levels; revised along a two-tier skilled/semi-skilled basis; or phased out completely."

table 6.18 : attitudes towards pay differentials

|     | <u>Maintained</u> | <u>Narrowed</u> | <u>Phased Out</u> |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| NUJ | 22%               | 50%             | 28%               |
| ALL | 31%               | 42%             | 28%               |

Interestingly, a larger percentage of all workers desired the maintenance of existing pay differentials (31%), than was the case for journalists (22%). This may have been due to the NUJ membership's perception of lower rates of pay compared to their craft colleagues, and hence the desire to erode this apparently disadvantageous position (see present chapter, section A). This perception of the craft union's collective bargaining strength was in fact viewed as both sectionalist, but also beneficiary to the NUJ:

"...there has been a great demarcation - that journalists wrote the stuff, the NGA put it into type, and SOGAT did the running around... And in an industry that was highly profitable over a given period...the money element has

never been a problem. You also finish up with the most fragile commodity that has ever been produced - a newspaper is dead a day old...And that gave the NGA as the union in the vanguard strength to improve salaries all the way round. The NUJ has benefited from NGA trade unionism, certainly in the salaries, to a lesser extent the conditions it has got."

[FAPER 1 : interview 25.6.86]

As was stated in Section A of this chapter, it is difficult to assess the relative pay levels of the three categories of worker surveyed in this research, although it is certainly the case that clerical workers receive the lowest rates of the three. Comparing journalist with craft rates is more problematic, and as far as the researcher knows, there has been no systematic academic study done on this question (although the respective unions have over the years issued regular propaganda about their need to catch-up with each other). Just by way of a very limited piece of evidence, gained from the provinces [92] Paper Two's formula for transferring ex-craft workers from the composing to the editorial room, was to make a one-off payment to the transferee of any lost income through pay differentials (multiplied by a factor of four). In April 1986, four compositors transferred into the editorial room, and under the formula, received a lump-sum (buy-out) payment of: £8,096.88p; £2,376.88p; £4,605.28p; £4,605.28p respectively. The figures differ because of seniority and day/night shift rates. Nevertheless, on the rough estimate of averaging out the four 'buy-out' payments (£4,921.08p), and dividing this by a factor of four (the buy-out formula), one can argue that the average compositor's salary was approximately £1230.27p above that of the average journalist. Thus, on this rough estimate, the NUJ claim that they lag behind NGA pay rates has some merit.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most interesting aspect of this question, but one difficult to quantify, is the apparently low profile given by journalist's interviewed to the question of pay differentials. For example, on examining the transcripts from the tape recorded group discussions and interviews, some two dozen or so separate references were found regarding the question of job demarcation, whilst only one reference, quoted above, touched upon pay differentials. The most likely answer to this is that given the radical implications of new technology on the structure of the labour process, journalists are more interested in demarcation issues than in pay. Even so, a large majority of both groupings desired the erosion (to a greater or lesser extent) of pay differentials between journalist, clerical and craft workgroups (78% of journalists, and 70% of all workers). Given that the question was posited in relation to there being only one union in the industry, on this aspect of inter-chapel relations, there would seem to be a relatively positive attitude to creating standardised conditions of employment.

c) Job demarcation

A similar question posed re pay differentials was asked regarding job demarcation. However, it is important to note that the question of demarcation has different implications re 'sectionalism' than does the issue of pay differentials. Clearly, the more a workgroup desires the reduction of differentials, the more we can say it is manifesting attitudes of solidarity rather than sectionalism. However, given the radical implications of changing technology on the structure of the production process, desiring the erosion of job demarcation lines, may imply either a wish to end sectionalisation within the newspaper industry, or a desire to do away with job tasks that have been made technically superfluous. Hence, care must be taken in interpreting the figures below.

Question -

"In a situation where there was only 1 union in the print industry, what would your attitude be to the demarcation of jobs: jobs to be allocated along broadly traditional NUJ/NGA/SOGAT lines; allocated along revised two-tier skilled/semi-skilled basis; or complete flexibility as practicably possible"

table 6.19 : attitudes towards job demarcation

|     | <u>Traditionally<br/>Maintained</u> | <u>Revised</u> | <u>Phased<br/>Out</u> |
|-----|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| NUJ | 47%                                 | 26%            | 26%                   |
| ALL | 38%                                 | 29%            | 34%                   |

Both in terms of the journalists' attitudes compared to all workers, and in contrast to journalist attitudes regarding pay differentials, the question of job demarcation produced the most vocal response. Almost half (47%) the journalists feel that traditional job demarcation lines should be maintained, compared with 38% of all workers, whilst 52% believed that they should be either revised along a two-tier 'skilled/semi-skilled' framework, or eroded as much as possible, compared with 63% of all workers.

In analysing the qualitative material, the one issue particularly prominent in the minds of many NUJ members, is the nature of their 'skills' and the feeling that craft workers tend to perceive these skills as marginal, and easy to pick-up. This was clearly expressed during several group discussions; for example, after the point was raised that there are major background differences between the various workgroups, a journalist argued that:

"...it leaves you wide open to being called a snob, or an intellectual elitist...but it's more that journalists for the most part wanted always to be journalists...I think a lot of journalists would feel quite strongly that it's a job that you have a...flair for, And to think that somebody who's gone in on the technical side, who may not have said...'I have always wanted to be a printer' - they may just have wandered into it...I don't like the idea that they can say 'well my job's gone, can I have yours, I can learn to do your job'...There is a strong feeling that it's a skill you can learn, so printers would be ideal candidates who can be taught how to be sub-eds...and that's how we can easily absorb them...And I'm not sure I agree with that, I think there's more to sub-editing than just having a flair for knowing when a headline's going fit."  
[PAPER 1 : group discussion 20.6.86]

A NUJ FOC on the same paper, developed this theme in a more specific sense regarding the fact that within journalism itself, the work of a sub-editor is regarded as having a higher status than a reporter's job in terms of skill, responsibility and experience needed:

"The NGA have this idea that they are not far from doing sub-editing, and that is anathema to a sub-editor, because they don't see their job as taking chunks out of a story. Sub-editing is actually a second tier of journalism, most sub-editors are reporters first, so you don't become a sub-editor until someone is prepared to trust you to handle their story...A sub-editor has to be able to review and edit the story, which is a more responsible job than writing the story in the first place."  
[PAPER 1 : interview 17.6.86]

This whole problem raises the issue of training, and a number of journalists honed-in on this aspect, mostly arguing for the need to design thorough re-training programmes for craft workers wishing to transfer into the editorial room:

"One of the things that worries me...is the necessity to retrain NGA members to do journalistic work...Now there are some NGA people in my opinion...who could never become journalists. And therefore you couldn't have a blanket policy where you accepted all NGA people...So I think there has to be a selection

process, you have to feel that the NGA members transferring over have the innate capability to do the job. Then the second thing is they must have the right kind of training."

[PAPER 1 : interview 20.6.86]

Another journalist on the same paper argued similarly:

"What concerns me and probably a fair number of other journalists is the recruitment and training, the selection...of people who are going to be journalists. Because the perception of the way things happen in the NGA...is that it's a pre-entry closed-shop, where your strict suitability for the job isn't the main criteria. The main criteria is whether you can get a union card and whether you can get into the system. Whereas entry into journalism is seen to be very much on suitability, merit, education and so on."

[PAPER 1 : interview 23.6.86]

The above quotes then, represent attitudes and perceptions of NUJ members that very much emphasise the 'skill' content of journalists' work, and the fear that this could be diluted if too many craft workers were allowed to transfer into the editorial room as the traditional jobs of craft workers disappear through technological change. Of course, it could be argued that this attitude is primarily a defensive sectionalism aimed both at restricting entry into the journalist labour market, and in maintaining a highly 'socially' structured 'skill' label for their occupation. Whilst containing some degree of validity, this would by itself be a simplistic 'structural' perspective, which avoids analysing very genuine perceptions held by the workers themselves regarding the nature of their jobs.

In fact, the above quotes are all from Paper One, and this is not coincidental. Paper One at the time of research had not undergone a radical introduction of new technology, and was still producing the newspaper predominantly by hot-metal production methods. Thus the NUJ chapel had no direct experience of how in practice craft transferees would adapt to a new working environment. At Paper Two, this was not the case, as it had already moved over to a fairly advanced form of direct-input photocomposition system prior to the period of the research, and had in fact been one of the innovative chapel's within the NUJ as a whole regarding transferees from the composing room into the editorial room. Thus Paper Two's experience of having four 'joint-card' holders' working as reporters and sub-editors is instructive.



The retraining period at Paper Two lasted for twelve weeks, although originally the NUJ chapel had argued for a six months period of retraining. Twenty craft workers sat a suitability test, of which only five were to be selected for the first stage of retraining. (One of the five selected subsequently decided to go back into the composing room during his training period).

The argument put forward by journalists on Paper one, regarding the need to devise thorough retraining programmes, was echoed by the ex-craft workers who transferred into the editorial room at Paper Two. The researcher interviewed two of these transferees together (and not with any other NUJ members), and asked them if their perceptions of the job content of journalism had changed since coming into the editorial room:

"It has changed, not only in the sub-editing job but the reporting as well. I just didn't appreciate before just exactly what went into it...The amount they [training officers] tried to stuff into us in such a short [training] period for the age group we were...it was horrendous really. Even if you were simulating it, you didn't have a chance to practice..."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 27.10.86]

The conversation developed, and the transferees spoke about adapting to their new jobs as journalists:

"It was much easier after training to tell you the truth. Mainly I think because we got a head start as we were coming onto 'on line' work so were the screens. We didn't have to learn about this, [but] others were having to...basically we were having to teach them. So I don't think either of us found it very difficult because any problem - all you got to do is just ask...In this firm...the association of all types of people, whether unionised or not, has always been a very friendly association. That helps enormously...because of the integration...over a period of years, it was a friendly atmosphere, they all knew us."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 22.10.86]

Overall, it was generally agreed within the NUJ chapel that the transfers had been successful, although the NUJ FOC told the researcher that initially, a minority of the chapel were wary of the craft workers coming into the editorial room. But through experiencing this process first hand, one NUJ member, who was originally sceptical, had this to say of the transferees:

"At first...I must admit that I had reservations... but I think it fair to say that it's worked well for management and us...But when they come on the [sub-editing] desk...one or two people said 'well, they haven't gone through the mill as a reporter'... And I think that we felt that they were not as professional as we were...But I think they brought in a lot of skill which was needed...and in the end...we all feel it was a partnership."  
[PAPER 2 : interview 28.10.86]

Thus on the above evidence, it can be argued that firstly, the 'skill' requirement involved in the journalist's job content is a genuine factor, and requires a certain period of time to learn and adjust to, even though, as was the case of the above transferees, the workers may already be experienced in working word-processors and visual display units. However, the fear of the journalists on Paper 2 who had not experienced at first hand the transference of craft workers into the editorial room, were clearly exaggerated, perhaps partly for defensive reasons as much as anything else. But it should be noted that even at Paper Two, which presented itself as a very positive 'case-study' re the low level of sectionalism, the NUJ chapel were still guarded concerning future larger scale transference of craft workers into the editorial room. This attitude appears to indicate a shift in the nature of 'sectionalism' away from overt antagonism towards craft workers, and towards both a structural, and 'skill' labelling emphasis. Structurally, there is still perceived to be a need to safeguard the employment and promotion prospects of 'traditional' NUJ members, and in this respect, the NUJ chapel at Paper Two formulated a compromise proposal with the NGA'82 chapel. Essentially, it was agreed that the definition of 'job vacancies' should be seen in two distinct ways. Firstly, if a 'new' job was created through expansion of the newspaper, then the NGA'82 chapel should be given first refusal to transfer one or more of its members into the editorial room. However, if an 'old' job was made vacant by an existing journalist leaving/retiring, then this should be advertised in the first instance for other NUJ members to apply for. It is difficult to estimate which type of job is most likely to become vacant, on many newspapers, the scope for staff expansion would seem limited, although not totally negligible given the transference of typesetting work from the composing into the editorial room. But at least the principle of an on-going de-facto erosion of job demarcation lines was accepted by this particular NUJ chapel, for the benefit of their craft colleagues.

Regarding the 'skill' factor, journalists at Paper Two still perceived a danger in allowing an 'open-door' policy to be formulated by the NUJ nationally, in respect of craft workers transferring into editorial jobs. Thus despite the very favourable experience of the latter,

journalists still emphasised the need to maintain their skill label. As one journalist argued:

"I would still protect our domain very jealously, I still think it's a very skilled job. And that was one of the major stumbling blocks in our negotiations with the NGA, that we weren't just going to let them come in and sub our stuff. We wanted them to be properly trained and insisted they take a proficiency test, and insisted they went out to the courts and council meetings, and did shorthand...and I think it is a skilled job and I would protect it as a skilled job..."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 28.10.86]

Overall then, it can be seen that job demarcation is the key issue regarding inter-union/workgroup relations given the impact of changing technology on the production process, an issue which has structural and perceptual elements to it, and which constitutes the most problematic aspect when discussing the possibility of print trade union amalgamation.

#### 8. Attitudes Towards Women

The final question to be examined in this section, concerns attitudes towards women as fellow newspaper workers and trade unionists. Whilst concentration has tended to be focussed on the craft unions attitude towards women workers (see for instance Cockburn 1983), it seemed important to look at this question from the point of view of journalists as well, and to compare their responses to those of the craft workers\*. For this purpose, the following set of questions were asked:

Question -

"What do you think will be the effect of more women entering previously male dominated work areas in respect of the following factors: wages; demarcation issues; job security; and union strength."

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\* SOGAT clerical workgroups were not asked this question, as the majority of the members were women. It was pointed out to the researcher that this was a form of sexism, as there was no facility in the questionnaire for women workers to give their responses to men as fellow workers and trade unionists. This is a valid criticism, but the research has to have its boundaries of enquiry.

a) Wages -

table 6.20a : male attitudes towards women workers

|            | <u>impact on wages</u> |                      |               |
|------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
|            | <u>Improve</u>         | <u>Little Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
| NUJ (male) | 0%                     | 64%                  | 36%           |
| ALL (male) | 2%                     | 43%                  | 56%           |

Interpreting the above figures is problematic. For instance, which is the least sexist response: that women entering the production process in greater numbers will 'improve' wages, or that it will have 'little impact'. It seems reasonable to argue that to say that women will 'improve' wages can be interpreted as an inverse form of sexism, and that it is the male workgroup that responds with 'little impact' that manifests the least degree of sexism. However, one can clearly distinguish between those male workers who answered the above question with either an 'improve' or 'little impact' response, and those that replied that women entering traditionally male dominated work areas would 'worsen' or lower wages in relative terms. On this level, a significant majority of NUJ members recorded a positive response, with 64% answering that women would have 'little impact' on wage rates. This compares to 43% of all male workers. Just over one-third (36%) of NUJ males responded negatively to this question, comparing favourably to the figure for all male workers of 56%. Thus the respective findings for NUJ and all male workers are almost converse.

b) Demarcation -

table 6.20b : male attitudes towards women workers

|            | <u>impact on demarcation</u> |                      |               |
|------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
|            | <u>Improve</u>               | <u>Little Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
| NUJ (male) | 0%                           | 71%                  | 28%           |
| ALL (male) | 1%                           | 50%                  | 50%           |

A large majority of NUJ males felt that women entering into production areas would have 'little impact' on the question of job demarcation (71%), whilst all male workers were split 50/50 on this question.

c) Job security -

table 6.20c : male attitudes towards women workers

impact on job security

|            | <u>Improve</u> | <u>Little<br/>Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| NUJ (male) | 0%             | 64%                      | 36%           |
| ALL (male) | 1%             | 40%                      | 59%           |

As in the above tables, the majority of male journalists felt that women would have 'little impact' on their job security (64%), whilst a similar percentage of all male workers believed that women entering production processes would 'worsen' their job security (59%).

d) Union strength -

table 6.20d : male attitudes towards women workers

impact on union strength

|            | <u>Improve</u> | <u>Little<br/>Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| NUJ (male) | 21%            | 57%                      | 21%           |
| ALL (male) | 15%            | 42%                      | 43%           |

It was the question of whether or not women entering traditional male areas would have a positive or negative impact on 'union strength' that produced the most mixed response, from both journalists and all male workers. A sizeable minority of journalists - 21%, felt that women workers 'improve' union strength, whilst an equal proportion felt that women 'weaken' unions. A majority again believed that women had 'little impact' on union strength (57%). Overall then, male NUJ members felt particularly positive toward women as fellow trade unionists - 78%.

Interestingly, the figures for all male workers recorded for the first time a majority with a positive view towards women with 57% responding either that women 'improve', or have 'little impact' on union strength. This question will be looked at in more depth in chapter eight, but it is interesting to note that craft workgroups are relatively more positive about women workers regarding trade union strength, than they are about women's impact on issues such as wages, demarcation and job security.

e) All four variables considered -

table 6.20e : male attitudes towards women workers

wages, demarcation, security & union strength

|            | <u>Improve</u> | <u>Little Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
|------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| NUJ (male) | 5%             | 64%                  | 30%           |
| ALL (male) | 5%             | 44%                  | 52%           |

When all four variables are taken into account, one can see an overall trend in the attitudes of male trade unionists towards women as fellow workers and trade unionists. Whilst a large majority of journalists feel that women would have either a positive or neutral impact on the four criterion (69%), only 49% of all male workers felt similarly. And whilst a significant minority of male NUJ members held negative attitudes towards women (30%), a majority of all male workers were antagonistic towards women as workers and trade unionists (52%). This comparison between the journalist and craft unions was very much in the minds of a number of male NUJ members, who felt that their Union, whilst not being perfect, had a much better attitude and set of policies towards women than did the NGA'82, although some felt SOGAT'82 to be the most positive union in some respects on the question of women:

"It's a class thing as much as anything else. The NUJ, and to a lesser extent SOGAT, tend to be highly educated - more middle class a membership. Whereas the NGA, in my perception of it, which isn't well informed, is a sort of traditional, heavy working class trade union; a male bastion. The NUJ aren't very good at recruiting women, but at least it has the policies, and makes some effort...SOGAT have in fact done much better in looking after the interest of women."  
[PAPER 1 :-interview 23.6.86]

Another journalist at the same paper argued that the craft union's attitude towards women would be a negative factor in many journalists consideration of union merger:

"Certainly, if you are talking about women, this would be something that the NGA is totally outmoded in its attitude...as far as the NUJ are concerned...I think it is male dominated, and totally unsuitable for journalist organisation."  
[PAPER 1 : interview 20.6.86]

The craft workgroups attitude on this subject will be examined later in the study. For now, we can say that the male journalists tends to be reasonably progressive towards women, perhaps emanating from the fact that 29% of the NUJ membership are female, thus giving the male journalist direct experience of women trade unionists. (Approximately 20% of Paper one's editorial staff are female).

## 9. Summary

The above section of Chapter 6 has presented in detail the survey findings from the field research, illustrating the complexities of interpreting the statistics and allowing the journalists themselves to articulate their feelings and attitudes towards the issues raised. The final section of Chapter 6 draws the previous sections together, and attempts to analyse the historical and contemporary relationship between manifestations of 'sectionalism' and 'solidarity' within the membership of the NUJ.

## E/ Sectionalism & Solidarity Amongst Journalists

Christian 1977, in a detailed sociological-historical analysis of the character of the NUJ and its membership, denotes four distinct periods of development within the union: 1906-17; 1917-20; 1920-1970; and 1970 onwards (p.368-9). The period 1906-17 saw the development of what Christian terms a "narrow occupational unionism" amongst a growing number of journalists, due to three main factors: the increasing commercialisation of the press, the passing of favourable trade union legislation; and a growing disillusionment with the 'professional' ethos of the then only organisation for journalists - IoJ, which appeared to be achieving little in practical terms for relatively low paid members in the provincial press. 1917-20 Christian denotes as a period in which a "broader employee identification" began to emerge, marked most importantly by the NUJ affiliation to the Printing & Kindred Trades Federation (PKTF), a Federation consisting at the time of most of the manual printing unions [93]. The period 1920-70 is seen as being fifty years of a steady, if uneven, development towards a more coherent "trade unionism", underlined by the eventual permanent affiliation to the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in 1940, and the consistent (if only partially successful) attempt at pursuing a closed-shop strategy within the editorial area of the newspaper industry. The final period in Christian's thesis, the 1970s, he characterises as one of a complex and uneven development of "class consciousness" amongst the ranks of the NUJ.

Whilst the above is very much a simplification of a detailed analysis, Christian's periodisation is both misleading in as much as it attempts to portray the general character of the NUJ as a continuing (albeit uneven) progression from a form of 'sectionalism' towards a greater class based awareness, based essentially on a 'class consciousness' model; and reflective of a general understanding of trade union development/history, particularly noticable in official union histories, which posit a 'progressive journey' type analysis. Rather, the experience of organised journalist has been one of a historical tension manifested between aspirations of 'professionalism' and a pragmatic need for 'trade unionism', that exists to date. And whilst there have been changes in the structure and character of the NUJ, this cannot be directly equated with a progressive change in consciousness amongst the rank & file journalist, a factor which needs exploration at a separate level.

To a large extent, the NUJ creates its self perception in the framework of a mirror image of the IoJ. The two main areas of contention between the NUJ and IoJ have historically revolved around orientational and organisational factors. Firstly, in an orientational sense, each union has generally been presented in



conflictual terms, between the NUJ's 'trade unionism' and the IoJ's 'professionalism'. However, this dichotomy, whilst reasonably reflecting the official stance of the two unions (ie leadership policy statements and union rules), is misleadingly simplistic when applied to the attitudes and perceptions of the respective memberships. However, whilst it was certainly the case that self-perceptions amongst the respective organisations memberships often revolved around the above type of self-labelling, the historical reality of the journalists consciousness, does not lend itself to interpretations based on a simple dichotomy between on the one hand a 'trade union conscious' NUJ membership, and on the other a 'professional ethos' within the IoJ.

In the case of the Institute, it seems clear that some degree of what for now can be broadly termed 'trade unionism' existed from its inception. Carr-Saunders/Wilson 1933 commented that despite the official aims and Charter of the IoJ, and in general an aspiration on the part of its members to be recognised as professionals, the circumstances of the time provided for strong trade union tendencies to emerge within the IoJ's ranks (p.268). And in fact, in 1920, the Institute was certified as a bone-fide trade union by the Register of Friendly Societies [94]. Structurally, elements of a trade union orientation within the IoJ can be noted for example in its setting up of local 'Defence Funds' in 1903 (for individuals members who left work due to work place grievances); in 1916 introducing 'grievance committees' (specifically excluding employer members); and the creation of quasi trade union bodies such as the Economic Committee in 1922 (later renamed the Salaries & Conditions Board in 1943) [95]. Christian summarises the tension within the IoJ between 'professionalism' and 'trade unionism' thus:

"The official line remained that of professing trade unionism for recruiting purposes while denying it for purposes of general status enhancement."

[CHRISTIAN 1977 : p.246]

Secondly, in an organisational sense, the Institute has always recruited into its ranks journalists that would usually be classed as employer/management personnel, maintaining that the higher the ranking of the member, the greater the Institute's ability to attain the long sought-after goal of a 'professional status' [96]. Thus for the IoJ, the criteria of membership centred on the occupational category of the individual, whilst for the NUJ it lay primarily on the individual's employment status. For the NUJ, the idea of recruiting the higher-echelons of editorial management has always been extremely problematic, and officially, the Union's position has always been to stress the conflict of interest between 'trade unionism' and the functions of management. This 'pluralistic' industrial relations philosophy, has not

however, prevented management grades from joining or remaining in the NUJ. As Simpson 1983 argues:

"...the resolution of the paradox for editorial managers in a workers' trade union was to accept the position, rather than leave the union which would create great hostility, and to envisage future gains or success as achievable on an individual basis."  
[SIMPSON 1983 : p.25]

In practice therefore, it seems that the differences between the NUJ and IoJ in many ways, is one of emphasis, rather than absolutes. Indeed, given the organisational structure of the two unions and the dominant organisational position of the NUJ, the many phases of merger talks up until the mid-1960s was surely reflective of the continuing tension in consciousness within the latter's ranks.

Overall however, there has been great change within the NUJ since its formation in 1907, and there have been trade union tendencies within the Union that have not been manifest within the IoJ, for example the period of 'wages militancy' in the 1970s. Structurally, the years between 1917-87 clearly denote the marginalisation of the IoJ, and the consolidation of the NUJ as the organisational representative of working journalists. Moreover, there has been a concomitant organisational shift with the trend towards a greater 'trade union' orientation, for example in affiliating to the PKTF in 1929 and the TUC in 1940. But from the evidence collected in the field research of the present study, it is equally clear that this organisational and structural change have not brought about a concomitant change in perception and consciousness of the journalist workgroups. Referring back to the quantitative and qualitative evidence presented in the previous section of this chapter, one can see that for NUJ members the question of inter-workgroup/union relations highlights a basic tension: that is a dualism between the needs for collective trade unionism in a time of radical change in the newspaper industry, and the desire to be regarded as 'professional' workers. Moreover, this dualism within the ranks of the journalists cannot be mechanically located within a 'sectionalism-solidarity' framework, as the tension between collective trade unionism and individualistic professionalism manifest itself as much within the consciousness of each individual journalist, as it does in factionalism within the workgroup. The most salient example of this is in the question of union merger, which on the one hand offers the possibility of a united approach with other trade unionists towards computerisation of the work process, but on the other raises the spectre of a loss of identity amongst a majority of trade union members who have rarely

perceived themselves to be anything but production workers, and who are perceived to have a much stronger orientation towards trade unionism.

It is to the perceptions, attitudes and consciousness of the latter two workgroups/unions that the thesis now turns its focus upon.

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51. Clerverley G *op.cit.*, p.143 & Beloff N *op.cit.*, p.16.

52. Tunstall J op.cit. p.67.
53. Christian C op.cit., p.225.
54. Beloff N op.cit., p.47.
55. Christian C op.cit., p.328.
56. Donaldson F op.cit., p.80.
57. ibid p.79.
58. Christian C op.cit., p.4.
59. Christian C op.cit., p.4 & 7.
60. Beloff N op.cit., p.47.
61. ibid.
62. ibid
63. Sunday Times 19.6.77 p.6.
64. Sunday Times 7.5.78.
65. Daily Telegraph 18.8.77 p.7.
66. The researcher has been unable to find out much about this faction within the NUJ, and assumingly the group disbanded not long after its inception.
67. See Journalist Sept 1986 p.10 & Nov 1986 p.12.
68. Figures given to researcher at Paper 2 (English provincial newspaper).
69. Journalist Jan 1987 p.1.
70. Journalist Dec 1986 p.1.
71. See reference 16 in Ch.5 of the present thesis.
72. Winsbury (1975) 'New Technology & the Press'
73. NUJ (1980) 'Journalists & New Technology'.
74. ibid p.18.
75. ibid p.30.
76. ibid p.38.
77. ibid pp.38-39.
78. Financial Times 26.7.85.

79. *ibid*
80. The Guardian 15.4.86 & Financial Times 18.4.86.
81. Journalist Feb 1987 p.1.
82. Tunstall *op.cit.*, p.70
83. Adpated from Tunstall *op.cit*, pp.34-35.
84. NUJ 1980 *op.cit.*, p.7
85. See Pilger in New Statesman 6.6.86.
86. This applies solely at the level of the workgroup.  
There is no room to examine individual correlations on  
this question.
87. Robins & Webster (1982) 'New Technology: a Survey of  
Trade Union Response' in Industrial Relations Journal  
V.13, No.1, Jan/Feb.
88. Information gained during field research at Paper 2 in  
1986.
89. New Statesman 22.8.86 p.10.
90. *ibid.*
91. Journalist July 1986 p.14.
92. Information gained during field research at Paper 2 in  
1986.
93. Musson AE *op.cit.*, pp.292-4.
94. Christian C *op.cit.*, p.245.
95. *ibid* pp.244 & 270.
96. *ibid* p.261.

Chapter Seven

CLERICAL WORKERS in SOGAT '82

|  | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| A/ Structure of Chapter  | 196         |
| B/ Organisational Structure of SOGAT '82                             | 196         |
| C/ Some Historical Aspects of SOGAT '82                              | 198         |
| 1. Introduction  | 198         |
| 2. 19th Century: Some Embryonic Amalgamations                        | 199         |
| 3. 1921-1966: Consolidation of<br>the General Unions                 | 205         |
| 4. 1970-88: Restructuring of<br>the 'General Union' Rationale        | 206         |
| 5. Postscript  | 210         |
| D/ Contemporary Character of<br>Clerical Workgroups in SOGAT '82     | 211         |
| 1. Introduction  | 211         |
| 2. Profile of Clerical Workgroups Surveyed                           | 211         |
| 3. Perception of Changing Technology                                 | 213         |
| 4. Attitudes Towards Print/Newspaper<br>Trade Unions                 | 220         |
| 5. Attitudes Towards Other<br>Workgroup Categories                   | 226         |
| 6. Summary   | 232         |
| E/ Conclusion: Sectionalism & Solidarity<br>Amongst Clerical Workers | 233         |



Society of Graphical & Allied Trades 1982 (SOGAT'82)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Membership (1986)                                | : 171,820  |
| Newspaper members                                | : 20,000 (12%)   |
| Female members (1985)                            | : 56,624 (31% in 1985)                                       |
| Other areas of<br>organisational<br>jurisdiction | : periodical & book publishing/<br>general print trade/paper |

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A/ Structure of Chapter

The following chapter is structured around four main sections. Firstly, a brief explanation of SOGAT'82s organisational structure will be given; secondly, some key historical aspects concerning SOGAT'82 will be explored; and thirdly, the contemporary character of clerical workgroups will be examined, using the field work data collected in 1986. It will be argued in the fourth section that, as in the case of the journalists, the clerical worker is locked into a dual contradictory consciousness, which is both influenced and exacerbated by changes in technology, and the concomitant changes in inter-workgroup/union relations.

B/ Organisational Structure of SOGAT'82

SOGAT'82 came about through an amalgamation of the then SOGAT'75, and the National Society of Operative Printers, Graphical and Media Personnel (NATSOPA) in 1982. Given the greater size of SOGAT'75, much of its organisational structure was taken as the basic model for the new union.

SOGAT'82 is officially governed by a Delegate Council, (DC) which meets biennially during May or June at the discretion of the National Executive Council. The DC has the power to confirm new rules and decide on any questions put forward on the agenda, and also alterations affecting subscriptions and benefits. Approximately 475 delegates attend to DC.

The National Executive Council (NEC) comprises thirty-six elected representatives, together with the General Officers. The composition of the NEC is based on membership numbers of each region of the Union, with the clerical/white collar ATAES/TAE&A Section having two NEC members. The NEC meets every two months (or as and when necessary), and is elected for two years, after which the

individual members can stand for re-election. The NEC manages the affairs of the Union, and issues an Annual Report of the work of the Society to the branches. It has the power to make such by-laws as is deemed necessary for carrying out the business of SOGAT'82, and adjudicates in all matters affecting the Society.

The General Officers (GO) consists of the President, Secretary, Organising Secretary, a GO with particular responsibility for papermaking, boardmaking and conversion industries, and six other GOs. The GOs are elected by a ballot of the whole of the membership for life. GOs are answerable, and under the directions of the NEC, through the General Secretary (currently Brenda Dean). The duties of the General President (currently Danny Sargent) are "to act as chief custodian of the Society's constitution through the NEC and the will of the membership as expressed through the Biennial Delegate Conference", preside at all NEC Meetings, with the right to speak on all questions, but has only a casting vote. The duties of the General Secretary (GS) are to attend the DC Meetings and all meetings of the NEC etc. The GS has a right to speak at all meetings but does not have a vote. In contemporary terms, it is the GS who has the role of the leading official in the Union.

A branch structure exists within each region, and acts as collecting stations in certain towns, although branches have to submit 60% of their income to the national union. The branch structure of the Union is particularly relevant to this thesis, in that the white-collar/clerical sections tend to be organised in separate branches. On merging in 1982, the situation pertained that the old NATSOPA 'CAEP' branch remained an independent branch, organising just under 10,000 clerical workers in London. The two white-collar branches of SOGAT'75 (ATAES/TAE&A) were to merge, forming a section of approximately 10,000 clerical workers nation-wide. On amalgamation then, SOGAT'82 had about 20,000 white-collar/clerical workers organised within its ranks in strictly defined white-collar sections, although the real figure would be higher as a number of clerical/white collar workers remained in other branches:

table 7.1 : white-collar sections in SOGAT & NATSOPA 1981  
[1]

| <u>Union</u> | <u>Branch</u> | <u>Membership</u> |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| SOGAT        | ATAES         | 7,606             |
|              | TAE&A         | 3,368             |
| NATSOPA      | CAEP          | 9,953             |

Hence given an approximate total membership on amalgamation of 225,000, white-collar grades constituted about 9% of SOGAT'82s membership in 1982.

Similarly to the NUJ and the craft unions, SOGAT'82 members are organised at the workplace in chapels. Generally in newspaper houses, the clerical sections form their own chapel, separate from the 'production' chapel in the machine and finishing room. Thus the clerical workers surveyed tend to have an organisational structure quite distinct from other members of the same union.

## C/ Some Historical Aspects of SOGAT'82

### 1. Introduction

The following historical section of this chapter is quite distinct from the historical exploration of both the journalists and craft workers. For the latter two categories of worker, there is a basic symmetry between the type of worker (eg the journalists), and trade union (eg the NUJ). Even in the case of Scottish craft workers (as will be seen in Chapter Eight), who are organised primarily in SOGAT'82, there is a distinct and to some extent autonomous union branch - the SGB, which acts as a kind of sub-union for these workers. More importantly, the Scottish craft workers have their own unique history within the former Scottish Typographical Association, which can be explored as a cohesive entity. But for the clerical workers surveyed in this thesis, no such distinct history or organisation exists, particularly because it was not until the 1970s that clerical workers began to be organised in large numbers in the newspaper/print industry. The present research has unearthed very little concerning white-collar organisation in the printing industry, in either work done specifically on the printing industry, or academic studies on white-collar unionisation. Thus a problem presents itself regarding this historical section of the chapter which appeared to have only two possible solutions; either that the historical background should be left out, or that some aspects of SOGAT'82s history should be given, which obviously was the decision finally made. It seemed at the very least that a brief exploration of SOGAT'82s development would help to contextualise the situation of its clerical sections, (as well as performing a similar function regarding the SGB - see Chapter 8). Also, some critical aspects of inter-union differentiation, impact on the clerical workgroups as much as other SOGAT'82 workers, for instance in the machine room. In particular, the long standing tension between the craft unions desire to restrict the promotion of labourers and machine assistants into 'skilled' positions, has some resonance in the contemporary origination area regarding direct input. Finally, wherever possible, an attempt will be made to focus specifically on white-collar issues, where evidence permits.

The structure of the following section is periodised, to allow for a clear historical understanding to be gained by the reader, although as for the other categories of worker, no attempt is made to present a systematic history of the Union, or to imply a pre-determined journey of unionisation.

## 2. 19th Century: Some Embryonic Amalgamations

The present day SOGAT'82 essentially developed out of four main types of worker: bookbinders (workers in the finishing process); paper handlers (warehouse workers); paper makers (workers in paper mills); and printing press workers (both proofing and printing press machine minders and assistants). Clerical/white collar workers are of growing importance to the Union, but as can be seen in table 7:1, constitute less than 10% of the membership in the 1980s, and historically have been marginal to organised labour in the printing industry. It is worth noting that although SOGAT'82 is popularly labelled as a 'general' union, which connotes a non-craft based membership, many of the original types of worker constituting the present membership of the Union are from craft based trades, especially in the bookbinding area. Therefore the dichotomy between 'craft and non-craft' unions in the printing industry has at least in part, developed out of historical exigencies and social structuring, rather than reflecting a completely objective evaluation of work skills involved in the different work processes.

Originally, all three former types of worker were organised in a plethora of small trades unions (see Appendix 10), and on one level, the history of SOGAT'82 is a history of union amalgamations and transfers of engagements, stretching as far back as the 18th Century. Diagram 7:1 presents an at-a-glance picture of this process of union amalgamations in the 20th Century. It is beyond the scope of the present study to explore in detail the early union mergers which took place throughout the 19th Century, but it is worth noting briefly the origins of the main constituent parts of the present day SOGAT'82: in particular what was to become in 1921, one of the two central foundation stones of the present Union, that is the 'National Union of Printing, Bookbinding, Machine Ruling & Paper Workers' (NUPBMR&PW); and the second major element of SOGAT'82, the National Society of Operative Printers & Assistants (NATSOPA).

On the bookbinding side of the industry (see Appendix 10, diagram 2), in 1786, one of the earliest recorded bone-fide trade unions was established in London, entitled the 'Journeyman Bookbinders of London', which was organised effectively as three 'lodges'. In 1840, these lodges combined, to form the 'London Consolidated Lodge of

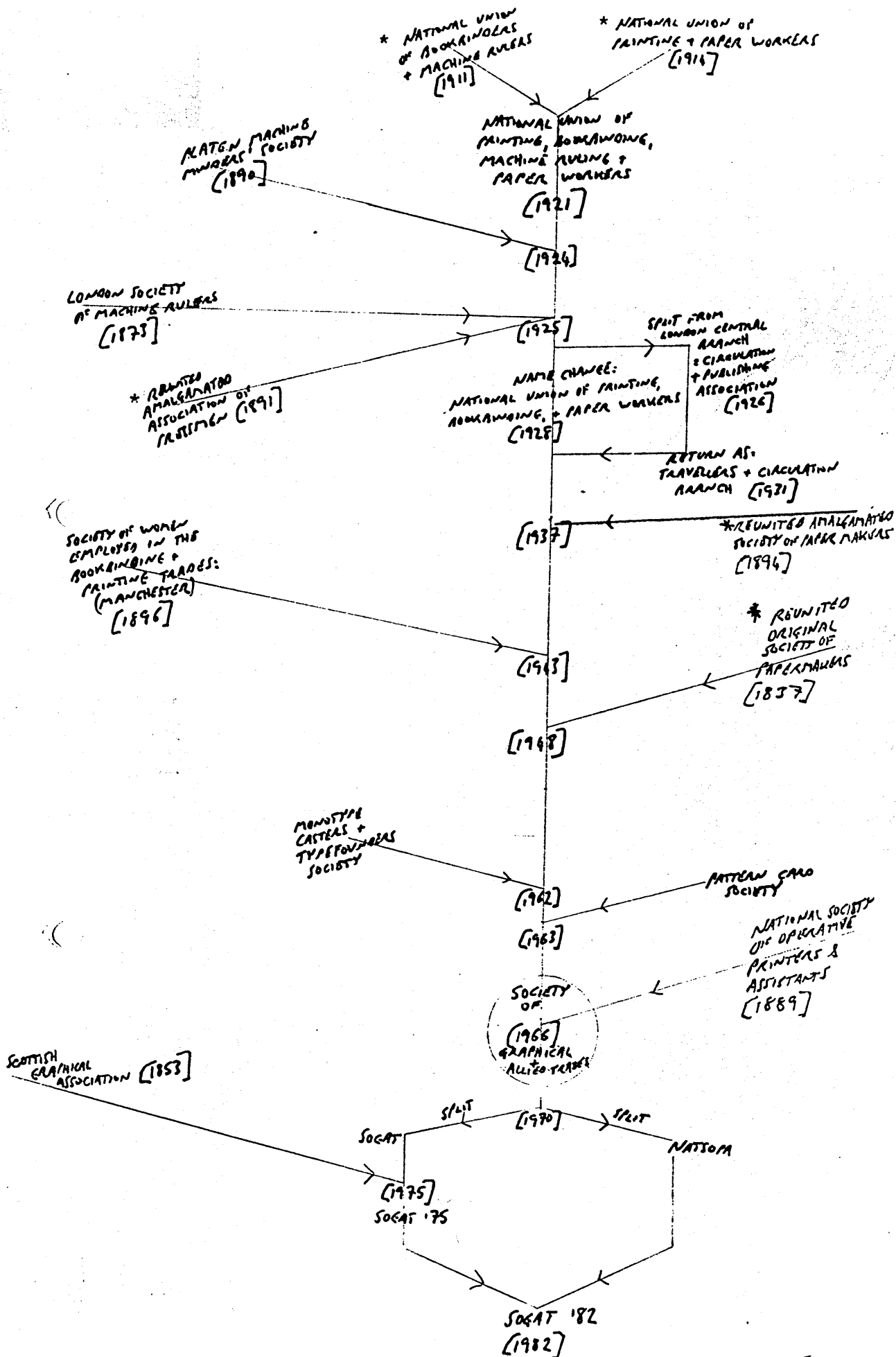


DIAGRAM 7-1 : SOCIETY OF GRAPHICAL & ALLIED TRADES 1982

\* See individual family trees Appendix 10

Journeyman Bookbinders' in 1840. Ten years later a split occurred, leading to a break-away 'Dayworking Bookbinders' union being formed in 1850. Two other main bookbinding unions existed in this period, the Vellum Binders Society (established in 1823, and the Bookbinders Consolidated Relief Fund-Provincial (established in 1835). In 1840, the latter union changed its name to the Bookbinders Consolidated Union, becoming the Bookbinders & Machine Rulers Consolidated Union in 1872, reflecting the need of the union to give more credence to the increasingly important machine ruling minority section of the union [2]. In 1911, the majority of bookbinding unions came together in the 'National Union of Bookbinders & Machine Rulers' (NUB&MR), creating a union of 21,700 workers by the outbreak of the First World War. The NUB&MR constituted one of the cornerstones of the present day SOGAT'82.

One interesting aspect of the bookbinders history was the systematic creation of a distinct sexual division of labour. Rather than attempting to keep women out of these areas of craft occupations, as was the case with the compositors unions, the male bookbinding unions agreed with the employers on a clear-cut demarcation of job tasks between male 'craft' workgroups and female 'non-craft' groups [3]. This gender based demarcation left a historical legacy of discrimination, which was not resolved until the 1980s, when the Equal Opportunities Commission investigated SOGAT'82s branch structure, and found that the separation of male and female London warehouse/finishing workers, led to the male workers receiving relatively higher paid jobs on the national newspapers, whilst women were excluded. As the Equal Opportunities Report 1986 noted:

"The two branches act as recruiting agencies. Information about job vacancies is restricted to members of one branch or the other depending on whether it is 'men's work' or 'women's work'. The branches provide access to jobs by reference to seniority but neither allows transfer of seniority from one branch to the other. Both practices, says the EOC, are indirectly discriminatory and effectively prevent women from progressing into higher paid and higher status jobs and prevent men from taking up jobs controlled by the GLB."  
[EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES REPORT 1986 : p.2]

As a result of this finding, and in the face of legal action, the male London Central Branch, voted by 2,317-1,708 to merge with the Greater London (women's) Branch in 1987 [4].

Paper workers have a similarly long history (see Appendix 10, diagram 2), with the 'London Society of Warehousemen' (1840) uniting with the 'Caxton Printers' Warehousemen's

Association' (1860) to form the 'Amalgamated Society of Printers' Warehousemen' in 1893. Seven years later in 1900 the latter union was joined by the 'Printers' & Stationers Warehousemen, Cutters & Assistants' Union' (1889) to create the first essentially national paper workers union - the 'National Amalgamated Society of Printers' Warehousemen & Cutters' (NASPWC). After several regional and female based unions transferred their engagements into the NASPWC, the latter amalgamated in 1914 with the 'Vellum & Parchment Makers Society' (est.1872) and the 'National Union of Paper Mill Workers' (est.1890) to create the second pillar of SOGAT'82, 15,000 strong 'National Union of Printing & Paper Workers' (NUPPW).

Paper makers began to organise at the turn of the 19th Century (see Appendix 10, diagram 3), with the 'Original Society of Papermakers' (OSP) being formed in 1800. A split occurred between 'deckle' and 'star' type paper makers in 1830, but combined again a few years later in 1837 as the 'Reunited OSP'. A second paper makers union began to take shape in the middle of the 19th Century (see Appendix 10, diagram 4), with the formation of the 'United Brotherhood of Papermakers' in 1854. This union also experienced a split (in 1869), but as with the OSP, recombined in 1894 as the 'Reunited Amalgamated Society of Paper Makers'. Both paper makers union were to merge into the growing general print workers union in the first half of the 20th Century.

For the pressmen, a similar family tree can be traced back to 1834, with the formation of the 'London Union of Pressmen', which as with the paper makers, split up temporarily, only to reform in 1891 as the 'Reunited Amalgamated Association of Pressmen'. This union joined the main general print workers union in the 1920s.

By the early 20th Century, the idea of creating one single union in the printing industry was gaining ground. The compositors union the London Society of Compositors for instance called for a joint meeting in 1912 of all London societies to form one union for the capital, an idea that was rejected by the NUPPW, who proposed a national strategy of union merger, on the grounds that a large London based union would exacerbate rather than ease the problem of inter-union conflict [5]. It was the idea of a national union that was to become the dominant idea in the printing industry from this point on, as Bundock notes:

"Ultimately resolutions were carried affirming the principle of amalgamation, expressing the opinion that the movement should be national in character and embrace all kindred trades unions throughout the UK, and appointed a sub-committee with power to arrange, as early as possible, a conference of all kindred unions."  
[BUNDOCK 1959 : pp.174-75]

Paradoxically, from this point on, union amalgamation was to become increasingly framed within an apparent general/craft dichotomy, rather than along a truly non-sectionalised structure. However, in many ways, the very terms 'general' and 'craft' are misleading, as both union groupings were initially based on distinct craft occupations, a fact which reflects the problematic nature of skill labels.

A second conference was convened later on in 1912, which reaffirmed the print unions commitment to the creation of one union in the industry. But a third conference of seventeen unions organised by the PKTF in 1912, highlighted inter-union conflict over subscription levels, administration, and structural differences, and the idea of one union in the print remained just an idea [6]. By the end of the First World War, the notion of creating one union in the print had lost its immediate relevance and vitality.

All of the above unions were to merge into what became in 1921 the main general trade union in the printing industry - the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding, Machine Ruling & Paper Workers (NUPBMR&PW), which resulted from an amalgamation between the main bookbinders and warehouse workers unions and represented approximately 100,000 workers. This merger however had been problematic, and in the period around the First World War, a growing friction had developed between the bookbinders (the National Union of Bookbinders & Machine Rulers - NUBMR) and the National Union of Printing & Paper Workers - NUPPW), over two issues. The first problem had been long standing, concerning which union should have jurisdiction in organising paper cutters. At the turn of the Century it was felt that recruiting cutters into the unions would allow unskilled labourers into the existing unions labour markets. However, by the First World War, these workers were seen as legitimate, and a jurisdiction war threatened to break out. In 1913 for example, a joint conference was called between the two unions to reaffirm a recruiting agreement made between them in 1910. The dispute took some time to resolve, but in 1915, a joint conference 'General Executive' issued the following statement:

"With regard to the working of the agreement we have to state that, although it may not have brought about a state of perfect peace between our respective members, or entirely prevented the possibility of misunderstanding between the two unions, it has, nevertheless, exercised a beneficial and soothing influence, and the friction between the members of the two unions, which, at one time, was so painfully frequent, is now of rare occurrence."  
[Quoted in BUNDOCK 1959 : pp.91-92]



The second source of friction between the bookbinders and warehouse workers union lay in the perennial issue of female recruitment. The NUBMR had traditionally resisted the employment of women into its labour market, but during the First World War, its London branch had begun to organise females, due to the shortage of male labour because of military service. This brought the London bookbinders into conflict with the NUPPW, after the War, whose origins had been very much inspired by the more socialistic/egalitarian philosophy of the 'new unionism' of the late 19th Century, and who had always recruited women into its ranks [7]. The PKTF attempted to settle this jurisdictional dispute during the War, and told the London bookbinders to stop female recruitment (which was against its own national union constitution) and hand over all its women members to the NUPPW. The London NUBMR refused to comply, arguing that it had been more successful in nine months of recruiting female workers (2,770) than had the NUPPW who in twenty-five years had only recruited 2,500 women [8].

The overall problem of membership jurisdiction erupted again after the First World War however, leading the 70,000 strong NUPPW into seeking merger with the 20,000 members of the London based National Society of Operative Printers & Assistants (NATSOPA). There had already been at least two merger initiatives between the NUPPW and NATSOPA in 1906, which had produced a narrow ballot vote amongst the NATSOPA membership against amalgamation (1280-1294) [9], and again in 1913, when the NATSOPA membership voted for amalgamation by 2,521-672, but failed to gain the necessary 66% majority as 2,331 members abstained from voting. [10]. In 1918, the above two unions, together with the London Machine Managers Society and Platen Machine Minders Society, held an amalgamation conference. However, for obscure reasons, the mergers never took place, leaving NATSOPA out on its own within the print industry until the 1960s.

In many ways, the history of NATSOPA highlights the traditions of inter-union rivalry and conflict within the printing industry. The Union's very name is significant in this respect - the National Society, of Operative Printers & Assistants - the ampersand (&) being inserted in 1912 as denoting that NATSOPA was not just an assistants union, but had fully trained machine managers in its ranks as well. (Demarcation disputes have historically been at their most acute in the machine room). It has been argued that a further source of inter-union difference has stemmed from the politics of the varying print unions, with NATSOPA occupying the 'far left' position in the spectrum [11], but there has been no systematic study done on this aspect of print trade unionism. It is doubtful whether there was ever any clear cut political differences between the unions, although NATSOPA clearly had its origins in the socialist inspired new unionism of the 1880s (being formed as the Printers Labourers Union in

1889, after a largely successful labourers strike in the industry).

At the same time as amalgamation talks with NATSOPA were breaking down, broader industrial changes and government involvement in the printing industry (as in many other industries after the 1918), led the bookbinders and warehouse workers back together in amalgamation talks in 1919. These broader political/industrial changes overrode jurisdictional conflict, and moreover merger offered the possibility of negating such problems. Thus a ballot in 1920 voted in favour of merger between the NUPPW and NUBMR:

table 7.2 : ballot over proposed merger of NUPPW & NUBMR  
[12]

|       | <u>for</u> | <u>against</u> |
|-------|------------|----------------|
| NUPPW | 56,077     | 2,104          |
| NUBMR | 16,092     | 2,693          |
| Total | 72,169     | 4,797          |

The amalgamation took place formerly in 1921, creating the NUPBMR&PW, with a total membership of approximately 100,000. At this point, the NUPBMR&PW constituted the spine of what was to become SOGAT in the 1960s.

### 3. 1921-1970: Consolidation of the General Unions

During the 1920s, several small craft based unions transferred their engagements into the NUPBMR&PW, such as the Platen Machine Minders Society in 1924, the London Society of Machine Rulers and the Reunited Amalgamated Association of Pressmen both in 1925. A small split occurred in 1926, when the London Central Branch Circulation & Publishing Association left the main union, but returned to the fold five years later in 1931 as the Travellers & Circulation Branch of what was now called the NUBPPW. (In 1928, to shorten its title, the Union changed its name to the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding & Paper Workers - NUPBPW).

The Union experienced slow growth between the early 1920s and the mid 1960s, and in fact lost membership in the wake of the 1926 General Strike (at which point Union numbers had fallen to around 70,000) with only a handful of transfers taking place in this period. In 1937, the Reunited Amalgamated Society of Paper Makers joined the NUPBPW, followed by the Society of Women Employed in the Bookbinding & Printing Trades (Manchester) in 1943, and the Reunited Original Society of Papermakers in 1948. These mergers brought the Union's membership to a then all time high of 120,000. No transfer of engagements or amalgamations took place in the 1950s, but in 1962, the Monotype Casters & Typesetters Society joined the NUPBPW,

and a year later the Pattern Card Society followed suit. By this stage in the early 1960s, the NUPBPW were approximately 175,000 strong, and had only one serious rival general union in the printing industry - NATSOFA, which organised some 45-50,000 workers in this period. The latter union had itself been involved in merger talks with the NUPBPW in 1958, but this time (in contrast to the NATSOFA membership's rejection of merger in 1906) the NUPBPW members voted against continuing merger talks with NATSOFA by 39,587-26,134 [13]. In the same year, NATSOFA also broke away from the PKTF, over the issue of craft/non-craft wage differentials, a continuing source of antagonism between print unions, but returned to the Federation in 1960 [14].

In 1966, an abortive amalgamation took place between the NUPBPW and NATSOFA, which brought into being the title Society of Graphical & Allied Trades (SOGAT). This new Union represented 225,000 print workers, with its title reflecting the wide scope of union membership occupations within this large general union. This amalgamation however was clearly fraught with problems, reflected in the fact that the NUPBPW actually became 'Division A' of SOGAT, whilst NATSOFA took on the title of 'Division One'. The merger never really became cohesive, and in 1970 the two constituents parts of SOGAT split, with 'Division A' returning to become NATSOFA, and 'Division One' retaining the title of SOGAT. The reasons behind this failed merger are complex, involving a number of issues, particularly concerning alleged breaches of the new union's constitution. Eventually, the two sides went to the High Court over the problem, but settled out of court and agreed to a formal split and to go their own ways.

#### 4. 1970-88: Restructuring of the 'General Union' Rationale

In many ways, the pinnacle of general unionisation was reached in 1966, with the first merger between the NUPBPW and NATSOFA. After this time, the very notion of a distinct 'general unionism' began to fundamentally change, or at least in its relationship to 'craft unionism' in the industry.

Before the eventual creation of just one general union in the industry was to be achieved finally, in 1975, the small 6,500 member Scottish Graphical Association (which organised Scottish compositors and machine managers) voted to amalgamate with SOGAT, rather than the former's more natural pattern south of the border - the NGA. At this point, the Union became officially known as SOGAT '75, and had a membership of just over 190,000. It was largely because Scottish craft workers felt more secure in the larger general union given the radical changes taking place in production technology, that persuaded them to vote to join SOGAT, rather than what some saw at the time

as a more logical merger with the English based NGA craft union. This merger therefore highlighted the increasing irrational structure of the print unions overall, and emphasised the logic and indeed urgency of creating 'one union in the print'.

By the 1970s, NATSOFA in particular was beginning to view the introduction of new technology in a distinctly more favourable light than its craft based fellow unions. In the mid '70s, the then General Secretary of NATSOFA argued:

"...speaking realistically, the lines of demarcation will not be blurred, they will be *obliterated*. The sooner practical people in all the unions come to terms with the reality the better for all concerned...instead of trying to maintain an out-moded guild mentality that should be interned in peace."

[NATSOFA Journal & Graphic Review, January 1976, p.1 quoted in MARTIN 1981 : p.115]

It would be unfair to say that the NATSOFA leadership were more positive towards new technology than the leadership of the craft unions such as the NGA, but clearly the inherent logic of changing technology in eroding craft skills suited the historical aims of both leaders and members of NATSOFA much more so than was the case of the craft unions. Even so, in Fleet Street by the 1970s, despite the potentially positive impact of changes in technology for the 'semi-skilled' workgroups, the Fleet Street NATSOFA membership narrowly rejected the 'Programme for Action', the industry wide plan to introduce new technology into the national press, by 4,598-4,296 (see Chapter 5). Whilst this was a closer result than occurred with the craft workers rejection of the 'Plan', it nevertheless reflected suspicion by the Union's membership of the promised benefits of this plan, and also a general dissatisfaction with the terms of the redundancy package offered in return for long term job reductions. Furthermore, relations between newspaper rank & file union activists and their national leadership had almost broken down completely by the mid 1970s, emanating from financial improprieties during the General Secretarialship of Richard Briginshaw. This hostility between officials and members which developed into political differences coupled with personal friction, played a major part in the rejection of the 'Plan for Action' [15].

NATSOFA in many ways had become a paradoxical union in the 1970s, as traditionally it had been a highly centralised union, a factor which is stressed in the Union's rule book:

"As Chapels owe their existence to the fact that they are created under the rules of the Society, and all members of the Chapel must be members of the Society, no Chapel can be affiliated to, associated with, or subscribe to any movement of any kind that is not recognised by the Society...In no circumstances can Chapel Rules over-ride or take precedence over the Society's Rules."

[NATSOPA Rule-Book pp.12 & 17, quoted in MARTIN 1981 : p.118]

However, in Fleet Street, this tradition of centralisation was coming under increasing pressure from rank & file activists, who were unhappy with the apparent willingness of the NATSOPA leadership to accept the basic assumptions regarding the urgent need for the introduction of new technology, because of what the employers claimed was a 'financial crisis' in the newspaper industry. The chapels in Fleet Street had clearly gained much autonomy from the national union, especially in the machine room, being influenced by the 'power' exercised by craft workgroups, the 'call' system of the London Machine Branch (which operated as a labour exchange for casual work on Fleet Street), and the strategic production position of 'break-hands' working the printing presses, who could halt production at the very final stages of the printing process.

It should however be noted at this point, that there was a wide gulf between the character and 'power' of the blue-collar sections of NATSOPA, and the white-collar clerical sections during the 1970s. In fact, it was only during this decade that the latter groups had become organised in large numbers in the printing industry, mostly under the auspices of NATSOPA. This differentiation within the union has carried over into the 1980s, and there is still a wide perceptual gap between the blue and white-collar membership organised now within SOGAT'82.

The clerical sections of NATSOPA whilst historically marginalised in respect of trade unionism, were becoming increasingly important by the 1970s, and by 1975, constituted the largest branch out of the three NATSOPA branches in London at the time, and were clearly becoming relatively more important within the Union as machine room numbers were falling.

table 7.3 : membership of 3 NATSOPA London Branches [16]

|                 | <u>1970</u> | <u>1975</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Machine branch  | 8,598       | 8,161       |
| RIRMA branch    | 6,997       | 7,034       |
| Clerical branch | N/A         | 10,450      |

Whilst Martin 1981 suggests that rank & file membership opinion was impossible to gauge at the time (p.138), as there is unfortunately, little empirical evidence of the attitudes of white-collar workers at this stage, or of the union membership as a whole, it seems that apart from the tension and contradictions inherent in the union membership consciousness, there was a growing division of interest between the clerical and machine room workgroups over the introduction of new technology, with the former viewing changes in technology in a more pragmatic way than the latter. In the machine room, large staffing cuts were being called for by the various national newspaper managements during the 1970, whilst the clerical areas appeared to be relatively safe from job losses. Indeed, the logic of the use of direct input technology was clearly going to place some clerical groups, most notably the tele-ad sales workgroup, in a more strategic position vis-a-vis the production process.

By the late 1970s, amalgamation talks had opened-up between NATSOPA and SOGAT'75, but again failed to make headway, particularly because of organisational differences between the unions [17]. However, these differences were eventually overcome a few years later, and in 1982 the two unions merged successfully, creating a 216,000 strong SOGAT'82, on the basis that:

"An amalgamation between our two Societies is a natural development. There are a number of areas and industries where both Unions have common membership. For example, both Unions have sections covering Technical & Supervisory workers, both Unions have sections for clerical workers, and both Unions have a large number of members who are machine assistants and ancillary workers both in General Print and in National Newspapers. An amalgamation between the two Unions would provide a new union which would be stronger, more financially secure and able to provide a better service for the membership"

[SOGAT & NATSOPA 1981: p.11]

Not long after the successful creation of SOGAT'82, the Union started talks with the NGA'82 over possible amalgamation, a merger which would lead to there being just one 'production' union in the print'. However, as is chronicled in Chapter 5, relations between the two unions grew steadily worse in the first half of the 1980s, largely over the issue of job jurisdiction rights over direct inputting of advertising material in newspapers. Relations between SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82 probably reached an all time low shortly before the onset of the News International dispute, when in the summer of 1985, SOGAT'82 under the direction of its then recently elected General Secretary Brenda Dean, offered the News International management a single union deal, for workers

operating the new printing presses at News International's new plant in Tower Hamlets, London [18]. Apparently talks between the company and SOGAT'82 had been going on for some time, and the EETPU's signing of a single union deal with Eddie Shah's News UK company spurred SOGAT'82 into making more formal approaches to News International (although the level of formality has never really been ascertained). Both of these developments threatened the NGA'82s position in the machine room, and possibly in the typesetting operation as well. However, the single union deal between SOGAT'82 and News International was not to be, and eventually SOGAT'82 along with the other print unions lost recognition altogether in the new plant.

The years of the mid 1980s largely revolved around the Wapping dispute, and will not be covered here. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that historical friction between the Union's leadership and its rank & file blew-up again during the dispute, which led at one stage to a 'break-away' threat by the London branches involved in the dispute. However, nothing came of this threat, although the attitude and strategy of the Union leadership during the Wapping dispute left a rift in the Union [19]. The final blow in the Wapping dispute came in January 1987, when the national membership of the Union voted against the imposition of an emergency levy to prosecute the dispute. On a 56% turnout, SOGAT'82s members voted by 51,187-44,265 to reject a recommendation of their national executive for a 58pence per week levy [20]. The result of the ballot very much reflected a tradition of tension between print workers in Fleet Street, and in the provinces. The relatively high pay achieved by some workers in the national press had produced a feeling of differentiation between the two groups, although for many SOGAT'82 members wages in Fleet Street were not particularly high. Nevertheless, the subjective feeling of many provincial workers was that Fleet Street workers were the pampered 'fat-cats' of the trade.

##### 5. Postscript

During (and partly because of) the Wapping dispute, SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82 re-opened amalgamation talks, which are still progressing to date (Summer 1989). The main stumbling block at this stage appeared to be over the question of branch restructuring, and even after three years of talks, SOGAT'82 leadership still felt it necessary to make vague threats about not allowing the merger to leave SOGAT'82 traditional membership as second class citizens in relation to the NGA'82s members [21]. Clearly however merger between the two unions has become vital, with SOGAT'82 in particular experiencing a sharp decline in membership during the 1980s, and at the end of 1987, its membership stood at just over 196,000.

1. Introduction

The above brief history of SOGAT'82 has attempted to outline some of the important events which helped determined the structure of the present union. Given that SOGAT'82 is primarily a blue-collar union, it has not been possible to clearly distinguish the history of white-collar/clerical unionisation within the printing/newspaper industry. However, this section of Chapter Seven seeks to explore the attitudes and perceptions of this latter category of workers, and will hopefully add to our understanding of this one particular group within SOGAT'82. Thus it should be stressed that the following findings have no direct relevance to blue-collar members of the Union. Indeed, whilst it was beyond the scope of the present research to explore this factor, there was clearly a feeling of differentiation within SOGAT'82, between white-collar and blue-collar workgroups.

The present section is divided into four main parts. Firstly, a profile of the clerical workers surveyed in this thesis will be presented; followed by an examination of the workers perceptions of changing technology on thier job content; thirdly, the clerical workers attitudes towards newspaper trades unions nationally will be explored, which will be followed by an assessment of attitudes towards other workgroups, ie journalist and craft groups.

2. Profile of Clerical Workers Researched

a) Age

table 7.4 : age of repondents

|          | <u>35 &amp; under</u> | <u>36-45</u> | <u>46 &amp; over</u> |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Clerical | 73%                   | 15%          | 12%                  |
| ALL      | 39%                   | 27%          | 35%                  |

Clerical workers responding to the questionnaire tended to be considerably younger than their colleagues in the editorial and composing rooms, with 73% of the former being aged 35 or under, compared to 39% of all workers. Only 12% of the clerical respondents were aged 46 or over, in contrast to 35% of all workers falling into this age band. The relative youth of the typical SOGAT'82 clerical workgroups in part reflects the higher turnover of staff in many of these work areas, and the tendency of managements to recruit female labour often with little or no background in the print industry. For example, one female clerical worker interviewed in the survey had spent



one year in nursing after leaving school, and three years as a drama student, before coming to Paper 1 from college. Another woman at the same paper had spent most of her working life in the cosmetics industry before getting a job on the newspaper. On the whole, as in other industries, a large proportion of these women tend to be in their late teens/early twenties, who are in the labour market on a full-time basis, before taking a break in their careers for family reasons.

b) Sex

table 7.5 : sex ratio of respondents

|          | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> |
|----------|-------------|---------------|
| Clerical | 41%         | 59%           |
| ALL      | 82%         | 18%           |

Only amongst the clerical workers in fact do we find a majority of female labour, in this survey 59% of respondents were women, compared to the overwhelming 82% of male respondents amongst all workers. This finding is consistent with a survey undertaken in the mid 1970s, which estimated that in the national and regional newspaper sector, 64.8% of clerical and secretarial workers were female [22].

c) Length of Service

table 7.6 : years in print industry/SOGAT'82

|            | <u>0-1yr</u> | <u>1-5yrs</u> | <u>5-10yrs</u> | <u>10+yrs</u> |
|------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| print ind. | 0%           | 19%           | 43%            | 38%           |
| SOGAT'82   | 0%           | 48%           | 43%            | 10%           |

Given the somewhat different profile of clerical workers in the newspaper industry compared to journalist and craft workers, it seemed appropriate to survey the length of time the former workers had spent both in the industry and as members of SOGAT'82 (and prior to 1982 - NATSOPA).

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\* In the newspaper industry in the mid 1970s the latter sectors constituted the only work areas in which women workers were in the majority. In the print industry as a whole, the only other female majority area was the binding and finishing department, with 63.3% of its staff being women, (although just in the newspaper sector, less than 20% of binding and finishing workers were female).

38% of respondents had been in the print industry for ten or more years, whilst only 10% had been a member of SOGAT'82 (NATSOFA) for ten or more years. Conversely, whilst 19% of clerical workers had been in the print industry for five years or under, 48% had belonged to SOGA'82 (NATSOFA) for this length of time. Overall then, although a number of clerical workers have in fact some years behind them in the printing industry, they were less likely to have joined a union until after being in trade for several years. This finding of course reflects the absence of a closed-shop in the white-collar areas organised by SOGAT'82, and indeed the historical low union density found in these work areas. Hence based on this one criterion, union membership would appear to have had less importance for clerical workers in sense that there was no automatic joining on entering firm. However, this factor will be explored in more detail below.

### Summary

Overall then, clerical workers tended to be very much younger than other categories of worker surveyed in this thesis, had a much higher ratio of female workers than either journalist or craft groups, and were often from a more diverse background than the latter two groups. Furthermore, the average clerical workers experience of trade unionism tended to be of a shorter duration than was the case for other newspaper workers.

### 3. Perceptions of Changing Technology

Attention is now turned to the ways in which changes in work have been perceived in respect to the introduction of new technology. Two questions were asked in the survey to ascertain both the experience of, and future expectations of changes in technology. The question asked was:

#### Question:

"What has been your experience of previous introductions of new technology (if any), and what are your expectations of future changes in technology, in respect of the following factors - skills; wages; stress; and job satisfaction. Has each criteria been improved, seen little change, or worsened."

Thus, attention is focussed on relative changes in perception given the introduction of changing technology.

a) Skill

table 7.7 : attitude towards changes in technology

a) impact on skill

|          | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|----------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|          | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| Clerical | 50%      | 64%    | 35%           | 23%    | 15%      | 12%    |
| ALL      | 37%      | 38%    | 26%           | 20%    | 37%      | 42%    |

The clerical workers clearly had a more positive attitude towards changing technology than all workers, with 50% of the former stating that the introduction of new technology had improve skill requirements in the past, and a larger proportion (64%) believing that skills would be enhanced given future changes in technology. This contrasts sharply with the respective figures of 37% and 38% for all workers. Conversely, only 15% of clerical workers felt that previous introductions of new technology had had a negative impact on the skill requirement for their jobs, and 12% felt this way regarding future changes in technology. Again, these figures are in sharp contrast to the response of all workers - 37% and 42% respectively.

Qualitatively, the generally positive philosophy many of the clerical workers held towards new technology was summed-up in the following way:

"I think it has to be positive...I think you've got to go forward, looking at it from my point of view...Yes, I think the fact that we have been taught new skills in our area is a positive thing. We're working with new technology, and whenever we want to leave the [Paper 2] we've got those skills with us...and I think the more adept we become at using it, the better it will be."

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

Nevertheless, more complex views were also expressed by clerical workers regarding the skill requirement needed for working computerised systems:

"It's been introduced and people have had to learn themselves...trial and error really...We were told that because of the linnage adverts (we direct input all the linnage adverts in the paper) that obviously our skills as far as punctuation and the way we set out the adverts had to be good, accurate, because we call it the 'wysiwyg' system, 'what you see is what you get'...But at the moment the administration have got the printer to help us, and they

obviously vet everything that goes through and bring back to us any errors. But...once they take that stopgap out...when there's nobody there to check, it's very difficult. One thing that I've found is that it's easy to see a spelling mistake on a piece of paper, but to actually see it on screen - you can scan over it - you can miss things... And it's concentration again, looking down."  
 [PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

Overall, the above type of description of working new technology systems tends to confirm the view that the skill requirement in many ways is increased, rather than diminished with the introduction of new technology. In fact there was very little evidence of negative attitudes towards the impact on skill of new technology in the clerical areas, although one SOGAT'82 clerical FOC pointed out that the essence of many clerical workers skills lay in typing, and in this respect little has changed, except that the result is now going onto a screen, rather than onto paper in the first instance. Nevertheless, particularly compared to the attitude of craft workers in this respect, clerical workgroups were significantly more favourable towards changing technology vis-a-vis this one criterion.

b) Wages

table 7.8 : attitude towards changes in technology

b) impact on wages

|          | Improved    |               | Little Impact |               | Worsened    |               |
|----------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
|          | <u>Past</u> | <u>Future</u> | <u>Past</u>   | <u>Future</u> | <u>Past</u> | <u>Future</u> |
| Clerical | 43%         | 42%           | 48%           | 38%           | 10%         | 21%           |
| ALL      | 51%         | 32%           | 40%           | 46%           | 9%          | 23%           |

Generally, most clerical workers felt that either new technology has had/would have, a positive impact on wage levels - 43% and 42% respectively, or that technological change has had/will have little impact on wages - 48% and 21% respectively. There was therefore slightly less optimism on this score for future changes than previous introductions of new technology, but compared to all workers, clerical groups tended to view future new technology introductions more positively on the criterion of wages, with only 32% of all workers responding that wage levels would increase in the future.

c) Stress

table 7.9 : attitude towards changes in technology

c) impact on stress

|          | Improved    |               | Little Impact |               | Worsened    |               |
|----------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
|          | <u>Past</u> | <u>Future</u> | <u>Past</u>   | <u>Future</u> | <u>Past</u> | <u>Future</u> |
| Clerical | 57%         | 8%            | 14%           | 52%           | 29%         | 40%           |
| ALL      | 18%         | 8%            | 32%           | 38%           | 49%         | 53%           |

The quantitative evidence regarding the clerical workers perceptions of changes in stress levels using new technology equipment seemed to indicate a fairly positive response, with 57% of respondents stating that stress levels had been lessened because of previous introductions of new technology, and 52% believing that the amount of stress in their jobs would be little affected by future changes in technology. These findings were in sharp contrast to the figures for all workers, of whom only 18% felt that stress levels had been lowered due to changes in technology, and almost half (49%) responding that the stress factor in their jobs had worsened after previous introductions of new technology. Moreover, all workers held even more negative views on future changes in technology, with 53% believing that stress in the job would continue to worsen. Therefore on this assessment, clerical workers tended to hold significantly more positive views regarding the impact of changing technology on the stress factor than all workers.

However, on examining the qualitative material, it was clear that many clerical workers had distinct reservations on this issue. This is how a tele-ad operator described her job using new technology:

"To a certain extent you do need more skill and we all had to be retrained onto VDUs... It took about three and a half days to be shown how to use the equipment and I would say it probably took another couple of weeks of daily use to really get the hang of it. It's much quicker...I would say the stress factor is greater because you can deal with work quicker, and you're expected to do more in the same period of time...the concentration level is much higher, because you are looking at the television screen hour on hour...because you're not sort of getting up from the phone and putting things down, you're continually looking at this piece of equipment."  
 [PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

In the advertising area, similar perceptions were manifest, during a period when the introduction of direct input technology was only just taking effect:

"We're sort of in the middle of change at the moment, gradually going over to direct input. My actual job in itself hasn't changed, I'm still doing exactly the same job, but in a different way. Working from print-outs instead of hand written or typed order forms... If anything it makes more work...we seem to do a lot of photocopies...It seems to be the small things that take longer than they used to before. It's definitely more stressful."  
 [PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

On the whole, it was only on the subject of stress that clerical workers qualitatively tended to be dubious about new technology.

d) Job Satisfaction

table 7.10: attitude towards changes in technology

d) impact on job satisfaction

|          | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|----------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|          | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| Clerical | 29%      | 29%    | 57%           | 46%    | 14%      | 25%    |
| ALL      | 30%      | 28%    | 34%           | 27%    | 36%      | 45%    |

On the question of job satisfaction, the largest percentage of clerical workers felt that both previous and future introductions of new technology have had/would have little impact. 29% thought that the introduction of changing technology had increased job satisfaction, and the same proportion felt similarly about future changes. Only 14% thought that satisfaction had been reduced because of technological change, whilst a relatively higher percentage - 25% - believed that future changes would lower job satisfaction. Compared to all workers then, who tended to hold mixed feelings on this issue, clerical workers were on the whole more optimistic about the content of their jobs in the future, given continuing changes in technology.

However, as with other categories of worker, qualitatively pinning down clerical attitudes towards job satisfaction is extremely problematic, although generally, most clerical workers surveyed manifested a reasonably amount of satisfaction with their jobs. From the qualitative material then, it was apparent that clerical workers saw a number of positive aspects emanating from new technology in many of their jobs. For instance, during a group discussion it was stated:

"We work in a much cleaner environment now, much quieter...there used to be typewriters, now there's visual display units...You can keep (on a VDU) up to date records so we can give more information to our customers, especially our account customers, because we keep library adverts and at least then we know what they have had and we can recall them, we've got things at our fingertips...We can give them information straight away because we've got reference to it, whereas before we would have to say...'right, I'm going to have to let you know and call you back'..."

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

However, unlike the work of many of the journalists (except reporters) and the craft workers, the job content of many of the clerical workgroups involve a large amount of contact with the general public, and on this issue it was mentioned by members of several different clerical workgroups that computerisation very often lead to the 'de-personalisation' of this aspect of their work. Reflecting on this aspect of new technology during a group discussion, one publishing/circulation representative argued,

"...the modern technology by putting it on the computers...they've taken it right out of your personal knowledge. We used to know the agents by name, but now we know them by account number. So it's taken that little personal touch out of it."

In the same discussion, a personnel department worker developed this theme:

"In most areas within our department it's been a tremendous asset, particularly with the information we need and update constantly - it often makes you wonder how you managed without...But...I [also] think it's depersonalised the job a little bit. Particularly my job, because a lot of areas in my job I couldn't really actually use the computer for, and in some cases I'm trying to justify using it, possibly making it more complicated than it was."

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

On the whole then, a complex mix of perceptions pertained regarding the effect of new technology on job satisfaction, within a general positive and optimistic framework.

e) All Four Variables Considered

table 7.11 : attitude towards changes in technology

e) skill, wages, stress, satisfaction

|          | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|----------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|          | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| Clerical | 45%      | 36%    | 39%           | 37%    | 17%      | 28%    |
| ALL      | 32%      | 27%    | 34%           | 33%    | 35%      | 41%    |

The four previous tables have attempted to show in detail the attitudes and perceptions of clerical workers to changes in technology, contrasted to those of all workers. However, none of the single criteria is mutually exclusive. For example, changing perceptions of job satisfaction are obviously interconnected with perceived changes in skill, wage levels and stress. Also, *a priori*, skill and wages are very much tied-up with each other perceptually, and it could be argued that if wage levels had been maintained or improved during the period of new technology introductions, then the clerical worker's perception of the skill required for the new process had to some extent been enhanced. Moreover, the four criteria are all problematic, and thus taken individually, leave room for much interpretation. Therefore the table above summarises the four criteria of skill, wages, stress and job satisfaction in order to illustrate in very broad terms the extent to which the clerical workgroups perceive past and future introductions of changing technology.

Overall, clerical workers tended to hold more favourable attitudes towards both previous and future changes in technology than all workers. Thus 45% of the former and 32% of the latter category of worker responded that changing technology had had a positive impact on the four criteria. Conversely, only 17% of clerical workers felt that previous introductions of new technology had had a negative impact, compared to 35% of all workers. Whilst 28% of the former felt that future introductions of new technology would have a negative impact, compared to 41% of all workers. Approximately a third of clerical and all workers felt that new technology has had, and will continue to have little impact on the criteria examined.

Qualitatively, perhaps the complex and dynamic relationship between the clerical workers and the technology of the work process is best illustrated by a quote from a worker in the advertising section, who referred to the way in which members of his department developed their job content through attempts to master the computer in order to gain/retain a certain level of control over the labour process:



"...We all find in the administration section, we're always trying to find ways of catching the computer out, or getting round it. Because it has got its limitations, whereby in the past you could get round the thing with tippex and a pen, whereas now you've got to find ways of getting round the problem, or catching the computer out; getting it do do things that it doesn't want to do - which is quite interesting really.

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

Hence for the typical clerical worker in the newspaper industry, changing technology has had a complex impact, but located generally within a positive framework of perceptions and attitudes.

#### 4. Attitudes Towards Newspaper Trades Unions Nationally

At this point, attention is turned directly towards the concept of 'sectionalism', and its manifestation amongst the ranks of craft workers, compared and contrasted to all workers.

##### a) Involvement/Importance of Union

Two questions were asked in this respect: firstly from a factual point of view:

Question -

"Have you held/do you hold a trade union position at any of the following levels - national, regional/branch/chapel."

table 7.12 : degree of trade union involvement

|          | <u>National</u> | <u>Local</u> | <u>None</u> |
|----------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Clerical | 0%              | 29%          | 71%         |
| ALL      | 1%              | 45%          | 53%         |

In relative terms compared to journalists and craft workers in the industry, clerical workers tended to have less involvement with their union - SOGAT'82, although in absolute terms, the figure of 29% of the latter who had held a union office at regional, branch or chapel level is probably fairly high compared to workers in other industries. Nevertheless, whilst only just over a half (53%) of all workers had not held a union position, almost three-quarters (71%) of clerical workers had not been involved with their union in this respect.

The second question to be asked concerning the workers orientation towards his/her own union was designed to gain an approximate measure of how important the workers perceived their union to be in respect of their daily working environments:

Question -

"In respect of your working life in general, do you feel that your union is: very important; fairly important; or not very important."

table 7.13 : how important is your union

|          | <u>Very</u> | <u>Fairly</u> | <u>Not<br/>Very</u> |
|----------|-------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Clerical | 48%         | 45%           | 6%                  |
| ALL      | 46%         | 42%           | 11%                 |

The response of both the clerical groups and all workers to this question was very similar, with 48% of the latter responding that their union is very important to them, compared to 46% of all workers. A further 45/42% of clerical/all workers responded that the union was fairly important to them. Only 6% of clerical workers, and 11% of all workers felt that their unions were not very important. Thus overall, 93% of clerical workers felt their union to be a significant factor in their working lives.

As with the journalists however, the clerical workers held a complex set of attitudes and perceptions towards the concept of trade unionism. This was how one SOGAT'82 clerical MOC summed-up her perceptions of the clerical chapel's membership:

"In the clerical chapel by and large, membership is made up of people with relatively few years of service, generally haven't come from trade union backgrounds, and generally haven't come from print backgrounds. Therefore the clerical chapel...are not particularly interested, and they won't particularly care. However, if you look at it in more general union terms, there's still much talk about 'I'm an old NATSOPA'... and that still goes on even though the merger's been going on for about four years now. And I'm sure to members who've been in the print for a long time, it will matter to them."

[PAPER 1 : interview 23.6.86]

Of course, there is a difference between being actively involved in a union, which if the above quote is accurate few clerical workers are, and feeling that the union is important in one's working life, which 93% of the clerical workers surveyed felt was the case. It would be wrong however to imply that clerical workers tend necessarily to be less amenable to trade unionism generally. Perhaps a

chapel member from Paper 1 presented an accurate reflection of the typical clerical worker's attitude towards trade unionism, arguing that it is the shop-floor experience of the latter that is at the core of perceptions on this issue:

"It's a very different sense of trade unionism [compared to journalist and craft workers]... A lot of people come to [Paper 1] who had been shop assistants, worked late nights, worked Saturday, and really horrible conditions. They come to [Paper 1], really good hours, really good conditions and pay, and there is a sort of direct link with it being in a union. Now people were interested in the short-term....prospects. Not the prospects of you know 'newspapers have been unionised for the last however long'. People weren't interested for example in the delegate meetings, nobody would ever go to those. So in the interest of the union as a whole - there wasn't that interest in it, but in terms of how our nine-day fortnight is working, what's going to happen over the bonus payments, those sorts of questions."  
 [PAPER 1 : interview 4.7.86]

As shall be seen below, perceptions of the clerical workers own union were often in sharp relief to perceptions of the other main print industry unions.

b) National Unions Approach

Moving on from the workgroup's attitude to and involvement with their own union, the third question in this section of the questionnaire delved into the attitude of workers towards other unions at the national level:

Question -

"What do you think of the print unions approach (nationally) towards changing technology: too defensive; aboutright; not defensive enough."

table 7.14 : SOGAT clerical workers perceptions of national unions approach to new technology,

|       | Too<br>Defensive | About<br>Right | Not<br>Defensive<br>Enough | Don't<br>Know |
|-------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| SOGAT | 21%              | 50%            | 21%                        | 9%            |
| NUJ   | 21%              | 29%            | 21%                        | 29%           |
| NGA   | 48%              | 22%            | 15%                        | 15%           |

At this juncture, it is worth remembering that the field research for this thesis was carried out during the period of the News International dispute, between Rupert Murdoch and the print unions nationally, and this factor had clearly influenced many of the clerical workers surveyed in respect of their attitude towards SOGAT'82 (and the other print unions).

Overall, half (50%) of the SOGAT'82 clerical workers felt that their union had adopted a reasonable approach towards new technology, whilst the remainder were evenly split between those who felt that the Union had been too defensive (21%), and those who in contradistinction believed that SOGAT'82 had not been defensive enough in its approach towards new technology (21%). Perceptions of how the other two main print unions had handled new technology were mixed, particularly in the case of the NUJ, with 21% of clerical workers feeling that the journalist union had been too defensive, 29% stating that the NUJ had basically adopted the right approach, and 21% again feeling that this union had not been defensive enough. A full 29% responded that they were uncertain on this question, perhaps reflecting the relative lack of contact most clerical workers have with members of the NUJ.

Examining the qualitative evidence, attitudes tended to be polarised, between clerical workers on the national paper, and provincial press workers. The former by and large were highly critical of the SOGAT'82 leadership from mid-1986 onwards, because of its handling of the News International dispute. For the clerical workers at Paper 1 (the national newspaper), feelings towards the national level of SOGAT'82 tended to be hostile; as one tele-ad operator argued, commenting that the strike action within the union over the 'Wapping' issue could have been spread throughout Fleet Street but for the tactics of the SOGAT'82 national leadership:

"It could have been, there's no doubt about that. But at the Mirror - loads of jobs went there, the Telegraph, it was Brenda Dean. There was a strike at the Daily Mirror...and we went down there on the first day in our lunch hour. Loads of tele-ads went down. All the Daily Mirror tele-ads were out there as well...and they were really militant. And the next day we heard they'd all been ordered back to work [by the national officials]...So if you do that to people, push them back to work when they're fighting for their own jobs, they're hardly likely to come out for somebody else. It is on Brenda Dean's hands."  
[PAPER 1 : interview 4.7.86]

Given the prevalence of the 'Wapping' dispute, and the contentious role of Brenda Dean and the SOGAT'82 national leadership, it became difficult in the field research to qualitatively distinguish the clerical workers attitude concerning the general approach of SOGAT'82 towards new technology. It was clear however in the provincial press that many clerical workers believed that their union had adopted essentially the right approach, especially over the issue of direct input, and it was felt by some that the main problem regarding this factor was the attitude of the NGA'82, (reflected in the above figure of 48% of clerical workers who felt that the latter union was 'too defensive' in its approach to new technology). As one clerical FOC commented,

"...as far as it goes it's not the NGA and SOGAT fighting each other to stop direct input, it's the NGA and management. We're just staying in the background."  
 [PAPER 2 : interview]

As can be seen in the above quote, similarly to other groups of workers, the clerical workgroups tended to judge the national union's approach to new technology by what they experience at the plant level, an issue which will be explored later in this section.

c) Attitudes Toward Union Merger

Question -

"Bearing in mind the impact of changing technology, what is your opinion of amalgamation of the three main print unions (NUJ/SOGAT/NGA): a good thing overall; a necessary evil; unnecessary."

table 7.15 : attitudes towards merger of the 3 print unions: the NUJ, SOGAT'82 & the NGA'82

|          | <u>Good thing</u> | <u>Necessary evil</u> | <u>Unneces- sary</u> | <u>Not Sure</u> |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Clerical | 45%               | 30%                   | 9%                   | 15%             |
| ALL      | 63%               | 16%                   | 16%                  | 4%              |

In contrast to the figures for all workers, clerical workers tended to be less whole heartedly in favour of union merger, with 30% responding that amalgamation between the three main print unions was a 'necessary evil', compared to 16% of all workers. Nevertheless, a clear majority of clerical workers still perceived union merger to be a necessity (75%), with 45% believing it to be a 'good thing' overall. This compares to 79% and 63% respectively for all workers. Only 9% of clerical workers felt union amalgamation to be unnecessary (16% for all workers), whilst 15% were uncertain.

However, a quantitative examination suggests that the very rapid change experienced by the clerical workers has in fact created tensions in attitude and perception equal to, but located within a different framework, to those found in the journalist and craft groups. Similarly then to these other workgroups, SOGAT'82 clerical workers display unique characteristics in their perception of trade unionism and thus in their attitudes towards other workers. On the question of union amalgamation specifically, a tension was manifest between the apparent logic of merger, and a wariness towards the perceived character of other unions:

"The border line between the two classifications is narrowing...So I suppose you can say that the skills needed are similar now on both sides, so it [merger] might be to everybody's benefit to a certain extent...[But] the NGA have always been quite strong, I wouldn't like to think that we would go on strike at the drop of a hat...I think they've lost that power just a wee bit, but I still think if you get the two unions together they might get a bit stronger."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

In other words, although merger with the NGA'82 was seen as logical in many ways, its desirability was very much influenced by a fear of a perceived 'militancy' of the craft union. This is not to imply however that the clerical workers were simply more 'moderate' trade unionists than their craft (or journalist) colleagues. In fact, many union activists amongst the SOGAT'82 clerical chapels often displayed a fresher, less sectionalist attitude to the defence of trade union principles and conditions, than did many activists in the NGA'82 and NUJ. One reason for this probably was that clerical workers tended to be relatively young, and often had not directly experienced the years of inter-union rivalry and sometimes open conflict that has characterised union relationships in the printing and newspaper industry. But this was probably a secondary factor, a more important influence on clerical attitudes being their actual experience of being located within a general union, which had historically attempted to erode status differentiation between the unions. As was argued during a group discussion at Paper 2:

"The NGA has always considered themselves the craft union...But I personally would like to see one union for the print industry...So if there's a dispute then there's a dispute right through the industry. And I think this is where the trouble's been in the past, where half are in and half are out...That's right, it gets men against each other. If they were all in the same union I think a lot of that would be ironed out."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

Overall, there were few out-and-out anti-mergerites amongst the clerical workers, but, as is the case for the other two categories of worker, the general desire for a greater unity between print/newspaper workers was located in a complex framework of perceptions and attitudes, both of their own union and of the NGA'82 and NUJ. One important element shaping the clerical workers beliefs was their immediate experiences at the shop-floor level, to which the discussion now turns.

### 5. Attitudes Towards Other Workgroups

As with the journalists and craft groups, the clerical chapels were asked three questions within this general area: i. perceptions of the impact of new technology on inter-chapel relations; ii. attitudes toward pay differentials; and iii. attitudes toward job demarcation.

#### a) Impact of New Technology on Inter-Chapel Relations

Question -

"What in your opinion has been the impact of new technology in respect of inter-chapel relations at the shop-floor level."

table 7.16 : impact of new technology on inter-chapel relations

|          | <u>Improved</u> | <u>Little Impact</u> | <u>Worsened</u> | <u>Not Sure</u> |
|----------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Clerical | 23%             | 42%                  | 16%             | 19%             |
| ALL      | 40%             | 30%                  | 25%             | 5%              |

Clerical workers held less positive views on the impact of new technology on inter-chapel relations than was the case for all workers. Thus only 23% of the former, and 40% of the latter category of worker felt that inter-chapel relations had been improved due to changes in technology. On the other hand, only 16% of clerical workers thought that inter-chapel relations had worsened, compared to 25% of all workers. The largest single proportion of clerical workers (42%) believed there had been little impact in this respect, compared to 30% for all workers. And 19% of clerical workers were not sure on this issue (reflecting the complexity of assessing chapel-relations objectively).

From the evidence gained from the qualitative interview and group discussion material, it appears that there were distinctly objective positive factors to come out of the issue of changing technology. In particular, technological change had created an impetus for the formation of federated house chapels, which if nothing else, break down

some of the less fundamental barriers between chapels and unions, especially concerning access to information. In the words of one clerical MOC:

"Certainly it puts the wind up our management, because when things get sticky they refer... quite often to the fact that there's a 'federated', and 'I know you've got friends in the federated', and that sort of thing. And also it means that sometimes at least we're fore-warned, and it also cuts down the possibility of management playing off one chapel to the other..."  
[PAPER 1 : interview 23.6.86]

Another advantage of a joint union representative structure is that it provides a forum for breaking down the aspects of sectionalism that tend to be based on a lack of knowledge of the importance of other workgroup's jobs:

"When we first started having federated [meetings] the NGA didn't really understand what a tele-ad did...The NGA saw them as all girls, therefore they were all secretary-typists. And when we actually explained for instance, when the paper was stopped one night during a dispute with the NGA, that tele-ads lost their bonus as a result of it...and that two-thirds of the people in the tele-ad department stood to loose £50...that kind of understanding is actually very constructive, because it makes the NGA who see themselves as good solid trade unionists, actually realise that it's excellent when you get people like tele-ads or secretaries supporting them, because it does actually mean genuine losses for them."

However, the same MOC recognised the limitations to organisational unity when it comes to the more fundamental issues such as jobs:

"But obviously when you're under pressure, as...certainly the chapels on Fleet Street are at the moment, there is still that desire to protect your own when it comes down to it... As long as you can go along together, people are willing to do it, but when the pressures really on from management...?"  
[PAPER 1 : interview 23.6.86]

Despite the pressure that changing technology generally, and direct input specifically has put upon inter-chapel relations, at the same time it has also helped raise awareness of the position that other workgroups and union



members were in regarding new technology and job losses. As one clerical worker put it:

"I think it's a difficult situation...I think we should be sympathetic to [the NGA] obviously, because they are our sister union anyway. And I think the unions have got to stick together in this industry, otherwise we'll all get folded-in, in the end..."

[PAPER 1 : interview 8.7.86]

The central issue of using direct input technology had specifically raised awareness of the craft workers predicament, as illustrated by the following quote from a tele-ad operator, who commented that her workgroup had been put under pressure by customers to by-pass work undertaken by NGA '82 workgroups:

"I think there was an awareness of why, especially when the 'Today' lark started off. Some of the advertisers started saying 'do I have to have it typeset by the NGA'...people were having to say 'no, we only accept NGA work'."

[PAPER 1 : interview 4.7.86]

Overall then, new technology had impacted on inter-chapel relations, and had in many ways created at the very least a greater awareness of the respective positions of what have traditionally been highly sectionalised workgroups.

#### b) Pay Differentials

On the issue of pay differentials, the following question was asked in order to gain some idea as to how the workgroups might respond to inter-chapel relations after one union in the print had been created:

Question -

"In a situation where there was only 1 union in the print industry, what would your attitude be to pay differentials: should they be maintained at present levels; revised along a two-tier skilled/semi-skilled basis; or phased out completely."

table 7.17 : attitudes towards pay differentials

|          | <u>Maintained</u> | <u>Narrowed</u> | <u>Phased Out</u> |
|----------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Clerical | 19%               | 34%             | 47%               |
| ALL      | 31%               | 42%             | 28%               |

A large majority of clerical workers wished to see pay differentials eroded - 81%, with 47% believing that pay differentials should be phased out completely. Only 19%

felt that differentials should be maintained along traditional lines. This compared to 31% all workers who felt that differentials should be maintained, and 70% who felt that differentials should be narrowed or phased out. It was natural enough that clerical workers should desire the erosion of pay differentials between the different union chapels, as clerical workers had traditionally been less well paid in the newspaper industry than most other groups, particularly in relation to journalist and craft workers.

The issue of wage differentials has certainly been a contentious matter historically between the print unions, and in general contemporary terms it was clear that many clerical workers felt it unfair that they should be on lower salaries, especially when working alongside another union member earning considerably more money. For example, the clerical MOC at Paper 1 felt this to be a factor in the relationship between editorial auxiliaries (organised by SOGAT'82) and journalists:

"On the whole, I don't think it's a bad working relationship. [But] I think that clerical members are very conscious of the sometimes huge differentials in wages, and particularly the secretaries...feel that they're doing a compatible job. And in this case it happens to be the journalists who are getting paid twice as much as them."

[PAPER 1 : interview 23.6.86]

Indeed, the logic of union merger was seen by many clerical workers as entailing the narrowing of the wages gap, "because I think basically it gives a lot more unity, especially over things like pay..." [taken from interview 8.7.86] (a factor not always accepted by other categories of worker).

As with the journalists however, clerical workers tended not to give the question of wages a very high priority regarding new technology, being more concerned with the impact on job demarcation, to which we now turn to.

### c) Job demarcation

A similar question posed re pay differentials was asked regarding job demarcation:

Question -

"In a situation where there was only 1 union in the print industry, what would your attitude be to the demarcation of jobs: jobs to be allocated along broadly traditional NUJ/NGA/SOGAT lines; allocated along revised two-tier skilled/semi-skilled basis; or complete flexibility as practicably possible"

table 7.18 : attitudes towards job demarcation

|          | <u>Traditionally<br/>Maintained</u> | <u>Revised</u> | <u>Phased<br/>Out</u> |
|----------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Clerical | 10%                                 | 27%            | 63%                   |
| ALL      | 38%                                 | 29%            | 34%                   |

Even more than with pay differentials, clerical workers responded overwhelmingly that they would like to see traditional job demarcation structures either revised (27%) or phased out completely (63%). As has been noted in chapter six, the relationship between job demarcation and sectionalism is more problematic than that regarding pay differentials, as the desire to see the erosion of demarcation structures may reflect a sectional wish to take over the job tasks of other workgroups, or may be a genuine anti-sectionalist approach for eroding sectionalisation between workgroups. Hence particularly on this question, it is important to examine the qualitative evidence, to try and assess the underlying meaning behind the above statistics.

There appeared to be two typical perspectives aired by clerical workers towards the question of job demarcation, which whilst not mutually exclusive, rather reflected a different emphasis towards the problems raised by new technology. On the one hand, the expression of a strict adherence to the trade union principle of non-encroachment into other workgroup's traditional areas. Or as one clerical MOC put it:

"I would still want to pursue the same policies as we have done, whereby you don't, to put it crudely, pinch each others jobs...In the past we've had limited introductions of new technology, just a dot-matrix machine, that transmits from London to Manchester, we've actually had agreements with the NGA whereby clerical people operate that machine between two buildings. It's in the NGAs own interest, they don't particularly want to have people down in the tele-ad room all the time. And it's in our interest as it's part of what people were previously doing by sending stuff up by trains. I would still expect that if direct input came - it would be a job done by tele-ads but negotiated with a mind to the NGAs traditional areas of work. I'm not in the game of negotiating a good deal for the tele-ads, which undoubtedly the company wants...at the expense of NGA jobs."  
[PAPER 1 : interview 23.6.86]

On the other hand, a number of clerical workers tended to stress the erosion of the logic of demarcation:

"It's no longer becoming an area of comps and people working on the old machines and of handling metal blocks. It's all becoming more office work now, as opposed to the old printing workers and clerical workers."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

This latter perspective tended to lead onto more specific arguments regarding the job jurisdiction. For example, it was pointed out in the same group discussion that the type of skills/ability required for many clerical based jobs were totally different from those needed for craft and technical operations:

"To a certain extent [NGA members] have been employed in a...different job. I mean people in the sales department have been employed as sales people...so your personality and the way you handle customers is paramount. It's not just a question of slotting 'a' into 'b' because it might not necessarily work. With somebody who's good on the comp floor with machines and understanding new technology, he's not going to be somebody who can come down and plug into a telephone and be able to sell advertising, or come into reception and talk to somebody over the counter...There has to be certain qualities in each job."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

The above quote could be interpreted to imply that given changes in technology, whilst much of the technical work skills needed in craft jobs would disappear, the interpersonal skills of the clerical worker would largely remain. Certainly a number of clerical workers were wary of allowing ex-craft workers into their traditional job areas, and this factor very much influenced opinions over union amalgamation:

"You've got to have a little bit of survival there as well. You've got to think well is it going to effect your job. If they get first priority...I would like to think that we could all work it out together - all keep jobs or keep certain jobs. But there are certain people in some departments, they're going to be lost when the new technology really gets in; what are they going to do? If we do amalgamate will the NGA people get better priority, will they get first priority to jobs."  
[PAPER 2 : group discussion 21.10.86]

Thus similarly to the journalists surveyed in this thesis, the clerical workers whilst manifesting a strong quantitative desire to see the erosion of both wage differentials and job demarcation, are, in a qualitative sense, much more circumspect about these issues, given the

potential implications of changing technology on inter-chapel relationships.

#### 6. Summary

From a position of being a marginalised, low paid, poorly organised group prior to the 1970s, clerical workgroups are now seen as one of the key sections within the production process. This rapid development of these workgroups from perceptions of being marginalised, often derogatorily describe as 'unskilled Natties' by other workgroups in the past, to becoming a key production group, has created perceptions and attitudes that contain within them a basic tension between this long held status position within the industry and the desire to achieve a more equal status with journalist and craft groups. The final section of this chapter briefly outlines this contradictory character of clerical workgroups.

## E/ Sectionalism & Solidarity Amongst Clerical Workers

In many ways, the clerical workers form the most interesting category within the contemporary newspaper industry. The changes taken place within the clerical sections of the newspaper industry are presenting the clerical workgroups (as with other groups in the industry) with a series of dilemmas, which have had the effect of exacerbating the tension within the consciousness of these workers, which is leading to a reformulation and restructuring of relationship with other sections of the workforce, especially in respect of journalist and craft workgroups.

One important and rather problematic point to note, is that in contrast to both journalist and craft workgroups, clerical workers are predominately female. Up-to-date statistics are difficult to obtain, but in 1976 for instance, women constituted 64.8% of all clerical and secretarial grades in national and provincial newspapers. In fact, SOGAT'82 has the largest proportion of female members of the three unions examined in this thesis - about 33% of a total membership of 171,000 in 1986. And this factor has an important influence on the perceptions and attitudes of clerical workers, and indeed on attitudes towards clerical workers, which can be seen particularly in Chapter Eight.

Traditionally, clerical workgroups have occupied a marginalised position in the production process, have been low paid and poorly organised group (particularly prior to the 1970s). A recent report on the position of women in SOGAT'82 stressed the fact that the latter still constitute a relatively poorly paid sector within the printing industry, and were very much underrepresented in the Union hierarchy:

"This means that women are not directly represented in the making and carrying out of union policy... These inequalities are reflected in the position of SOGAT women in the workplace... Women are still in the low paid, low skill jobs..."  
[SOGAT'82 1985 : p.5]

This objective marginalisation of female workers (and clerical workers generally) has produced a subjective consciousness of being marginal, compared to the 'higher status' groups such as journalists and craft workers. However, perceptions of differentiation are slowly shifting from being based on being marginal workers, and clerical workgroups can now be seen (and are increasingly seeing themselves) as one of the key sections within the production process.

Referring back to the survey data, clerical workers recorded a highly positive response to the question of print union amalgamation, and were consistent in their

attitudes towards two key issues that flowed from the question of union merger, that is pay differentials and job demarcation. Thus 75% of clerical workers felt union merger to be either a good thing or at least a 'necessary evil', 81% felt that pay differentials between the three print unions should be eroded or phased out completely, and 90% felt similarly towards job demarcation. Thus on these objective criteria, the clerical workgroups manifest little signs of sectionalism.

However, a qualitative examination of the clerical workers suggests that the very rapid change experienced by the latter has in fact created tensions in attitudes and perceptions equal to those found amongst journalists (see Chapter 6), and as will be seen in the following chapter, amongst craft workers. Similarly to the other categories of worker in this study, SOGAT'82 clerical workers display unique characteristics in their perception of trade unionism, and in their attitude towards other workers, which contain feelings of sectionalism and solidarity, which are constantly being restructured in a dynamic process of change and interaction with other groups of differentiated workers in the newspaper industry.

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22. See SOGAT'82 1985 Appendix 5.



## Chapter Eight

### CRAFT WORKERS in the NGA '82 & SGB

|   | <u>Page</u> |
|---|-------------|
| A/ Structure of Chapter   | 237         |
| B/ Organisational Structure of the Craft Unions                       | 238         |
| C/ Some Historical Aspects of Craft Unionisation                      | 240         |
| 1. Introduction   | 240         |
| 2. 19th Century: Pattern Set for Craft Control                        | 242         |
| 3. 1900-1945: Consolidation of Craft Hegemony                         | 252         |
| 4. 1955-82: Craft Hegemony Under Stress                               | 258         |
| 5. 1982-88: Restructuring of Craft Position                           | 264         |
| 6. Summary  | 268         |
| D/ Contemporary Character of Craft Workgroups<br>in the NGA '82 & SGB | 269         |
| 1. Introduction   | 269         |
| 2. The Nature of the Chapel   | 269         |
| 3. Profile of Craft Workgroups Surveyed                               | 274         |
| 4. Work Orientation of Craft Workgroups                               | 275         |
| 5. Perception of Changing Technology                                  | 282         |
| 6. Attitudes Towards Print/Newspaper Trade Unions                     | 292         |
| 7. Attitudes Towards Other Workgroup Categories                       | 300         |
| 8. Attitude Towards Women Workers                                     | 308         |
| 9. Summary  | 314         |
| E/ Conclusion: Sectionalism & Solidarity Amongst<br>Craft Workers     | 315         |

National Graphical Association 1982 (NGA'82)

Membership (1986) : 131,730  
Newspaper members : 20,000 (15%)  
Female members (1982) : 6,172 (5%)  
Other areas of  
membership jurisdiction : periodical & book publishing/  
general print trade

Scottish Graphical Branch of SOGAT'82 (SGB)

Membership (1986) : 5,678  
Newspaper members (1988) : 2,500 (44%)  
Other areas of  
membership jurisdiction : Scottish periodical &  
book publishing/general print

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A/ Structure of Chapter

The following chapter is structured around four main sections. Firstly, a brief explanation of the craft unions organisational structure will be given; secondly, some key historical aspects of craft workgroup unionisation will be explored; thirdly, the contemporary character of craft workgroups will be examined, using the field work data collected between 1985 and 1986. And lastly, a conclusory section will present a synthesis of both the historical and contemporary material, in an analysis of sectionalism and solidarity within the NGA'82 and SGB; arguing that, as in the case of the journalists and clerical workers, the craft worker is locked into a dual contradictory consciousness, which is both influenced and exacerbated by changes in technology, and the concomitant changes in inter-workgroup/union relations.

## B/ Organisational Structure

### NGA '82

The organisational structure of the NGA '82 begins at the shop-floor level (officially and historically). This is an important aspect to note regarding print craft unions generally, and is not meant to imply a value judgement that all unions should focus primarily on the shop-floor membership. But rather it denotes the fact that craft unions were/are decentralised, with much power and autonomy residing in the chapel (and Branches), compared to the essentially centralised general unions in the print industry. The individual workplace union member is organised in a chapel, of which there could be several representing the NGA '82 in any one plant. Chapels are organised into Branches (there being 126 in the NGA '82), which in turn are organised into Regions (of which there are 7). Both the latter two tiers of the union are geographically based. It should be noted that 'London' is both a Branch and a Region, an anomaly derived in part from logistical reasons and in part from historical exigencies. The function of the Regions is to carry-out the policy of the National Council (NC) and to act as an administrative body.

In addition, there are 4 trade groups boards, which look after matters relevant to their respective trades, and are elected by members only in the relevant section (Letterpress, Lithography, News[papers] and the Art, Technical, Clerical & Administrative [white-collar]). The 4 trade group boards however act under the authority of the NC at all times.

The NC comprises of 40 members, 19 elected on a Regional basis, 13 appointed by the trade group boards, 6 elected from and by former SLADE members, and 2 elected from and by former NUWDAT members (all of whom hold office for two years). The NC has responsibility for administering the rules of the Association, and to ensure policy is carried out between Delegate Meetings, although it has a strictly defined remit, and cannot sign any agreement with an employer at any level without first obtaining a majority vote from the relevant section(s) of the membership. The National Officers are nominated at Branch level but elected by the whole of the membership, and posts will include a General President (currently Bryn Griffiths), and a General Secretary (currently Tony Dubbins).

## SGB of SOGAT'82

The basic organisational structure of SOGAT'82 was given in chapter seven, so will not be repeated here. However, the SGB position in the larger union is as follows. When the then Scottish Graphical Association (SGA) merged with SOGAT in 1975, it became the Scottish Graphical Division of SOGAT'75 (SGD). Later, in the 1980s, a minor restructuring operation led to the SGD becoming the SGB of SOGAT'82. On amalgamation, the Executive Committee of the SGD continued to administer the management of their own property and provident scheme. The General Secretary of the former SGA became the Secretary of the SGD and a Divisional Officer of SOGAT with a seat on the National Executive. The SGA also paid a capitation fee of £95,000 which qualified all its members for immediate SOGAT benefits, such as dispute, disablement and unemployment. This basic situation exists to date, with the SGB having its own main office in Glasgow (separate from the SOGAT general office also in Glasgow), and its own elected officials.

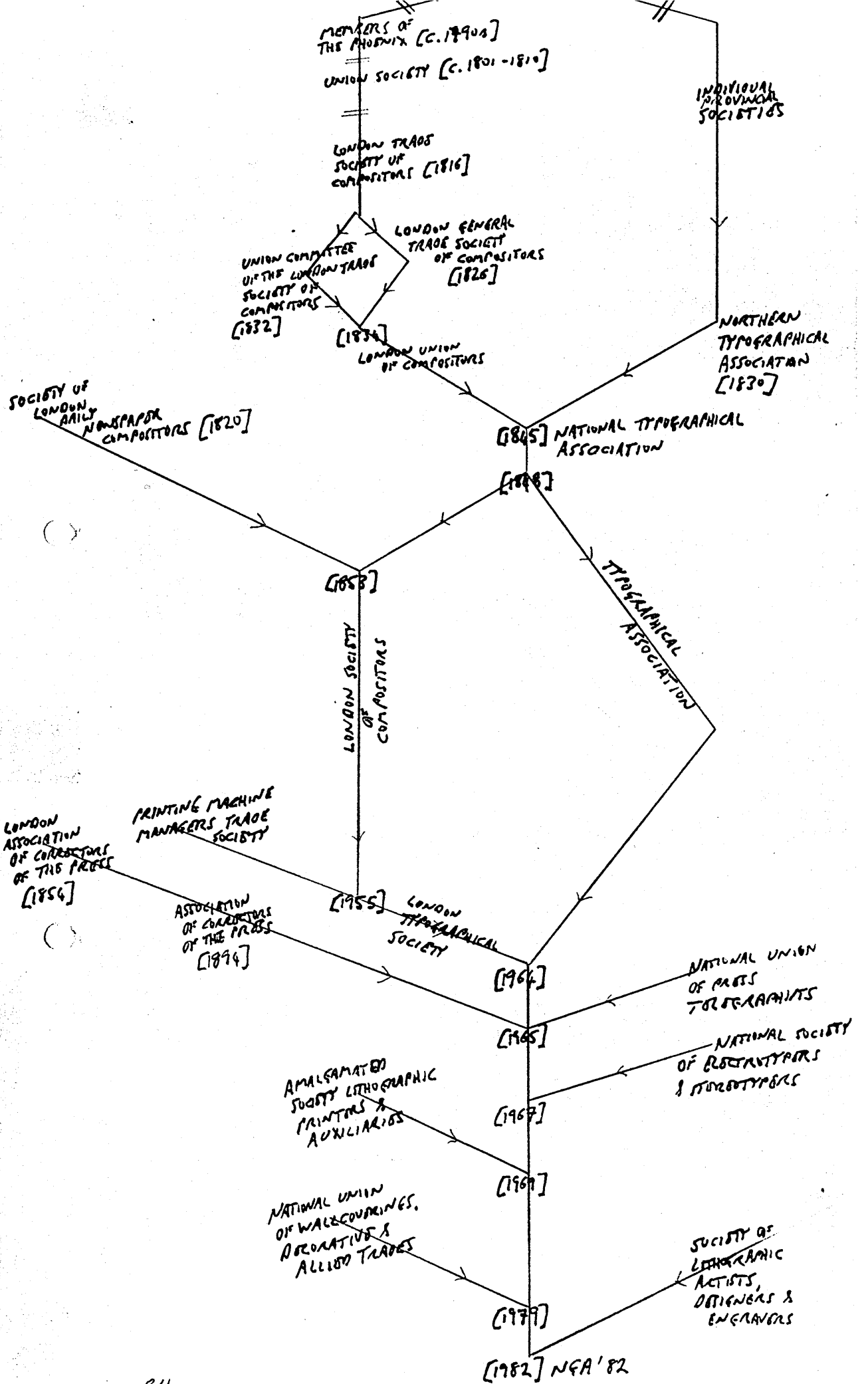
Similarly to its 'southern' craft counterpart, the structure of the SGB starts at the shop-floor level with members organised in chapels, which in turn are organised into the SGB. From this level, the Branch functions essentially as every other SOGAT'82 branch functions.

## B/ Some Historical Aspects of Craft Unionisation

### 1. Introduction

The structure of the following section is periodised, to allow for a clear historical understanding to be gained by the reader. It will be argued that during the 19th Century, the pattern was set for craft trade union control over both access to the 'skilled' labour market and over the labour process itself. This 'control' however, was not created in a once-and-for-all sense, but met with constant challenge by both the employers and other groups of organised labour, as shall be seen throughout this chapter. Between 1900-1945, the craft unions tended not only to consolidate their control, but also develop a workplace cultural hegemony over other 'lesser skilled' groups in the industry. In the post-war years, 1955-82, both craft control and hegemony [1] came under stress, from both employers and other unions, leading to a large number of mergers between craft unions to take place. Finally, between 1982-88, the organised craft labour has undergone a radical restructuring of its position in the printing industry, which has played an important role in altering the interrelationship and self-identity of all groups of workers in the industry.

Whilst the structure of this chapter is in chronological order, three key themes will be explored throughout this historical perspective: firstly, the contradictions and tensions between craft unions, manifested in the historical development towards the creation of just one craft based union in the industry, and the continuation of friction between and within the craft unions. Secondly, the strategy of the craft unions to retain control over both the labour market and the labour process, in particular by restricting and preventing women and young workers from gaining access to 'skill labels'. And thirdly, the influence of changing technology on the attitudes, strategies and structures of the craft unions. Of course, all three themes are interconnected, and thus will not be explored in isolation from each other, but will be analysed as an interrelated set of factors that have helped shape the history of the present day two remaining craft unions, the NGA'82 and the SGB. It should be stressed that no examination of print craft unionisation can take place without constant reference to union amalgamations and transfer of engagements, particularly in respect of the present NGA'82. Thus this historical fact will form a kind of skeleton structure which will interweave the exploration of the key themes mentioned above. The NGA'82 'family tree' (diagram one) gives an at-a-glance picture of the development of union mergers throughout the period under review.



## 2. 19th Century: the Pattern Set for Craft Control

It is important to examine, at least briefly, some of the events that took place during the 19th Century, as several key patterns of structure and strategy were developed in this period of print craft worker unionisation, involving all three key themes to be examined in this section, ie the approach towards changing technology, craft control and craft differentiation. It will be argued in this section that by the end of the 19th Century, the pattern had been firmly set for the control of the craft unions of both access to the skilled labour markets, and over the labour process.

Already by the early 18th Century, the character of the 'printer' had been radically altered, through the general development of competitive industrial capitalism, the growth of literacy amongst the population and through the specific introduction of changing technology [2]. In fact the pre-industrial 'artisan' craftsman who owned his own press, designed and set his own type, and printed and bound the final product, had mostly disappeared in the 16th and 17th Centuries, through a growing division of labour (and capital), which had broken down the constituent parts of the labour process involved in the production of printed matter. As early as the mid-16th Century, Marshall 1983 notes that in the European printing industry,

"Poor working conditions were reflected in the relations between workers and masters. In France, both Paris and Lyons saw strikes and disturbances between 1539 and 1572 over wages, conditions, apprentices and entry into the trade...The masters also tried to break the organisation of the journeymen by allowing more apprentices into the trade to create a labour surplus."

[MARSHALL 1983 : p.13]

By the early 18th Century in Scotland, Gillespie 1953 notes that the old guild system had broken down, due to an expansion of trade after after the Act of Union in 1707 (p.91). Thus the master printers organised in medieval printing guilds, were replaced by journeymen workers, organised in trade unions, and selling their labour power to an employer, who in the Middle Ages would have been a master printer, but who was by now more appropriately to be seen as an industrial capitalist.

However, despite the apparent conflict between employers and journeymen, during the first half of the 19th Century, attempts to create a greater occupational unity met with constant failure, and it was not until the mid 19th Century (some sixty years after the first recorded 'unions' came into being) that even the relatively cohesive London based compositors united in one association. Howe/Waite 1948 note the formation of some of

the earliest compositor combinations, the first being called 'Members of the Phoenix' c.1790s. The esoteric title may have been due to the existence of the 'Combination Acts' between 1799-1824 effectively outlawing trades unions. A second society seemed to have replaced the 'Phoenix' by the turn of the 19th Century, called the 'Union Society' c.1801-10, which in turn indirectly evolved into the 'London Trade Society of Compositors' in 1816. Meanwhile, c.1820, a separate newspaper based compositors union was created - the 'Society of London Daily Newspaper Compositors (SLDNC)', with about 193 members. In 1826, another compositors union emerged, entitled the 'London General Trade Society of Compositors', which according to Howe/Waite existed in friendly rivalry to the 'London Trade Society' and in 1832, both unions formed an alliance through the mechanism of a joint committee - the 'Union Committee of the London Trade Society of Compositors'. In 1834, the first clearly defined single general trade London compositors union was formed out of this alliance called the 'London Union of Compositors' (LUC).

Relations between print unions were characteristically patchy, particularly in respect of the general trade compositors and their newspaper counterparts, manifested in the latter's refusal to enter into the newly formed all London compositors union - the LUC [3]. However, relations with other unions were more reasonable, and the LUC generally supported unions in dispute with the employers [4]. However, an initiative by the Scottish based Northern Union in the early 1840s to create a national union proper, met with little success [5]. But nevertheless, it was becoming clear that multi-unionism amongst the compositors was a major weakness, particularly in London, due largely to the increasingly successful use by employers of 'scab labour' during disputes.

"It was stated that while men quitted their frames under the instructions of one society, their places were supplied by the sanction or with the knowledge of another society - both professing the same objects, but yet thus acting in direct opposition to each other".

[HOWE/WAITE 1948 : p.113]

Another problem was manifest in this period however, which perhaps posed a greater threat to the control of entry into the labour market by organised craft workers, this being the use of apprentice labour by the employers. In fact the craft unions have historically had to fight for the restriction of cheap young labour, both for short term (wage levels) and long term (numbers of new entrants into the 'skilled' market) reasons. In fact it is undoubtedly the case that the development of 'craft' unionisation came about partly as a direct result of the need to combat cheap labour. Howe & Waite 1948 record that between 1770-



1848, many battles were fought in London between capital and labour over this issue, with the newspaper compositors union formed in 1820 - the SLDNC - being largely successful in restricting entrance into skilled areas (p.132-33). This period appears to have set a pattern in the national press whereby no craft apprentices were to be allowed right up to the 1980s.

In Scotland, attempts to combat the use of cheap 'boy' labour had already contributed to the demise of two embryonic Scottish craft unions prior to the 1830s. By 1836, the 'General Scottish Association' (forerunner of the STA), saw the problem of apprentice labour as a central issue [6]. Some attempt was made to limit the ratio between apprentices and journeymen at the plant level to 1:3. In Edinburgh, a case was made by the craft union that it would be beneficial to both employers and journeymen to reduce the number of boys coming into the trade, which in turn was leading to too many journeymen setting themselves up as master's, thus creating greater competition. But by 1850, these restrictions had largely broken down, and Gillespie reports that in six Scottish towns (Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kilmarnock, Perth and Stirling), there were approximately 550 apprentices to 954 journeymen, ie more than 1:2. In the whole of Scotland in 1850, there were estimated to be 1,500 journeymen and 1200 apprentices [7].

Faced by the general problem of oversupply of labour, the craft unions experienced a consistent impetus to merge, counterposed by continuing strong feelings of differentiation. Hence the LUC sought amalgamation with the provincial compositors union, the National Typographical Association (NTA), and with a membership of approximately 2,200, became in 1845 the 'London Society of Compositors' (LSC) Branch of the NTA [8]. However this embryonic national union with a total membership of 5,418 in 1846 [9] was to have a very short life, splitting up in 1848. In his official history of what became the provincial compositors union - the Typographical Association (TA), Musson 1954 saw the failure of the national union as reflecting a general aversion to amalgamation between London and the provinces (p.264). Howe/Waite support the view that amalgamation came about for rather negative reasons, with the LUC joining forces with the NTA "much in the same spirit as a drowning man clutches a straw" (p.89). But it is equally important, given the overriding imperative of merger in the first instance, to stress external factors in the breakdown, such as a trade depression and growing unemployment in the printing industry, the over supply of labour, and the increasing efficacy in the use of 'scab labour', especially in London (coupled with the apparent inability of the new national union to do anything about it) [10]. Thus on the 1st February 1848, the LSC branch of the NTA passed the following resolution:

"That in consequence of the numerous secessions which have taken place, both in town and country, from the ranks of the NTA, as also the continued indifference exhibited on its behalf, this Branch deems it necessary, for the maintenance of Union, to cease connection with the aforementioned Association, forming in its place a local Society apart from, but in friendly connection with, all other typographical societies in the three Kingdoms."

[CHOWE/WAITE 1948 : p.121]

This break-up left the TA organising compositors in England, Wales and Ireland, but with separate unions in London, Dublin and Scotland. Relationship between the unions were however reasonably harmonious, with agreements not to strike break, and the facility for members to transfer between unions, although a financial problem developed over the individual transferees subscription rate [11]. But the external impetus for unity amongst the compositors continued apace, and a dispute involving the use of scab labour from northern Britain at the 'Morning Post' in London, brought both the SLNDC (now with a membership of only 120) and LSC together in merger in 1853 [12]. Only at this point mid-way through the 19th Century were all organised compositors in London united in one 2,600 strong union.

In the same year - 1853 - the Scottish Typographical Association (STA) was formed, with a greater unity initially being shown amongst print workers north of the Border than in the 'south', with both machine minders and compositors joining together. However, this unity was short lived, and in 1866 machine minders in Glasgow broke away from the STA to form their own union, on the grounds that the former union was dominated too much by the interests of the compositors [13]. In 1874, for similar reasons, the Edinburgh pressmen attempted to gain greater autonomy within the STA, but the latter refused to allow the Edinburgh machine minders to form their own branch, which led to the latter seceding completely from the STA [14].

This disunity in Scotland between the pressmen and compositors came at a time of radical developments in printing press technology, with mechanical presses becoming much more sophisticated, particularly with the advent of web-fed rotary perfecter machines, which could print on both sides of continuous reel paper simultaneously [15]. However, Gillespie argues that there was apparently little displacement of labour with the introduction of this type of machine in Scotland (p.108). This could explain both the pressmen's desire for a greater focus on machine room problems due to new presses being introduced, and the feeling that their position in the industry was secure enough to continue as an autonomous organisation. However, given the potential ability of the employers to 'divide and rule' the two

unions, reconciliation was given an important priority in the STA, and unity was achieved between the machine minders and the compositors in Scotland in 1907 (p.124).

For the compositors, a more specific reasons for unity with the machine minders may have partly been inspired by the need for solidarity action in the face of continuing use of cheap apprentice labour by the employers. With the formation of the STA in the mid-19th Century, further attempts were made at restricting this type of entry into the labour market, but with only marginal success:

"With few exceptions, this was mainly achieved by protesting at new encroachments, and little attempt was made to secure universal application of the Association rule of one apprentice to two journeymen [itself a ratio that had been narrowed from an earlier period of unionisation]. The rule, in fact, was largely ignored, and in consequence, the problem remained."

[GILLESPIE 1953 : p.93]

During the 1860s three tactics were discussed within the STA to combat the use of apprentice labour: agitate for complete abolition (only a minority view); restrict the use of apprentices (but this had proved difficult to enforce in the past); and reduce the time period spent in apprenticeship from seven to five years [16]. But whilst the first two options were clearly problematic (if not impossibilist) solutions, the third option, reducing the time period, highlighted already in the mid 19th Century the problematic and complex nature of 'skill'. For example, correspondence in the STA's 'Circular' in the early 1860s [17] pointed out that technological changes and the increasing, to use marxist terminology, real subordination of labour to capital, meant that a seven year apprenticeship unnecessary, and that cheap apprentice labour was increasingly able to do the work of journeymen,

"...under the name of apprenticeship, it creates an ever increasing staff of workmen, who at half, or even less than half, the ordinary prices, execute work which would otherwise be executed by the general body."

[From the 'Circular' c.late 1862/early 1863, quoted in GILLESPIE 1953 P.94]

Despite attempts to restrict its use by the STA, particularly from the 1870s, apprentice labour expanded up until the end of the 19th Century. At this point, perhaps paradoxically, it was the mechanisation of the typesetting function in the form of the 'Linotype' machine, that restricted the use of 'boy' labour by the employers, as it created a need for better trained personnel, and was not as amenable to job fragmentation in itself, as was much of the composing function when done by hand. We shall return to the impact of the introduction of the Linotype machine later.

During the latter part of the 1800s, craft control over entry into the labour market was coming under stress from another quarter, this being the use of cheap female labour by the employers. The 1860s saw the question of women coming to the fore in the printing industry, and partly for wider social reasons, several specific campaigns were launched in this period to enhance the position of women in the workplace generally. For example, a campaign was launched by the Social Science Association to promote women into the world of work to soak up numbers of destitute women prostitutes [18]. This specific development was accompanied by a more general shift towards so-called genteel, middle class forms of women's employment in the latter half of the 19th Century. In the printing industry, this manifested itself in women moving out of machine room and bindery areas, and into the composing room. The printing industry was in fact to come under particular scrutiny in this period. The Liberal Prime Minister at the time, Gladstone, focussed specifically on the print industry as an example of the systematic exclusion of women from industry, "although we all know that women are peculiarly adapted, from their small fingers, to the delicate handling of type" [19]. In 1860, the 'Society for Promoting the Employment of Women' set up the Victorian Press in London, to be staffed exclusively by women [20]. A year later, a similar organisation in Scotland - the 'Scottish National Institute for Promoting Employment of Women in the Art of Printing' - established the Caledonian Press in Edinburgh for the employment of women compositors [21]. Until the 1870s however, women compositors were still only found in special patronaged firms. But in 1872, a large scale male printers strike in Edinburgh led to the use of female labour to strike break, which had the affect of establishing women in large numbers in the Edinburgh print trade by the mid 1870s [22].

With the onset of the economic depression in the last quarter of the 19th Century, the question of women compositors was to become acute, with many male printers blaming the employment of women for unemployment in the trade, espcecially in London, when the LSC's quarterly Delegate Meeting listed as one of the main causes of unemployment the use of female labour [23]. The craft unions position on this issue however, varied. A General Typographical Conference of all the main print unions in 1886 resolved that women should be recruited into unions on a par with men [24], but it appears that this policy failed to gain ground in practice within the industry. It seemed that in Scotland, the STA was more supportive of women workers (on the basis of equal pay as men), than its counterparts south of the border. Female compositors perhaps came closest historically to genuine male acceptance at the very end of the Century, when the Edinburgh Female Compositors Society was formed in 1898, with support of the Edinburgh Branch of the STA [25].

The female craft union was short-lived however, and the women were to face more hostility from the male craft unions at the turn of the 20th Century. Throughout the later 19th Century, the position of female employment in the printing industry showed some signs of marginal improvement. Cockburn 1983 presents the following employment statistics from 1851-91:

table 8.1 : employment of female labour in craft and non-craft areas of the printing trade 1851-91  
(p.23)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Bookbinding</u> | <u>Printing (craft)</u> |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1851        | 3,500              | 300                     |
| 1871        | 7,000              | 700                     |
| 1891        | 14,200             | 4,500                   |

Clearly the agitation and general social trend towards female employment had some impact from the 1870s onwards. But women still constituted only a small proportion of the employed labour force in the industry, and as Cockburn points out, the apparent noticeable rise in the employment of women in the craft sectors of the industry between 1871-91 is misleading, as often many of these women were still in the bookbiding sections of larger printers.

Whilst gender differentiation was a continuing feature of union/worker relationships in the printing industry in the second half of the 19th Century, so was male craft differentiation. To some extent, the impetus for a greater unity between the various printing unions gained momentum, and in 1861, the Printing & Kindred Trades Federation (PKTF) was set-up, with the affiliation of most the the craft (and general) unions except for those based in London and Scotland, who still feared loosing autonomy in a larger organisation [26]. However, the LSC and STA had apparently over estimated the degree of homogeneity between the PKTF affiliates, and Musson 1954 claims that the Federation at this stage had little real power:

"There is no doubt that valuable machinery had been created for combined action in trade affairs. But the real powers were still the constituent trade societies. The Federation had practically no funds, and was therefore unable to back up its decisions, except through the various Executives, which were apt to take an independent line. The Federation's committee's powers were mainly consultative and negotiatory. They could arrive at no decisions and take no action without reference back to the individual Executives.

The various unions still shaped their own trade policies and relied mainly on their own powers to enforce them. Trade differences and mutual recrimination were also apt to hinder federated action. A speaker at the TA Delegate Meeting in 1898 therefore considered that Federation existed only 'on paper'."

[MUSSON 1954 : p.290]

Despite these limitations, or perhaps because of them, the printing unions continued to seek greater unity towards the end of the 19th Century. In the 1870s, talks took place aimed at creating a more formal federated structure, and the suggestion of an 'Amalgamated Society of Printers' was made to merge all provincial unions. However this idea failed to get off the ground, but was echoed in London in 1885 with the idea of the 'Federation of the Printing & Paper Trades in the Metropolis' [27]. The London based initiative emanated from a trade dispute between the LSC and Waterlows in the East End, and 16 (mostly craft) unions representing some 11,000 members appointed delegates to consider the scheme [28]. Again however, nothing came of this federation.

In Scotland, the isolation of the STA led it to affiliate to the PKTF in 1891, only to withdraw a year later over the issue of autonomy. But this proved only temporary, probably as the STA realised that the Federation retained only very limited powers vis-a-vis the constituent unions, and the STA rejoined the PKTF in 1895 [29].

During the 1890s, the single most important technological development occurred in respect of the origination area with the introduction of the 'Linotype' mechanical typesetting machine. Given the advances made in printing press technology during the 19th Century, particularly from the 1860s, it was almost inevitable that the employers would focus their attention on the one remaining area of printing technology that remained un-automated - the setting of type by hand. Indeed, hand composing was clearly causing a bottle neck in production, and many attempts at developing and introducing mechanical typesetters were made during the 19th Century, including the introduction in the 1840s of the 'Young-Delcambre' composing machine (often worked by women operators). However, these machines proved inefficient and uneconomic, and other mechanical typesetting machines relied on the use of cheap labour for profitability, which met with mostly successful resistance from the craft unions, especially in London re the LSC [30]. The linotype was to change this situation to some extent, but in the longer term, was introduced in a way that helped cement the male craft union member's position in the industry, rather than weakening it. The first recorded use of a linotype in Scotland in 1890 led to a dispute between the employers and the STA at the 'Scottish Leader' in Edinburgh [31]. But the Union at this stage still perceived the employment

of cheap apprentice labour as the major threat to its membership, rather than changing technology [32]. Overall, it appears that in both Scotland and the South, the revival of the British economy from about 1890 onwards (after fifteen years of slump), and the growing demand for printed matter from an increasingly literate populace, helped to offset the employment impact of this new typesetting machine. As John Child 1967 comments in his historical study of the printing industry:

"The transition was amazingly swift and smooth. It was fortunate for the unions that the machines came onto the scene during an era of great expansion in the industry. The growing demand for books and newspapers, in part a consequence of mass education, in part a consequence of new techniques of advertising, cushioned the shock to the hand craftsman."  
[CHILD 1967 : p.182]

Gillespie (p.119) makes a similar point regarding Scotland. Individual craft union membership (see table 8.2) and overall union density figures tend to support the view that the linotype machine had no lasting adverse impact on employment levels. The STA's membership grew from 3,000 to 4,000 (ie by 33%) between 1890 and 1900, and a further 25% between the turn of the Century and the outbreak of the First World War [33].

For the TA, corresponding membership increased from 9,556 to 16,179 (69%) and to 23,783 by 1914 (47%) [34]. For the LSC, membership grew from 8,910 in 1890 to 11,287 in 1900 (a 26% increase), and rose to 12,384 in 1914 (a 10% rise) [35]. Union membership in total in the print industry was approximately 40,000 in 1890 (24% union density) and rose to 90,000 (31% union density by 1914 [36]. Thus it would appear that the print unions in general, and certainly the craft unions, experienced a steady increase in membership (and influence) at the same time as the the linotype machine had come on stream on a large scale in the industry. In fact, it appears that the potential of the linotype machine to reduce employment, was successfully channeled by the male dominated craft unions into a reduction of apprentice and female employment in the industry [37]. The ability of the male craft union to 'capture' the linotype machine was, *a priori*, reflective of the generally dominant position of this latter group, vis-a-vis women and young labour by the end of the 19th Century, and given the upturn in trade, the employers would have had little incentive to fight a major and unpredictable battle over wresting control of the linotype from the craft workers. And finally, it has already been noted that once 'captured', the linotype machine itself could not be easily altered in its basic functions, and thus the operator became increasingly 'master over his' machine.

table 8.2 : Craft union membership 1890-1900 [38]

| <u>Year</u>   | <u>TA</u> | <u>LSC</u> | <u>STA</u> |
|---------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| c.mid-19th C. | 5,500     | 2,000      | 1,000      |
| 1890          | 9,556     | 8,910      | 3,000      |
| 1900          | 16,179    | 11,287     | 4,000      |

Thus by the end of the 19th Century, a multi craft union structure had taken shape that was to form the basic framework for unions in the printing industry lasting into the second half of the 20th Century. More importantly, we can see from the experience of the previous Century that many of the contemporary problems facing the printing unions have a long tradition, and are by no means just a modern phenomenon. In particular, the desire on the part of the individual unions to retain a high degree of autonomy in any merged or federated union, counterposed by the constant dynamic of the capital-labour relationship creating an impetus towards greater unity between the sectionalised groups of organised labour. This tension became structured in an organisational sense with the development of occupational unity, but spatial differentiation within the composing trade; ie one union in the English provinces, Wales and Ireland (TA), one in London (LSC), and one in Scotland (STA). The maleness of the craft areas, and indeed the definition of 'craft' itself had also been fought over and largely secured by the male craft unions, although whilst the issue of apprentice labour was largely settled by the turn of the Century (with the craft unions exercising a reasonable degree of control over entry into the labour market), the issue of women printers came to the fore again early in the 20th Century, as we shall see in the following section.



c) 1900-1945

The Century started positively re print trade union unity, with the acceptance of a TA proposal that the PKTF should establish its own separate funds. The TA's scheme was in fact a bit too far reaching for many of the affiliated unions, giving the PKTF far too much power over its constituent unions, but nevertheless a watered down version was adopted, which led to a radical reshaping of the old PKTF in 1901 [39]. At that stage, the PKTF represented 13 trade unions, organising some 43,000 members (mostly craft but semi-skilled also). By 1903 affiliation had risen to 16 unions, including the TA, STA, LSC, and the Association of Correctors of the Press (ACP) [40]. However, the apparent success of the PKTF was not so much reflective of a growing overriding desire towards print union unity per se, but the more limited and practical goal of obtaining a universal fortyeight hour working week [41]. Musson makes much of the fact that "the [unions] had for the first time, subordinated their autonomy to a general Federation movement" (p.297). However, many attempts were made throughout this period to amalgamate the various unions, and create a more solidly structured unity, but all met with failure.

In 1900, merger talks took place between the STA and LSC, and in 1908 the LSC invited the STA, TA and the London based Printing Machine Managers Trade Society (PMMTS) to a joint conference over merger. This move had in fact been initiated by a TUC sub-committee, after the early years of the 1900s had seen sectional conflict grow over job jurisdiction [42]. In particular, there had been much friction between London and the provinces over the higher rates of pay gained in London, and a concomitant tendency for London print firms to move into the provinces. In 1907, open warfare had broken out between the LSC (and PMMTS) and the TA when, because of the latter factor, the London based unions began to organise outside of the previously agreed 15 mile radius of London. The TUC's formula for settling this dispute was the strategy of amalgamation, and on the 30th April 1908 the four unions got together and appeared to be moving towards merger, agreeing that:

"...in the opinion of this Conference it is desirable in the interests of the members of the four societies here represented that the societies should amalgamate into one association."

[HOWE/WAITE 1948 : p.275]

Merger talks continued into 1910, with the reader's unions - the ACP - joining the discussions in 1909 [43]. But again, the talks broke down over the old issue of autonomy, especially regarding collective bargaining, finance and the authority to call strikes within each branch. The main protagonists in this dispute over

autonomy were the TA, who had traditionally favoured a highly centralised union structure, and the LSC, who had always jealously guarded their independence, and favoured a decentralised organisation [44].

Despite the increase in size and influence of the PKTF by the outbreak of World War One, (the PKTF had doubled in size since 1903, to incorporate 23 trade unions representing some 82,000 print workers, and had taken over some of the collective bargaining functions of the individual unions [45]) initiatives by the Federation in 1912, and again in 1920, aimed at creating a more formal print union amalgamation, again floundered.

Changes in printing technology were an ever present factor underlying inter-union tension during this period, particularly between craft and semi-skilled unions in the machine room. In Scotland, the STA had largely ignored the increasing use of rotary printing presses, and the men working them. By the outbreak of the First World War, NATSOPA had organised many of these machine minders in newspaper houses north of the border. The STA, seeing this as a potential weakness in its ranks, started to recruit some of the rotary pressmen, which led to friction with NATSOPA. In 1915, an agreement was reached between the two unions to transfer NATSOPA members into the STA, but many NATSOPA members refused to transfer unions, and in 1917 NATSOPA was forced to rescind the agreement. This situation was exacerbated when in 1918, the STA decided to set-up an Auxiliary Section, an organisational move which very much impinged upon the recruitment area of NATSOPA, and the papers workers union the NUPPBW. With the STA membership voting to reject a PKTF sponsored compromise arrangement in 1922, whereby the STA would undergo a reorganisation in its structure, and an STA Delegate Meeting deciding to go ahead with the creation of the Auxiliary Section, the STA was expelled from the PKTF in 1924 [46].

In the latter half of the 1920s, the STA continued to come into conflict with NATSOPA and the NUPPBW over the craft union's Auxiliary Section. However, a compromise agreement was reached in 1928, which restricted the STA's area of recruitment of auxiliaries to outside the main Scottish cities (Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow), which led to the STA reaffiliating to the PKTF in the same year [47]. The problem over the recruitment of rotary pressmen was also settled by a compromise agreement in 1929 [48]. Nevertheless, in the 1940s, this same problem again raised its head, and had to be sorted out by another compromise agreement [49].

Overall, between the mid 1920s and the early post-War period, mechanisation in the press room had been largely controlled by the STA, which in turn had led to a slight shift in its membership structure, as table 8.3 below illustrates:

table 8.3 : membership structure of STA 1925-51 [50]

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Compositors</u> | <u>Machinemen</u> |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1925        | 3,356              | 1,519             |
| 1951        | 2,986              | 1,568             |

Nevertheless, semi-skilled operatives entering the machine room, whilst recruited by the STA through its Auxiliary section, were not given full membership rights, and thus the Union retained its 'craft' identity to a large extent, whilst at the same time benefiting from the membership of 'semi-skilled' labour [51].

In England, the TA had a slightly different approach to non-apprenticed trained workers, and had since the early years of the 20th Century a dual policy of recruiting apprenticed trained machine room labour into its own ranks, for example having 2,751 machine minding members in 1909, whilst giving NATSDPA assistance in organising in the provinces those labourers/assistants not eligible to join the TA because they were not 'time-served' journeymen [52]. However, with enlightened self-interest, the TA was not above recruiting non-apprenticed labour in a key strategic area of the machine room - these being rotary press operatives. The latter were in fact equally skilled as other machine minders, and could not be easily replaced during a dispute, thus they could effectively shut down an increasingly important part of the press room in many print houses [53]. In fact the employers also recognised the strategic importance of rotary press operatives, and often refused to grant the TA recognition rights in this area, which led to the TA organising these workers at the local, rather than national level [54].

During this same period, another major jurisdictional argument was taking place between the LSC and the ACP, over whether LSC members should be eligible for 'promotion' into the reading room. This dispute in fact illustrates the complex nature of print union perceptions and character, as the ACP saw themselves not as a craft union, but as a professional body:

"The LSC caters for a craft, the ACP maintains that its occupation ranks as a profession, and as such it admits only those who display sufficient of the professional qualifications required."

[HOWE/WAITE 1948 P.284]

In the 1930s, this dispute raised its head again, (and continued to do so into the post-War years). Similarly to the attitude of the NUJ in the 1980s (see chapter seven), the ACP felt that compositors needed rather more retraining to enter the 'reading box' than the latter felt was necessary [55]. However, as Howe & Waite point out, this particular rivalry never reached the heights of

sectionalism of some other disputes between the unions, and generally, relations between the LSC and ACP were good (p.284). Even so, a noticeable degree of differentiation existed between the two unions, and whilst a joint card agreement for 'promoted' compositors was reached prior to the First World War, merger talks between the two unions were ultimately rejected by the ACP in both 1912 and 1924 [56].

Also in 1924, a Conference between the TA, STA and NATSOPA took place regarding possible merger, but broke down, amongst other reasons, over the granting of full working rights in England to Scottish women compositors [57]. The question of women working in craft areas of the printing industry had by this stage received much attention in Scotland. By the turn of the 20th Century, a number of women (between 700-800) had been retrained to work lino and monotype machines in Scottish printing houses, with a particularly strong presence in Edinburgh [58]. However, female workers still only received about 50% of the male rate of pay, and in branches, such as Glasgow, where women had not gained a foothold, there was much resistance to them joining the STA. In 1905, a special Delegate Meeting decided against recognition of women compositors [59]. However, the number of women working in the trade continued to irritate some branches of the STA, and in 1910, with growing unrest occurring in the print houses over women workers, an agreement was reached between employers and the STA to restrict the entry of women, and a permanent ban on female apprenticeships ensued [60]. However, those women who remained in the industry apparently showed surprising solidarity (in the sexist circumstances) with their male colleagues in disputes with the employers, and the STA decided to assume responsibility for female recruitment. Gillespie (p.205-6) notes that in 1911, a Delegate Meeting approved the formation of the 'Edinburgh Female Compositors Society' (EFCS), although it is unclear whether this was a recognition of the de facto existence of the original EFCS formed in 1898, or if that organisation had by 1911 become defunct, and thus the STA were helping in the creation of a new female union. In any event, in 1918, women union members were given voting rights on Association affairs, and in 1920 were granted the right to be represented on the STA's Executive Council and at Delegate Meetings. Finally, in 1922, the EFCS was fully amalgamated into the STA's Edinburgh Branch [61]. However, female compositors were viewed much less favourably by the English based unions (and appear to have never really gained a foothold in the craft areas in the industry south of the border). The TA's reluctance to accept women compositors probably was influential in leading to the latter's declining numerical position in Scotland. As Gillespie comments:

"Recognition of the female compositor led to a gradual improvement in their position and a reduction of the disparity between the male and female rates of pay...The numbers taken on, however, were small, and early in the inter-war period those receiving the full male rate had all retired or been replaced. Women compositors continued only in the Aberdeen and Edinburgh Branches [their traditional stronghold]." [GILLESPIE 1953: p.206-7].

As for the London based craft union - the LSC, its official historians - Howe & Waite, argue that the Union were not against women compositors as such, but against their use as cheap labour, and during both World Wars the Union resisted the entry of women as 'dilutees', particularly in the Second World War, preferring employers to use retired compositors and out-of-trade members, rather than dilutees [62]. The position of the London craft union may have partly reflected the slow decline in membership during the inter-war years. Shortly after the First World War, the LSC had peaked at 15,500, but by 1945, this number had fallen to just under 13,000 [63]. Nevertheless, some women did enter craft areas in London during the 1939-45 War, undertaking a training period of between 9 months (for working a monotype machine), 12 months for reading, and 18 months for working a linotype or entrance into other composing areas [64]. But as in most industries, female 'dilutees' were to be successfully pressurised to leave the printing industry after the War, to make way for returning servicemen, and female labour virtually disappeared from the composing room throughout Britain after 1945.

This gender differentiation had been matched by the craft unions effective control over the apprenticeship system in the industry by the outbreak of the Second World War. In Scotland for example, by the early years of the 20th Century, there had been an increasing emphasis on the need for better trained apprentices, due to mechanisation in the composing area. During the inter-war period, this had led to a more systematic training programme for apprentices. By the Second World War, the STA were able to secure stricter entry restrictions than it had been during the 1914-18 War. Thus whilst between 1935-39 575 apprenticeship starts were recorded, between 1940-44 this figure dropped to 158 [65].

Overall, the craft unions had experienced a steady growth in influence in the printing industry, despite some setbacks experienced during the 1926 General Strike. Union membership figures had however declined in London, and had grown only slowly outside the capital, as table 8.4 illustrates.

table 8.4 : Craft union membership 1900-1945 [66]

| <u>Year</u> | <u>TA</u> | <u>LSC</u> | <u>STA</u> |
|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1900        | 16,179    | 11,287     | 4,000      |
| 1914        | 23,783    | 12,384     | 5,000      |
| 1920        | 31,234    | 15,500     | ---        |
| 1930        | 34,098    | 14,800     | ---        |
| 1939        | 38,277    | 14,255     | ---        |
| 1945        | 41,000    | 12,865     | ---        |

By the outbreak of the Second World War then, little had changed regarding the structure of the print unions since the end of the 19th Century, though clearly the male craft unions had overall solidified their hegemonic position in the industry, although at this stage the craft unions themselves were still highly differentiated from each other. One of the few pieces of evidence of unity, at least between the craft unions, was the survival of a reciprocity scheme, which allowed for the payment of unemployment and strike benefit to members of each union [67]. Originally devised in 1904 between the TA, STA and LSC, and reformulated by the FKTF in 1913, to incorporate members in the TA, LSC, STA, PMMTS, Dublin Typographical Provident Society and ACP, three unions were operating the scheme successfully, the STA, TA and PMMTS in 1944 [68].

During the 1900-1945 period overall, Musson notes the consistent tension between the positive acceptance of amalgamation and unity in principle, and the endless rounds of job demarcation and jurisdiction disputes in practice:

"This enthusiasm for 'general' or 'industrial' amalgamation, however, gradually fizzled out in face of practical difficulties. Each union jealously guarded its autonomy, had its own peculiar rules, constitution, customs and trade problems; some unions were 'craft', others 'non-craft'; some national, others local; while there were constant disputes between them in regard to 'demarcation'."  
 [MUSSON 1954 : p.299]

In short, relations between the printing unions prior to the Second World war, were similar to that of the post War years and into the 1980s, a period to which the thesis now turns.

d) 1955-82

Musson argues that the first half of the 20th Century saw an uneven, but progressive tendency towards print union unity and ultimate amalgamation, noting in particular the role played by the PKTF over issues such as post-war reconstruction of the industry, wages and hours movements and the bipartite Joint Industrial Council (JIC) (p.526). And given that in 1948, there were ten craft unions (eight letterpress and two lithographic), whereas only one was in existence by 1982, there appears to be some validity in Musson's optimism. However, as in the periods examined so far, unity amongst organised labour in the printing industry has not come about without contradictions, and a tension still exists to date between various sections, even within notionally craft areas.

In 1955, the PMMTS and LSC finally merged, after many abortive attempts in the first half of the Century, under the new title of the 'London Typographical Society' (LTS), with a membership of 19,000. This merger between the machine minders and compositors unions had come about primarily because of the post-War growth in lithographic printing techniques, which threatened the livelihood of the letterpress machine minders, hence the PMMTS no longer felt able to continue as a viable autonomous entity.

Relations between the craft unions (and print unions generally) remained in state of tension however, and even as late as the early 1960s, the General Secretary of the LTS - John Bonfield - could be found arguing against print union amalgamation at various conferences [69]. At the same time however Bonfield's counterpart in the TA - Bob Willis - urged the print unions move towards the creation of 'one union for the print' [70]. This difference of opinion between the General Secretaries of the two large craft unions in part reflected the historical tendency of the London based union to retain an autonomous entity, but was also to do with the problem of wage differentials, which the LSC were very keen to maintain, in an industry that was experiencing increasing technological change. Given the lower rates of pay that existed outside of London, even for craft workers, it may well have been the case that the TA felt it could best enhance the terms and conditions of its membership by uniting with all print unions, rather than attempt to retain what was in absolute terms, a narrow margin of pay differential over its semi-skilled colleagues in the industry.

Changing technology however, proved to be an overriding determinant in the 1960s towards craft union merger, despite the constant manifestation of sectional attitudes amongst certain sections of the unions. Given that two strikes involving the LSC and TA in the later 1950s had severely taxed the resources of both unions, a slow but perceptible change in attitude towards merger was also underpinned by the realisation that a multi craft union

structure could not exert the sort of craft dominance that had pertained throughout the first half of the 20th Century. Thus in 1964, one of the largest and most important amalgamations took place between the LTS and TA, which created the National Graphical Association (NGA), with a total membership of just under 82,000. In 1965, the 1,500 strong ACP and the National Union of Press Telegraphists (NUPT) with a similar membership, transferred their engagements into the NGA, to be followed in 1967 by the 5,000 strong National Society of Electrotypers & Stereotypers (NSES). This latter merger meant that for the first time, only one letterpress technology based craft union existed (outside of Scotland and Ireland) in the printing industry. This series of amalgamations and transfer of engagements amongst letterpress unions was largely the result of the growth of lithographic techniques, which make increasing inroads into the job areas of the above mentioned unions. However, it was apparent that changing technology was potentially threatening to the lithographic based unions as well, and with the development of the web-offset printing press in the late 1960s, affecting both letterpress and lithographic machine minding numbers, the Amalgamated Society of Lithographic Printers & Auxiliaries (ASLP) with approximately 13,000 members, transferred its engagements into the NGA in 1969 [71]. At this point, only two main craft based unions (not including Ireland) lay outside the NGA, these being the STA and the Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers & Engravers (SLADE), both unions organising predominantly origination area workgroups.

At this stage, the NGA, with a membership of over 107,000, represented the vast majority of craft workers in the trade. SLADE retained a membership of about 16,000 throughout the period under review, and the STA had only approximately 7,000 members in Scotland. However, growth through further mergers were to prove more problematic for the NGA in the 1970s, than had been the case between 1955-69. Symbolic of the complex nature of union amalgamations, a notable increase in inter (and intra) union tension was witnessed in the 1970s, in part due to the creation of just a few very large and 'defensively powerful' unions, which made joint union agreement harder to achieve than during a period of relatively small unions who needed each other's cooperation and goodwill to a greater extent. Symbolic of this inter union tension was the desolving of the PKTF in 1974, (which had reached a peak membership affiliation figure of 405,793 in 1971 [72]), largely for the latter reason [73], to be replaced by a TUC committee - the Printing Industries Committee - an information/discussion forum rather than a joint union body with a collective bargaining role a la the PKTF. A decade after the formation of the NGA, John Bonfield, its then General Secretary, still spoke of 'one union for the print' as being a long way off, with inter union relations



at an all time low in the early 1970s, and citing the recent collapse of an abortive SOGAT/NATSOPA (see Chapter 7) merger as evidence for his viewpoint [74].

Despite the constant manifestation of inter-union tension in the 1970s, changes in technology began to take on an ever more radical shape, far outpacing the speed of change experienced in the previous decade. The development of lithography in printing processes had been the main rationale for mergers in the 1960s, but in the 1970s, increasingly these developments were overtaken (and to some extent enhanced) by the further advances being made in computerisation, especially in the origination areas (see Chapter Four). The details of this technological change and its general impact on industrial relations in the industry have been given in chapters four and five respectively, so will not be repeated here. But suffice to say as Gennard & Dunn 1983 comment:

"The impact of new technology upon the print craft unions is becoming increasingly profound. The NGA...is threatened with a loss of control over the supply of labour through possible substitution of its members by lesser and higher skilled workers both within and outside the traditional printing industry."

[GENNARD/DUNN in BJIR Vol.21, 1983 : p19]

Gennard & Dunn 1983 note four tactics adopted by the craft unions in the 1970s to meet the threat of changing technology: i. attempts to reach new technology agreements (NTAs) with newspaper publishers; ii. attempts to return work to the composing room; iii. recruitment in new areas of membership; and iv. union amalgamations. To some extent, Gennard & Dunn's perspective perhaps paints too conscious a picture of the craft unions approach to new technology in the 1970s. To a certain extent, each tactic can be seen as mutually exclusive, and it was only with the apparent failure at different times of each tactic, that focus was shifted towards a different approach. Indeed, the fourth option, that of union merger, was less of a tactic for handling contemporary technological change, as much as the continuation of a historical tendency, only in part underpinned by a technological impetus. In other words, it could be argued that the craft unions adopted various tactics in an ad-hoc manner, rather than developing any coherent and systematic strategy towards technological change. It is interesting to note that even a decade later, of the three main print unions examined in this thesis, the NGA had no discernable official attitude towards technological innovation, although it had established a working party to look at this issue. This compares with the NUJ and SOGAT who had made official statements as to the union's attitude towards new technology, had published discussion/education documents, and in the case of the journalists union had published books and reports on the subject, as well as

setting up working parties to look into the impact of changing technology [75]. Furthermore, it is reflective of the radical and problematic character of changing technology during the 1970s and early 1980s, and also the ad-hoc manner of the tactics employed by the craft unions, that all four tactics, *inter alia*, further exacerbated inter-union tension, and at times led to open conflict.

The history of new technology agreements (NTAs) between employers and the NGA have been largely dealt with in previous chapters, so will not be examined in detail here, although it is worth noting that in a survey published in the mid-1980s, the NGA '82 had signed a total of five NTAs, compared to the NUJ's eleven, and SOGAT '82s four [76].

The second strategy, involving attempts to return work to the composing room, was basically aimed at preventing origination work (particularly art-work) from by-passing union recognised print shops. The 1972 and 1974 NGA Biennial Delegate Meetings endorsed a 'blacking' campaign to be pursued by the Union, which was put into effect in 1976 [77]. However, the 'blacking' campaign led to conflict with SLADE, which had a policy of trying to recruit workers in unorganised art agencies (to which most of the 'blacking' was aimed at), rather than taking work away from them. A compromise was reached in this inter-union wrangle in 1977, with the introduction of the 'labelling' system, whereby a joint NGA/SLADE rubber stamp had to be attached to any piece of work emanating from any printers/art agency, in order for it to be handled by union members in other print shops [78]. Attempts to return work to the composing room also led the NGA into problems with a host of trade unions outside of traditional print areas, such as AFEX, TASS, NALGO and ASTMS, as changes in technology (particularly the development of the web-offset press) had led to the growth of 'in-house' printing, which meant that almost any company with reasonable resources could undertake much of its own printed matter requirements, rather than sending the work out to a contract printers'. This brought many non-traditional print workers into print production, as employers used their existing staff, or at least staff organised in existing unions, to work the in-house printing machines. In the case of NALGO, the NGA had to back down from an inter-union jurisdictional argument when it was threatened with a 'Bridlington' ruling from the TUC [79].

Despite the impact of the 1982 Employment Act on 'blacking' tactics, this labelling system relied heavily on shop-floor F/MDC vigilance, and by the early 1980s had lost its efficacy. However, the tactic was reintroduced at the NGA '82s 1984 Biennial Delegate Meeting, with the endorsement of the National Executive's plan to publish a new 'fairs list' (of recognised print houses) and a newly designed, more detailed rubber stamp to be attached to all unionised pieces of origination work [80]. The tactic

would be more successful in the 1980s than the 1970s, it was argued, as by now SLADE and the NGA were one union.

The third tactic adopted by the NGA in the 1970s, was that of widening its traditional craft based recruitment area. Again, this led to problems with SLADE, as both unions attempted to recruit art studio workers. SLADE was the first of the two unions to systematically recruit these workers, with the creation of a new section called the 'SLADE Art Union' in 1975. In 1979, the NGA adopted a similar organisational restructuring (after merger with NUWDAT - see below) by creating an 'Art, Technical, Clerical & Administrative' section (ACTA), with an eventual aim to "seek a post-entry closed shop to maintain membership and protect itself from competition from other unions" [81]. Both unions however met with only limited success in white-collar recruitment in the 1970s [82]. And despite the NGA and SLADE merging in 1982, white-collar recruitment continues at a very slow pace in the NGA '82, as the National Council Report to the Union's 1986 Biennial Delegate Meeting makes clear:

"Organisation within ACTA areas continues despite the obstacles which have been reported to previous conferences and in particular, opposition from employers, employers' organisations, other trade unions and the general industrial climate. But, consequently at a slow pace."  
[NGA '82 1986 : p.44]

Thus the three tactics mentioned so far - signing NTAs, blacking non-unionised printing material and widening the recruitment base - have all been both problematic and of limited efficacy. The fourth approach - amalgamation - can best be seen from the perspective of a long term historical tendency, which offers the craft unions the most viable opportunity for maintaining some degree of control over its position in the industry.

In 1976, the NGA's Biennial Delegate Meeting gave its Executive the go-ahead to pursue talks with all other relevant unions with a view to creating 'one union in the print' [82]. However, between 1970 and 1981, only one merger took place regarding the NGA, and that was with the 1979 transfer of engagements of the 'National Union of Wallcoverings, Decorative & Allied Trades (NUWDAT). Despite its title, the importance of this merger for the NGA lay in the white-collar base of NUWDAT, and as stated earlier, the NGA formed a new white-collar section from this basis - ACTA. SLADE had been joined in 1973 by a small group called the 'United Society of Engravers', but had essentially remained throughout the period under review, a small (approx.16,000), tightly knit union with perhaps the most craft exclusive membership in the industry. In 1982 however, with changes in technology and the increasing difficulty for small unions to remain

financially viable in the industrial relations climate of the 1980s, the NGA and SLADE finally amalgamated, to form the NGA'82.

Although ostensibly only one craft union existed in the industry from 1982, an interesting development had occurred in the mid 1970s in Scotland, with the then Scottish Graphical Association (SGA) deciding to amalgamate with SOGAT (to form SOGAT'75), rather than with the NGA. The SGA had already experienced noticeable change in its membership structure by the early 1970s, and concomitantly the type of work its members were engaged in. In response to this the Union decided on a name change at its Conference in Aberdeen in 1973, and broadened its historical title - the Scottish Typographical Association, into the Scottish Graphical Association. By the mid 1970s, the SGA realised that although it had broadened its recruitment area, with a membership of just 6,500, it was no longer a viable autonomous entity. The Union opened negotiations with both the NGA and SOGAT with a view to merger, and in 1975 its Executive decided to ballot the membership on joining with the general print union rather than with its craft counterpart south of the border. The vote was 2,602 in favour of the SOGAT merger, and 2,195 against [83]. It is unclear whether this close vote reflected the STA membership's ambiguity over joining a general union rather than a craft based one, or whether it reflected the desire on the part of a large minority to remain autonomous, probably a mixture of both. Certainly some bad feeling had been generated amongst Scottish compositors over the reluctance of the London region of the NGA to allow craft workers to transfer down to the capital in the early/mid 1970s, due to a growth in unemployment. In any event, this merger constituted the first amalgamation proper between a union popularly perceived as non-craft based, and a traditional craft based union in the printing industry. On merger, the SGA became the Scottish Graphical Division of SOGAT'75 (SGD), and a few year later through a minor organisational restructuring became the Scottish Graphical Branch of SOGAT (SGB).

By the early 1980s therefore, rather than just one craft union remaining in the industry, it would be more accurate to state that there was only one craft union outside of Scotland, but another one in Scotland integrated into the largest print union - SOGAT'82. Analysing membership figures of the craft unions during this period is complex, due to the many mergers. But after the NGA was formed in 1964, the craft unions experienced an uneven growth, with only amalgamations and transfers of engagements allowing the NGA's membership to increase significantly at certain times, as table 8.5 illustrates.

table 8.5 : Craft union membership 1966-83 [84]

| <u>Year</u> | <u>NGA</u>       | <u>SLADE</u> | <u>STA</u>  |
|-------------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1966        | 8,5805           | 16,032       | 7,130       |
| 1969        | 10,7373          | 16,145       | 7,050       |
| 1974        | 10,8792          | 16,925       | 6,418 (S6A) |
| 1980        | 11,6438          | 22,388       | 6,000 (S6D) |
| 1982        | 11,2299          | 25,103       | 6,000 (S6B) |
| 1983        | 133,949 (NGA'82) |              | 6,000       |

e) 1982-88

From 1982 then, only three traditional unions remained in the printing industry, the NUJ, SOGAT'82 and the NGA'82. The radical and high profile impact that changing technology, interlinked with changing employer attitudes, was having on the unions in the printing industry, and particularly the newspaper sector of the latter; created the urgent impetus for further merger talks to take place, with the long held goal of creating 'one union in the print'.

The NGA had already opened up merger negotiations with the NUJ in 1981, but these talks came to nothing after a couple of years of discussions, despite the apparant logic of a merger between the two, given the NGA'82s desire to secure access to front end systems of typesetting, and the NUJ's need for greater organisational and industrial strength [85]. Generally at this point in time, relations between the NGA'82 and the NUJ were at a delicate stage. On the positive side a joint 'Disputes Committee' had been established, to ensure that consultation took place between the unions before either entered into industrial action which could affect the other party. Also, a joint NGA'82/NUJ 'Technology Committee' had been set up, but at this stage had only met infrequently. At chapel level, support had been given by both unions to each other's chapels involved in disputes with various employers. In particular, the NGA'82 National Council offered thanks to the NUJ "for their magnificent help and assistance during the Association's dispute with Messenger Newspapers Group" (Eddie Shah's Stockport Messenger) [86]. However, on the negative side, the dispute at Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers (PSN) had severely impaired NGA'82/NUJ relationships (see Chapter Five). By the time of the NGA'82s Biennial Delegate Meeting (BDM) in 1984, the National Council reported that after eleven lengthy and protracted meetings, the merger talks with the NUJ had broken down over the following issues: the structure of the London Region/Branch; the editor of the Journal; the qualification period for office; the Professional Council/Appeals Body; the frequency of delegate meetings and the question of National Council seats [87].

At the same time as talks with the NUJ had floundered, merger talks had began between the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82, which continue to date, although these discussions have gone through several high and low points between 1982 and 1988. At the NGA'82s 1984 BDM, a National Council report on the merger negotiations, was put forward to Conference solely to 'note' (and not for any decision making reason). It was made clear by the then General Secretary elect, Tony Dubbins, that discussions with SOGAT'82 were clearly problematic, in particular the wide gap in per capita terms between the relatively wealthy NGA'82 and the less well-off SOGAT'82, (p.335), but the impetus for merger had to override these difficulties:

"Let me say at the outset that I do not want to pretend in any way that these discussions are going easily to be brought to a successful conclusion. In order to do that there will have to be a major re-assessment made on certain issues which the Association has previously considered fundamental. Compromises will need to be made if we are to create a new union encompassing the vast majority of workers in our industry. It may be that the NGA members will see, as they have on many occasions in the past, the purity of a mainly craft union as being something they wish to maintain above all else. If they do that, I have no doubt that we will be contributing to a steady decline of the NGA's bargaining power in such a way that our ability to do what we primarily exist for will have been irrevocably damaged."  
[NGA'82 1984 : p.332]

Whilst most delegates who spoke from other Regions argued in favour of 'noting' the progression of the discussions so far, the London Region, whilst still stressing that they were amalgamationists in principle, argued against 'noting' the report, as it would imply endorsement of the situation to date, which was far from satisfactory to London members, on the grounds that it lacked comprehensiveness, making no mention of the retention of a closed-shop in union policy, that it appeared that the NGA'82 had made all the concessions and SOGAT'82 had made none, that the provident fund should retain a compulsory rather than voluntary contribution system, and that the craft union would be swallowed-up whole by the general union if the National Council's report was the basis for the final merger proposals [88]. The London Region's hostility to the National Council's position in the merger talks may have held some validity, most certainly the NGA'82s national leadership felt under much pressure to unite with the largest print union after the experience of the Stockport Messenger dispute, and the generally more aggressive stance being adopted by provincial newspaper publishers over the introduction of direct input. These factors may have pushed the National Council negotiators into making more concessions to SOGAT'82 than perhaps was

politic. But clearly to some extent, the London Region's position reflected old sectionalist attitudes amongst its membership, not least in the machine room where friction between craft and non-craft workers had always been at its most hostile. In the words of one Fleet Street machine manager critical of the National Council's report:

"I just want to ask what page, what paragraph, refers to the machine managers. Also, what assurance you can give that we are not going to be swallowed up by the NATSOPAs who always wanted to eat us up, and always endeavoured to."  
[NGA'82 1984 : p.337]

Sectionalism at chapel level was certainly taken on board by the NGA'82s National Council in its talks with SOGAT'82, with the 1984 report noting that if amalgamation took place, chapels will be left to decide on a voluntary basis whether or not to combine, although the formation of Imperial chapels will be urged by the national unions [89]. The merger talks between the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82 however came to a de facto dead end shortly after, amidst inter-union conflict over direct input in the advertising area of several large provincial papers in 1985 (see Chapter 5).

With the break down of inter-union talks between the three main print unions in 1985, the NGA'82 urged its FOC's to hold local level chapel discussions with the NUJ and SOGAT'82, over the introduction of DI technology [90]. And as was mentioned in previous chapters, this tactic found some success, and eventually helped pressurise the unions at national level, particularly the NUJ and NGA'82, into formulating a joint new technology approach. In the context of the News International dispute in 1986, the NGA'82 and SOGAT'82 reopened amalgamation discussions, which continue to date, and at the time of writing (July 1988), appear to be progressing reasonably well. Both unions are again talking in terms of *when* merger takes place, rather than *if* it will occur.

Whilst amalgamation talks with both the NUJ and SOGAT'82 had clearly met with a certain amount of craft exclusive sectional interests, the NGA'82 by the early 1980s had undergone a profound change in attitude regarding the historical mechanism for restricting access to print craft labour markets - the apprenticeship system. In 1982, it was recognised at the BDM that the apprenticeship system had become increasingly inappropriate to the needs of the printing industry, because of the rapid, and continuing technological changes that were taking place in the industry [91]. Hence the BDM gave the National Council the go-ahead to negotiate a radically revised training system with the general print employers' association, the British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF). In a comment on the NGA'82s ballot paper over the implementation of the a new NGA/BPIF training agreement, it was stated that:

"The National Council recognise that whilst the new agreement involves moving away from the traditional time serving apprenticeship system, an equally important, if not more important provision, has been made for members to receive systematic further training and retraining at all stages in their working life, to enable them to be equipped to meet the challenges presented by new technology and changing techniques."  
 [NGA'82 1983]

This agreement marked a total shift away from the traditional time-serving basis of entry into the labour market, and towards a modular system whereby trainees had to achieve certain standards over a more flexible, and shorter, time period, which would be approximately between 3-4 years. It also introduced the idea that training would no longer be a once and for all thing, and that in order for 'craft' workers to maintain a position in the industry, they would have to undergo systematic retraining throughout their working lives. It was a mark of how attitudes had shifted within the NGA'82s membership that the NGA/BPIF agreement was voted on by 28,027 for, to 6,924 against (a majority of 21,103) [92]. The agreement became operative as from the 1st August 1983, although the Newspaper Society (NS) continued to use an apprenticeship system, along with several smaller employers' groups, largely because the new modular system implied a coherent long term manpower planning policy, agreed to by both employers and unions. From the craft unions point of view, it also meant that the introduction of trainees was more subject to chapel agreement, as it was "conditional upon the Chapel agreeing that it is possible, with the equipment available and the company's cooperation to adequately train a new entrant into the trade" [93].

By 1986, the slowly declining membership of the two craft unions underlined the growing pressure that craft areas of the printing process were coming under, mostly due to changing technology, as table 8.6 illustrates.

table 8.6 : Craft union membership 1983-86 [94]

| <u>Year</u> | <u>NGA'82</u> | <u>SGB</u> |
|-------------|---------------|------------|
| 1983        | 133,949       | 6,000      |
| 1984        | 131,584       | -          |
| 1985        | 131,721       | -          |
| 1986        | 131,730       | 5,678      |



f) Summary

Whilst craft print unions in particular have most often been perceived as 'sectionalist', their history has in fact been one of continuing restructuring, largely through the process of merger. This merger history however, has been fraught with problems and it is an oversimplification to suggest that the creation of the NGA'82 was merely a logical and even development towards a monopoly craft union, as the creation of the NGA'82 was in many ways a historical reflection of the increasingly problematic concept of 'craft' itself, in part caused by changing technology consistently rendering craft processes redundant. Differentiation between craft unions have historically been based on both geographical and occupational lines. Geographically, the central division has always been between London and the provinces, a factor which still plays a part in the contemporary politics of the NGA'82. Three periods in particular are of important note. Firstly, the 19th Century saw the slow and uneven development of an occupational unity between the compositors, but differentiated geographically, a structure that was to continue into the post 1945 period; Secondly, 1900-1930, were years of contradiction in respect of print union relations, with on the one hand the growth in size and importance of the PKTF, but on the other the consistent failure of attempts to enter into formal amalgamation between the unions. And thirdly, 1955-82, a period which saw the eventual creation of just two production unions in the printing industry, one 'craft' based and the other a 'general' union.

By the end of the 1980s, the main print craft union had undergone a radical change in its official outlook, and was on the verge of a historical merger which would structurally mean the ending of the strict craft/non-craft differentiation between organised labour in the printing industry. However, although in an organisational sense, both the NGA'82 and SGB have undergone a radical change, as in the case of the NUJ and the SOGAT'82 clerical groups, it cannot be taken for granted that this has had a direct impact on the attitudes and perceptions of the rank & file membership. It is to an exploration of this question that the thesis now turns.

## D/ Contemporary Character of Craft Workgroups in the NGA'82 & SGB

### 1. Introduction

Following this brief introduction, this section of chapter eight is sub-divided into two main parts. Firstly, a critical assessment of the nature of the craft chapel will be presented, primarily using documentation and library sources, so as to develop some understanding of this in many ways unique workgroup organisation, before examining the findings of the contemporary field research on the craft workers. The second part of this section, the contemporary exploration, will follow a similar pattern to that of the previous chapter on the journalists, that is an examination of: a profile of craft workgroups surveyed; the work orientation of craft groups; perceptions of changing technology; attitudes towards print/newspaper trade unions; attitudes towards other workgroup categories; and attitude towards women workers. Finally, a summary will be given of the findings of the field research.

By way of explaining a stylistic point, it should be noted at this juncture that the field research data as presented in the tables, does not distinguish between the two craft groups in this survey, the primarily English based NGA'82, and the Scottish SGB. However, where appropriate, attention will be drawn to the need to differentiate between the findings from these two distinct groups of organised craft workers. A full breakdown of the field survey data distinguishing the NGA'82 from the SGB is given in Appendix 6.

### 2. The Nature of the Chapel

The previous section of chapter eight explored the history of the print craft unions, focussing upon two main aspects: firstly the uneven and contradictory process of hitherto structurally and perceptually differentiated craft groups uniting, at least structurally, into larger units of organisation (through union merger); and secondly the methods by which craft workers in general secured and sustained their hegemony vis-a-vis other groups of workers, particularly in respect to both control over the labour market and labour process (primarily by restricting the entry of 'weaker' groups of workers into craft areas).

However, whilst a historical analysis can describe the methods and tactics by which craft based organised labour in the printing/newspaper industry achieved a high degree of influence over both entry into the labour market and control over the labour process, it does not offer an explanation as to why the craft workers were able to achieve this apparent hegemonic position. One factor that

has often been offered for the relative strength of the craft workgroups/unions, in the newspaper industry, is the nature of the finished product, which is uniquely vulnerable to industrial action, as a lost edition of a newspaper cannot be resold on the market a day or so after it was due publication. Moreover, given the sectionalisation of the production process (see Chapter Four), many individual workgroups had the ability to stop production at various stages; which gave the latter much scope for independent action. This type of explanation is useful for understanding the relative ability of newspaper industry workers to halt production compared to workers in other industries, but does not in itself explain the dominant position of the craft worker within the industry, as other non-craft groups also retained the ability to stop production, at critical stages, such as distribution staff.

Underpinning the historical efficacy of craft workers in relation to the above, and in turn enhancing its cohesion, has been the craft chapel, and to a large extent, it is the nature of this latter organisation that holds the key to the character of the craft trades unions in total. Formulating ideal type categorisations, three basic theories have been posited regarding the apparent strength of the craft chapel in the printing industry: i. the technological factor, emphasising the nature of the labour process; ii. the orientational factor, focussing on the character of the workgroup itself; and iii. the contractual factor, which stresses the relationship between capital and labour at the level of the shop-floor. Of course none of the categorisations are mutually exclusive, each being inter-connected, with one reinforcing the other. Again stressing the centrality of the chapel in print craft union organisation, all three categorisations stress factors levelled at the shop-floor in understanding craft control, rather than locating 'power' at the national union level.

Perhaps the best known exponent of the 'technological' factor is Blauner 1964, who wrote of the American print worker that, only in the fact that they work for an employer, and have no claim to the finished product, does the craft printer have anything in common with other industrial workers:

"In some ways, the printer is almost an anachronism in the age of large-scale industrial organisation. His relation to his work is reminiscent of our picture of the independent craftsman of preindustrial times. Craft technology, favourable economic conditions, and powerful work organisations and traditions result in the highest level of freedom and control in the work process among industrial workers today."  
[BLAUNER 1964 : p.56]

In Britain, the early work of AJM Sykes 1967 echoes this conceptualisation of the craft worker, but stresses that custom, moral obligation and social structure create the conditions for the uniqueness of chapel cohesion (p.160). Furthermore, the above is enforced by social sanction, taken against a chapel member who fails to respect the norms and values of the workgroup:

"If a man goes too far below the level [of effort] his workmates will begin to comment on it and try to shame him into working harder. On the other hand if a man greatly exceeds the level he will be warned to ease up, and if he persists, sanctions will be brought into use against him."  
[SYKES 1960 : p.249]

For Sykes then, it was custom and practice, shaping the character of the workgroup that underpinned the latter's strength. However, similarly to Blauner, Sykes emphasised the importance of technological continuity, but from the point of view of enabling the transmission of custom and practice (particularly through the apprentice system), rather than in the technology being a determinant of workgroup character per-se.

Whilst both Blauner and Sykes were writing some two decades ago, at a time when in both countries changing technology had not in practice impacted radically on the labour process of the craft worker in the printing industry, the perception of the all powerful chapel persisted, at least in Britain, for many years. But the focus of attention shifted somewhat away from technological and workgroup character, and towards the relationship between management and organised labour at the shop-floor level. Sisson 1975 was influential in this shift, and argued that management had de facto given up much of what pluralist industrial relations specialists would regard as management prerogative, and that the chapel existed as a sub-contracting organisation,

"...the key to understanding the main features of the pay structure as well as many of the other characteristics which have come to be associated with industrial relations is what might be termed the 'sub-contracting' relationship between management and chapels."  
[SISSON, 1975 : p.165]

Furthermore, once established, newspaper management often had little incentive for challenging the sub-contracting nature of chapel/management relations:

"It is self-evident that the control which has been conceded to the chapels is not absolutely essential to the running of the newspaper. In fact, the different groups of managers are able to devote their total energy and attention to satisfying their goals and constraints in the product market...The chapels too are kept relatively satisfied - and because of this, it may be argued, do not make more serious demands on the managements about such matters as editorial policy."

[SISSON, 1975 : p.169]

This is not to imply that the trades unions themselves have not influenced the sectionalisation of the newspaper production process, for they clearly have, especially in respect of job demarcation structures: firstly, by restricting women, the 'unskilled' and young workers entry into skilled sectors of the production process; and secondly by limiting the application of technically radical forms of new working methods. Nevertheless, management in the newspaper industry (not so much the wider printing industry), could be seen to have logical reasons for maintaining the sub-contracting nature of the employment relationship. Even as the 1970s drew to a close, it was still possible for informed commentators on the national press to argue that chapel control over the labour market/process was a permanent fixture. Jenkins 1981 for example argued that the outcome of the 1978/79 'Times' dispute had demonstrated that the print chapels, particularly those of the craft based NGA, still held the whip hand in the employment relationship, and that employers would be wise to adapt to this 'fact' in the most rationale way, by accepting de-jure what had been the case de-facto for many years, and turn the chapel into a formal sub-contracting agency, whilst at the same time, distancing the national unions from the collective bargaining process.

Although the above posits a perspective of strong craft chapels, based on a combination of technological, orientational and contractual factors, some caution should be made in interpreting the character of craft workgroups from these 'ideal type' formulations. In particular, the above very much focusses on national newspaper craft chapels, and not provincial chapels, thus giving a distorted viewpoint of craft chapel autonomy and strength. Also, one should be careful in equating the relative strength and cohesion of the craft chapel (compared to say the journalist and clerical workers) with any direct link with a strong trade union solidaristic ethos, or indeed with a strong 'political consciousness'. Historical evidence on the latter point is in fact contradictory. Cannon 1967 in a detailed study on compositors in Britain, found that 77% of surveyed compositors identified themselves as 'working class' (compared to only 53% of

other skilled workers), and 68% voted Labour (compared to 48% of other skilled workers) [95], and concluded that:

The occupational community helps to maintain a cluster of attitudes that can be called the occupational ideology or ethos: the good compositor is a good trade unionist, a member of the working class, and a supporter of the Labour Party."

[CANNON 1967 : p.170]

However, Sykes 1965, in a survey of the then STA, found that whilst between 1920 and 1963, the Union held eight ballots over the setting up of a political fund (each time overwhelmingly supported at the respective Delegate Meetings), it was rejected by the rank & file on every occasion. Sykes concluded that although there was consistent support amongst activists and officials for a pro Labour political fund, the latter displayed a consistent lack of knowledge about the membership's attitude (p.176-77). Even so, Sykes accepts that most STA members at the time were pro Labour, but in true 'labourist' tradition felt that industrial and political matters should be kept separate (p.178).

As in the case of journalists and clerical groups, the craft workgroups in fact exist within a self-perceived framework of contradiction and tension, which have both a historical and contemporary basis. Attention is now turned directly to a closer examination of the workgroups surveyed in this study, to try and gain a more complex understanding of the nature of craft workgroups in the newspaper industry.

### 3. Profile of Craft Workers Researched

#### a) Age

table 8.7 : age of repondents

|       | <u>35 &amp; under</u> | <u>36-45</u> | <u>46 &amp; over</u> |
|-------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Craft | 16%                   | 31%          | 54%                  |
| ALL   | 39%                   | 27%          | 35%                  |

Craft workers responding to the questionnaire were clearly older than both journalist and clerical workers. Only 16% were below the age of 36, whilst over half were over 46. For all workers, the respective figures were 39% and 35%. These figures reflect the lack of recruitment into the craft areas throughout most of the 1980s, and hence an ageing workforce in these areas. This factor is clearly an important one when considering the craft worker's attitude to the future of the newspaper industry, although it is perhaps surprising, as will be seen, that very few craft workers spoke in terms of an eagerness to leave the industry and take early retirement and voluntary redundancy.

#### b) Sex

table 8.8 : sex ratio of respondents

|       | <u>Male</u> | <u>Female</u> |
|-------|-------------|---------------|
| Craft | 100%        | 0%            |
| ALL   | 82%         | 18%           |

The sex ratio of the craft workers holds no surprises, given the history of exclusion of females from craft areas. All the craft workers surveyed (both quantitatively and qualitatively) were male, and this very much reflects the predominance of males in both unions, especially the NGA'82, where in the mid 1980s, only 5% of its members were female\*. The SGB do organise women print workers, but mainly in non-craft jobs, such as clerical workers in Scotland.

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\* The researcher did come accross one female compositor working for Paper Two, but due to pre-conceived ideas about male exclusive work areas failed to realise that the women in question was a compositor, and unfortunately, was only told by chance when it was too late to arrange an interview with her. She also did not complete the questionnaire, so the researcher has no indication of her views.

c) Apprenticed/Indentured

table 8.9 : % of respondents who have served an apprenticeship

|       | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|-------|------------|-----------|
| Craft | 94%        | 6%        |
| ALL   | 88%        | 12%       |

The figures for 'all workers' excludes clerical groups, so the comparison in table 8.9 is between craft and journalist workers. Nearly all craft workers had in fact served an apprenticeship - 94%, compared with a slightly lower figure for all workers of 88%. Theoretically, those craft workers who responded negatively to this question could have gained entry into the newspaper industry after undertaking some form of training in the newer areas of printing technology, perhaps in an art studio engaged on paperpaste-up. However, in practice, given the high average age of the respondents, they had probably undergone some form of non-indentured training in a small hot-metal house in their youth, and had gained entry into the newspaper industry after becoming de facto journeymen and joined one or other of the craft unions.

In summary then, craft workers surveyed for this thesis were significantly older than all workers, were all male compared to a small number of women in the NUJ and a majority of women in SOGAT clerical areas, and were slightly more likely to be indentured than their journalist counterparts, although in this respect, figures for both groups were very high.

4. Work Orientation

Question:

"Number in order of priority (from 1-5) those factors that you feel were/are most important in your job in respect of both old and new technology - skills, control over the work process, wages, job security and job satisfaction".

a) Skill

table 8.10a : traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation to work re 'old' and 'new' technology

a) the importance of skill in the job

|       | High (1-2) |            | Medium (3) |            | Low (4-5)  |            |
|-------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|       | <u>Old</u> | <u>New</u> | <u>Old</u> | <u>New</u> | <u>Old</u> | <u>New</u> |
| Craft | 50%        | 20%        | 17%        | 28%        | 34%        | 52%        |
| ALL   | 46%        | 28%        | 15%        | 26%        | 38%        | 46%        |



50% of craft workers gave 'skill' in the job a high priority under old technology, compared to 46% of all workers. Interestingly however, approximately half the craft workers gave 'skill' just a medium or low rating, which implies that one should be careful in assuming that classical perceptions of the craft worker, such as Blauner's notion of the non-alienated print worker, can be understood in any straightforward manner. Nevertheless, there was a marked change in priority amongst craft workers under new technology production systems. Only 20% gave 'skill' a high rating working new technology jobs, whilst 80% gave the skill factor a low or medium priority. This compares to figures of 28% and 72% respectively for all workers under new technology.

Thus it can be argued that compared to all workers, craft groups are more likely to perceive the skill factor as more important to their jobs under old technology, but less likely to give 'skill' a high rating than all workers under new technology systems of production. Hence, the priority given to 'skill' in the job falls sharply through the change over from old to new technology for the craft workgroups. Both NGA'82 and SGB craft workgroups recorded approximately similar responses.

b) Control over the work process

table 8.10b: traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation to work re 'old' and 'new' technology

b) the importance of control over the work process

|       | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-------|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|       | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| Craft | 12%        | 9%  | 15%        | 19% | 72%       | 72% |
| ALL   | 10%        | 15% | 20%        | 19% | 69%       | 66% |

As was noted when examining the journalists re this question, very few craft workers gave 'control over the work process' a high priority, under either old or new technology (12% and 9% respectively). Indeed, a large majority of both craft and all workers felt that 'control' had a low priority under both old and new technology (72%). However, some shift in orientation can be detected between old and new technology, with the craft groups rating 'control' even less important with new technology systems than old (9-12%), whilst the reverse can be seen for all workers (15% and 10% respectively). Both NGA'82 and SGB workgroups responded similarly to this question.

As is the case for most of the survey questions, 'control over the work process' is a complex concept, and needs interpreting with care. It may appear surprising that craft workers in general registered a low priority on this

issue. One explanation could be that the craft workgroups have never really attained the degree of 'control' that some commentators have believed (basing their analysis solely on Fleet Street, eg Sisson 1975 and Martin 1981). But an alternative explanation could be that a 'high' level of 'control' had actually been achieved by craft workgroups under old technology, to the extent that it was taken for granted and not considered important in the way that sociologists understand the term. On the other hand, given the radical impact of new technology, especially over the the issue of 'control', it would seem logical that the craft workgroups would be more aware of this aspect of their working lives in the 1980s. Alternatively it may be that the findings indicate contrary to popular perceptions, that despite job loss through technology change, those workers operating new technology equipment find they have a considerable degree of control. This issue will be looked at in more qualitative terms later in this section.

c) Wages

table 8.10c : traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation to work re 'old' and 'new' technology

c) the importance of wages in the job

|       | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-------|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|       | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| Craft | 40%        | 61% | 27%        | 19% | 34%       | 20% |
| ALL   | 43%        | 57% | 24%        | 19% | 32%       | 24% |

40% of craft workers gave wages a high priority re importance to their work, in respect of old technology. This proportion rose under new technology, with 61% of craft workers feeling that wages had a high priority. A slightly higher percentage of all workers (43%) gave a high priority to wages under old technology, but again a larger proportion gave wages a higher priority under new technology (57%). Hence two conclusions can thus be drawn from these figures. Firstly, craft workers perceive wages to be an increasingly important aspect of their job given the introduction of new technology, which would indicate that on this single criterion, craft workers become more instrumental in their orientation to work given computerisation than under traditional methods of production. And secondly, compared to other workers, the craft groups tend to exhibit a similar but more extreme shift in attitude towards wages when changing from old and to new technology. On this particular criteria, the SGB workgroups were more inclined to give wages a high priority (50%) than were the NGA '82 craft workgroups (30%), under old technology, although the trend for both groups was similar.

d) Job security

table 8.10d : traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation to work re 'old' and 'new' technology

d) the importance of job security in the job

|       | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-------|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|       | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| Craft | 63%        | 66% | 7%         | 4%  | 29%       | 30% |
| ALL   | 49%        | 49% | 15%        | 12% | 36%       | 38% |

As was noted when examining the journalist workgroups, there was some divergence in attitude towards job security between the different categories of worker. The craft workgroups clearly felt that 'security' was important working within both old and new technology situations, with only a slight shift in emphasis on security under new technology. Less than a third of the craft workers gave job security a low priority under old and new technology. This compares to the attitude of all workers, with just under a half responding that they felt security had a high priority under both old and new technology, and 36% to 38% who felt that security had a low priority in their working lives under old and new technology respectively. These findings are not surprising given the immediate vulnerability of the craft workers to changes in technology, compared to say the journalists. Indeed, it has been an important strategy of the NGA'82 in particular to try and save as many craft worker's jobs as possible during the change over to computerised systems of production, and this lay behind the latter's "follow the job" principle in joint union/management negotiations (see chapter five). The Chairman of the Federated House Chapel at Paper 1 and NGA'82 representative indicated the importance of job security to the contemporary craft worker:

"As far as we are concerned, we've been working the traditional way...now because technology is available, not through the choice of our own, and the company has chosen to make use of this technology, they want to transfer work that has traditionally been done by us into a journalist area...but what they want to see is redundancies...The journalists themselves see that they are taking on an added responsibility and as such they feel there should be more money attached to it.

The precedent has been set with the forty pieces of silver paid at Murdoch's operation\*...So to me, having accepted that there has got to be more money for it, they must also accept that they're taking on work which is new work, and that new work is work that we have traditionally done..."  
[PAPER 1 : interview 12.6.86]

A similar attitude of bitterness was expressed by a rank & file member of the NGA'82 at Paper 1, who suggested that,

"the problem...is where they keep saying they'll give you redundancy money for how many years you've served, I think they should give you another type of redundancy for how many years you could have served."

[PAPER 1 : group discussion 3.7.86]

Nevertheless, even within work situations under old technology, the craft worker clearly saw job security as a more important part of his working life than other workers (63% compared to 49% respectively gave security a high priority). It is difficult within the context of the present research to ascertain the reasons behind this, as the answer may well lay in the wider social/class situation of the respective categories of worker. One factor however that could be important in the craft worker's attitude towards job security is the relative older age of the latter group, who concomitantly feel less inclined to change jobs (within or outside the industry) and thus put a higher premium on security than the younger members of the other workgroups.

It is perhaps worth noting that whilst overall the majority of craft workers gave security a high priority, under both old and new technology, craft workers in the SGB felt that job security was more important in new technology environments than in the old systems (56% and 65% respectively). The reverse trend was recorded by NGA'82 members, who gave security a slightly lower priority under new technology than old (68% and 71% respectively).

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\* A reference to the payment made by News International during the 'Wapping' dispute to the NUJ chapel members, as an inducement to transfer from Fleet Street to Tower Hamlets.

e) Job satisfaction

table 8.10e : traditionalist/instrumentalist orientation  
re 'old' and 'new' technology

e) the importance of job satisfaction in the job

|       | High (1-2) |     | Medium (3) |     | Low (4-5) |     |
|-------|------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------|-----|
|       | Old        | New | Old        | New | Old       | New |
| Craft | 27%        | 27% | 31%        | 29% | 42%       | 43% |
| ALL   | 52%        | 49% | 21%        | 21% | 28%       | 30% |

One of the most interesting findings regarding the traditionalist-instrumentalist dichotomy concerned the albeit vague and problematic issue of 'job satisfaction'. Clearly the craft workgroups surveyed in this thesis do not fit easily into any notion of the non-alienated craft worker, propounded for example by Blauner 1964. Only 27% of craft workers gave a high priority to satisfaction in the job under both old and new technology. This compares with approximately a half of all workers giving satisfaction a high priority. Just over 40% of craft workers in fact felt that satisfaction was a low priority in their work under any form of technology (compared to 28-30% for all workers). On analysing the qualitative data however, it appears that feelings towards job satisfaction are more complex than the quantitative statistics imply. It was difficult to find statements that expressed an overt lack of satisfaction working within an old technology situation. One long-serving member of the linotype department at Paper 1 did express some disregard towards attachment to a particular job in the print industry:

"I don't mind where I work...I've always looked upon it that as long as the money's ok, I don't mind what I do...People say to me 'I don't want to be on the keyboard all day, I like a bit of variety'. Well I feel to go into full integrated on line newspaper production there's not going to be a lot of variety at all. We are going to be on the keyboard or we're going to be out of a job."  
[PAPER 1 : interview 19.6.86]

However, as will be seen later in this section, many craft workers indicated a strong sense of job satisfaction working in craft areas (using old and new technology) by articulating negative perceptions of the changing nature of their job content given the restructuring taking place in the industry.

There was a marked contrast between the SGB and NGA'82 members on this question. Whilst in both groups only a minority gave satisfaction a high priority under either old or new technology, the SGB workgroups became in relative terms more traditionalist oriented with the

introduction of new technology, with 31% responding that job satisfaction had a high priority working new systems, whilst only 16% felt that satisfaction was a high priority under old technology. This compares with figures for the NGA'82 workgroups of 37% and 22% respectively, thus showing the reverse trend; ie as new technology is introduced, the workgroups become less traditionalist in orientation.

### Summary

Generally, the five criteria used in this research to gain an approximate understanding of the 'traditionalist-instrumentalist' orientations of craft workers, compared to other categories of worker, have indicated a clear instrumentalist orientation on behalf of the craft workers, which tends to contradict most conceptualisations of craft workers generally, and printers in particular being traditionalist in their orientation to work.

The findings, it should be stressed, refer to old as well as new technology work situations. Thus vis-a-vis the traditionalist criteria, only 50% and 20% gave 'skill' a high priority re old and new technology respectively, and a mere 12% and 9% of craft workers recorded a high priority for 'control' over the work process re old and new technology. Whilst for instrumental factors, 40% and 61% gave wages a high priority (old and new technology), and a large majority of 63% and 66% gave job security a high priority (old and new technology). Perhaps the most indicative figure concerns the 70%+ of craft workers who gave job satisfaction under both old and new technology a medium or low priority. This apparent surprising finding re the craft workgroup's orientation to work will be analysed in more detail towards the end of this chapter.

Finally, it is worth noting that in relative terms, whilst both NGA'82 and SGB responses followed broadly similar trends, there was a notable divergence between the two. Regarding two of the traditionalist criteria - skills and control, the SGB members were more likely to view positively the introduction of new technology than were the NGA'82 workgroups. However, on the two essentially instrumentalist criteria - wages and security, it was the NGA'82 workgroups who were more likely to view new technology positively. One explanation of this divergence is that the SGB groups may feel more secure vis-a-vis the introduction of new technology given that they are part of the larger union SOGAT'82, and thus relative to the NGA'82, feel more able to focus on traditionalist elements of the job, whilst NGA'82 groups clearly felt most threatened by the introduction of new technology, reflected in the high priority given to job security and wages. This divergence emerged later on in the survey.

Nevertheless, in absolute terms, the introduction of new technology was viewed by both groups as enhancing the priority given to instrumental factors of the job, at the expense of traditionalist factors.

### 5. Perceptions of Changing Technology

Given the above picture of the orientation of craft workgroups towards their working environment, attention is now turned to the ways in which changes in work have been perceived in respect to the introduction of new technology. Two questions were asked in the survey to ascertain both the experience of, and future expectations of changes in technology. The question asked was:

Question:

"What has been your experience of previous introductions of new technology (if any), and what are your expectations of future changes in technology, in respect of the following factors - skills; wages; stress; and job satisfaction. Has each criteria been improved, seen little change, or worsened."

Thus this question was designed to develop further the understanding of the perceptions that craft workgroups hold vis-a-vis their job content compared to other workers. But instead of examining the absolute level of importance given to the respective criteria, attention is focussed on relative changes in perception given the introduction of changing technology.

a) Skill

table 8.11a : attitude towards changes in technology

#### a) impact on skill

|       | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|       | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| Craft | 10%      | 12%    | 28%           | 19%    | 62%      | 69%    |
| ALL   | 37%      | 38%    | 26%           | 20%    | 37%      | 42%    |

It is perhaps worth looking empirically at the craft workers response to this question in some detail, to highlight the complexity of this factor, not least in the perceptions of the workers themselves. Whilst table 8.11a above indicates quantitatively the apparent acceptance of a loss of skill by the craft workgroups, like most other criteria surveyed in this thesis, qualitative evidence presents a much more complex picture, and one that essentially reflects the often contradictory tension existant within the ranks of this category of worker.

Statistically then, for most craft workers, there is little doubt that changing technology has had (62%), and will continue to have (69%), a negative impact on the skill requirement in their jobs. Only 10% thought that previous technological change had increased skill levels, and perhaps surprisingly a slightly higher figure of 12% felt that future changes would increase skills. This was consistent with the finding that 52% of craft workers gave 'skill' under new technology a low priority in job content. For all workers, technological change had proved of more ambiguous quality, with equal numbers (37%) stating that previous introductions of new technology had either improved or worsened the skill levels of their work. Concomitantly, all workers were similarly divided over the impact of future changes in technology. Overall, there was a clear divergence of opinion regarding skill and new technology between the craft workgroups and all workgroups. Responses to this question by both the NGA'82 and SGB followed a similar pattern, although the SGB workgroups tended to record a more polarised response than was the case with the NGA'82. Hence a greater percentage of the former group felt that technology had, and would continue to erode the skill requirement.

The generally unfavourable experience of previous introductions of new technology had logically enough created a pessimistic attitude towards future changes, as one process worker argued:

"Purely from an artist's point of view, I would say that modern technology has been the death of artistry in the printing trade...Your basic skills are no longer valid at all in future technology...an artist's skill has been depleted so much...and I'm talking especially about colour work, that an artist is no longer really necessary."

[PAPER 3 : group discussion 1.8.85]

However, reflecting in part the contradictory perceptions on this issue, despite the fact that a clear majority of craft workers responded in the questionnaire that technology had reduced skill content, some workers argued that even under relatively advanced photocomposition systems, a degree of skill pertained. In particular, many compositors felt that typographical skills, learnt in hot-metal days, still had relevance, not only for paste-up artists, but for working with VDUs as well.

"I did a seven year apprenticeship to learn to be a comp. I still don't think you could take somebody in within two weeks and train them on the keyboard, and say you can do the job as well as him...because you have to visualise what's coming out..."

[PAPER 3 : group discussion 29.7.85]



A number of craft workers felt that whilst new technology had eroded skill levels, some aspects of traditional skill, particularly the ability to work at speed (always critical in newspaper work), were still highly relevant to computer systems of production:

"The level of specialist skill has been reduced. But the one skill that has remained, continues to be there, is working at a certain pitch when you need to get the paper out, when the deadline needs to be hit...The journalists have found...that they haven't been able to learn that ethic, that work ethic..."

[PAPER 2 : interview 16.10.86]

Moreover, there were some craft workers (albeit a small minority) who felt that computerisation had enhanced the overall skill requirement of printers. During one group discussion, it was argued that, "most of the jobs that we do now are just...low skilled jobs. A typist can do my job, a child can do paste-up". This fairly typical response was met with the following argument:

"I tend to disagree...Because I think the VDUs have really enhanced the old comps job...Because he can actually do more on the VDU than they done before. And I disagree that any old bod off the street can come in and do it. They can come in and do it and they wouldn't make a very good job of it. You see for yourself the stuff you get shoved through the door every day - there's no style to it...nothing flows. I still think a comp has got...more skill than...some typist coming from school. They can set the straight stuff when someone says to them, right, you hit the F02 [text command], but when it comes to the actual layout on the screen...a bloke that's been trained nowadays, he's virtually trained in the same way as the comp was trained when I was an apprentice, but now he relates all that skill to a computer..."

[PAPER 2 : group discussion 20.10.86]

It is worth quoting this statement at length because it highlights a number of complexities regarding skill. Firstly, there is the empirical issue of examining the type of skill needed to work a computer keyboard and VDU, which has the ability to lay-out adverts etc. on screen. At the very least it seems logical to argue that general knowledge of typography is a relevant skill. Indeed, given that some workgroups needed no real knowledge of typography and layout design working with hot-metal (lino-ops for example), it could be argued that this specific aspect of job content is a skill enhancement (as most

craft workers are now required to operate VDU machines). Thus responses to this question could to some extent depend on the exact nature of the production process the worker was engaged in prior to new technology. The different attitudes expressed above could be the result of different experiences of previous introductions of new technology. In other words, the better the outcome of previous technological change, the more positive the attitude generally towards new technology. However, differences of opinion were expressed by workers who had worked at the same paper during previous changes in technology, so the latter explanation is unlikely. The second type of issue the above quote raises in fact is an analytical one, that of the way in which the craft worker explains his position in the industry. In the case above, the reference point was to compare the craft worker with a 'school leaver', or 'typist'. In other words, it is the tension within the consciousness of the craft worker that requires analysis. The perception of the impact of changing technology on skill is therefore obviously complex, and will be analysed in the final section of this chapter.

b) Wages

table 8.11b : attitude towards changes in technology

b) impact on wages

|       | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|       | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| Craft | 60%      | 22%    | 31%           | 49%    | 9%       | 29%    |
| ALL   | 51%      | 32%    | 40%           | 46%    | 9%       | 23%    |

On the question of wages and new technology, it is fairly clear that the response recorded in table 8.11b reflects the historical efficacy of the craft unions in gaining concessions from the employers with the introduction of technological change, and the contemporary relative weakness of the unions in continuing with this strategy. Thus whilst 60% of craft workers believed that new technology had improved their wage levels, only 22% felt that wages would rise in the future solely because of changes in technology. Even so, almost half (49%) felt that wages would not suffer because of technological change in the future. Corresponding figures for all workers showed a similar trend, with 51% believing that wages had increased through the introduction of new technology, whilst only 32% felt that this would be the case in future. Both NGA'82 and SBG groups responded similarly to this question.

c) Stress

table B.11c : attitude towards changes in technology

c) impact on stress

|       | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|       | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| Craft | 4%       | 6%     | 27%           | 28%    | 69%      | 66%    |
| ALL   | 18%      | 8%     | 32%           | 38%    | 49%      | 53%    |

For the craft worker, changes in technology were very much associated with greater stress levels, with 69% responding that technological change had worsened the degree of stress involved in the labour process. For SGB workgroups, a higher proportion felt that stress levels had increased with previous introductions of new technology (83%), than was the case for NGA'82 members (52%). Similarly, 69% of SGB members had negative expectations of stress re future changes, compared to 63% of NGA'82 members. For all workers, 49% felt that stress levels had worsened after previous technological change, and 53% thought that stress would be further exacerbated with future changes.

The criteria of 'stress' is of course problematic, and the above responses may well have recorded perceptions towards factors not directly relevant to job content, such as the fear of technological redundancy. Clearly, craft workers have been most vulnerable to this factor out of those workers surveyed, and this may have been the reason behind the relatively higher numbers of the latter category who felt that technological change caused greater stress. One compositor from Paper 3 for instance, summed up the feelings of the craft workgroups during a period of great uncertainty when his newspaper was undergoing negotiations over direct input:

"Over the last year or six months...the trauma that it's created is absolutely horrific...For me, this has been the most important part of the last twelve months, that everyone is unsure of their future...I wouldn't be surprised if it's actually caused divorces...Because there are people who are under pressure, not knowing what's going to happen...at least some of them who are married have perhaps taken it out on their wife, some of them are perhaps drinking more than they were..."

[PAPER 3 : interview Sept 1986]

Obviously, this type of perception relates to the fear of uncertainty rather than the direct impact on job content of technological change. Nevertheless, previous introductions of new technology were seen to have had a direct impact on stress in the labour process, as the following quote from an ex-linotype operator indicates:

"It's harder work than the lino, I don't honestly know why it should be, I think it might have something to do with the actual pressure up there. Maybe the actual working on VDUs...But it's tremendously satisfying."

[PAPER 1 : interview 17.6.86]

The above quote also illustrates the complexity of perceptions towards job content. Thus, working on new equipment can at the same time be seen as both more stressfull but also more rewarding, in the attempt at mastering the new skill requirement.

d) Job Satisfaction

table 8.11d : attitude towards changes in technology

d) impact on job satisfaction

|       | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|       | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| Craft | 21%      | 19%    | 17%           | 10%    | 62%      | 71%    |
| ALL   | 30%      | 28%    | 34%           | 27%    | 36%      | 45%    |

For the overall criteria of job satisfaction, craft workers were much more negative in their appraisal of both previous and future technological change than were all workers. 62% of craft workers felt that new technology had eroded job satisfaction in the past, and 71% responded that it will lower satisfaction in the future. This compares with respective figures of 36% and 45% for all workers, who had, on the whole, mixed feelings on this issue. For the NGA'82 member in particular, job satisfaction had been overwhelmingly viewed as diminishing with the introduction of new technology, with 65% saying that previous introductions, and 85% responding that future introductions would erode satisfaction. This compared to respective figures for the SGB of 58% for both previous and future technological change. Remarks about the lack of satisfaction working with new technology equipment abounded during the research, "sticking down bits of paper, you must be joking", "I think we all miss generally the achievement of putting the paper away, there's a certain amount of buzz in hot-metal, there's a lot of shouting going on, a lot of patter, whereas its a funeral atmosphere down there [new technology composing room]". These were just two of many remarks that summed-up many craft workers views on changes in technology. But other workers stressed the positive side of these changes, such as the cleanliness and healthier environment offered by computerisation:

"I think they've been good changes. Because personally for the caseroom staff you can go in dressed now and come out dressed. Whereas if it was under the old hot-metal system you get mucky. If you were on the pages you were all ink. In that way it's been great..."  
 [PAPER 3 : interview Sept 1986]

Even so, this same worker expressed the negative side of new technology on craft areas, ie job losses, which impacted on the overall attitude towards technological change and job satisfaction, especially given that common perceptions are of large scale future redundancies to come because of further advancement in technology.

e) All Four Variables Considered

The four previous tables have attempted to show in detail the attitudes and perceptions of craft workers to changes in technology, contrasted to those of all workers. However, none of the single criterion is mutually exclusive. For example, changing perceptions of job satisfaction are obviously interconnected with perceived changes in skill, wage levels and stress. Also, a priori, skill and wages are very much tied-up with each other perceptually, and it could be argued that if wage levels had been maintained or improved during the period of new technology introductions, then the craft worker's perception of the skill required for the new process had to some extent been maintained. Moreover, the four criteria are all problematic, and thus taken individually, leave room for much interpretation. Therefore the table below summarise the four criteria of skill, wages, stress and job satisfaction in order to illustrate in very broad terms the extent to which the craft workgroups perceive past and future introductions of changing technology.

table 8.11e : attitude towards changes in technology

e) skill, wages, stress, satisfaction

|       | Improved |        | Little Impact |        | Worsened |        |
|-------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|----------|--------|
|       | Past     | Future | Past          | Future | Past     | Future |
| Craft | 20%      | 15%    | 25%           | 26%    | 54%      | 59%    |
| ALL   | 32%      | 27%    | 34%           | 33%    | 35%      | 41%    |

The craft workers overall tended to have a negative perception re changing technology, both in terms of their previous experience (54% responding that the four criteria had worsened) and in respect of future changes in technology (with 59% saying that the four criteria would continue to deteriorate with the introduction of new

technology). Thus a slightly higher percentage felt that future changes would have an even more negative impact on their working environment than changes already experienced. This compared to all workers who had more mixed feelings towards the impact of new technology - both past and future, although similar to craft workers, tended to feel that future changes would yield increasingly negative results on their working environment.

There was however a noticeable divergence between NGA'82 and SGB members when all four criteria are taken into account. Thus although a majority of both groups felt negatively about both previous and future changes in technology, the SGB workgroups felt relatively more positive about future change than in their response towards previous change. Hence 35% felt that new technology in the past had either improved or had little impact on the four criteria, but 46% felt similarly about future introductions of new technology. For the NGA'82, the respective figures were 57% and 37%, thus reflecting the reverse trend of relatively greater pessimism towards future change than experienced in the past. One explanation of this difference may again lay in the fact that the SGB are part of the larger general union - SOGAT'82, a which gives craft workgroups in the SGB more sense of security than their NGA'82 counterparts, especially as future changes in technology invariably mean direct input of advertising material, with Scottish workers in clerical sections being organised by the SGB as well as craft workers. It seems fair to say that objectively, this puts SGB craft workgroups in a relatively stronger position than their NGA'82 counterparts in this respect. As a Scottish SGB FOC put it, during a discussion regarding the introduction of advertising direct input,

"...that alteration we're not too worried about because that operation comes under our domain anyway - it's a SOGAT SGB job...we have nine-tenths of production jobs in newspapers... We've always felt in Scotland that the NGA position is much weaker than our own, simply because they only control the craft area... whereas...we [SGB] cover an area from sweeping up in the machine room to personal secretaries upstairs...So we've got that much more control and are that much more powerful."  
[PAPER 4 : interview 2.9.86]

For many craft workers however, in both the NGA'82 and SGB, feelings towards changing technology generally were hostile, an unsurprising finding given the radical impact of advanced technology on craft workgroup structure and numbers. A compositor on the national newspaper researched eloquently summed-up the feelings of many:

"For us who have worked either a six or seven year apprenticeship...we were guided by our parents or whatever, to going into this trade knowing full well that we would have to work as - well in my case it certainly was slave labour, working in a rat shop in the East-End, knowing that we would be better off at the end of the rainbow, thinking that we had got it here now, and boom, there it goes...Only to find that in a comparatively short space of time its all been eroded with new technology coming in, and you're just nothing. This is the bitterness."

[PAPER 1 : group discussion 3.7.86]

However, although the above quote is representative of a large number of craft workers, it should be emphasised that from the qualitative evidence gathered during the field research, it was workers in the national press who articulated the most pessimistic attitude towards the changes that new technology was on the verge of creating. Many workers in the provincial papers surveyed held more optimistic views on new technology. Clearly this must be reflective of the specific historical circumstances of the field research period (see chapter five), when nearly all 'Fleet Street' craft workers were coming under enormous pressure vis-a-vis looming large scale redundancies. This was not the case in the provincial press sector, where on the whole, change had been negotiated over a longer period of time, and large scale compulsory redundancies were not a factor (although craft numbers had continued to fall slowly). During a group discussion at one provincial newspaper for instance, it was stated that retraining on computer based skills had given craft workers greater job security because the new skills learnt were transferable to other industries. More generally, once the immediate threat of compulsory redundancy is no longer a factor, both morale and perceptions can rapidly change. This was how an NGA '82 FOC describe the changes that occurred amongst his members over a period of about two years, from a situation of generally low morale,

"...we had to start pulling things together... We had to start educating the workforce that there is a future, as long as we're sensible as far as new technology is concerned. And in doing that we started building bridges with other unions, especially the NUJ where the major conflict was as far as the national scene was concerned. So we built a lot of bridges with the NUJ locally, [arriving] at a situation where both sides were saying we weren't at the end of the day gonna sort of jump in and accept new technology at the expense of other people's jobs..."

As the situation improved for the craft union at this newspaper, advanced computer technology was introduced for retraining purposes:

"Once that happened, I said to our people, look, we've got to prove that we can use that equipment best, we're the ones that are going to make that equipment work. Which we did do all throughout our floor. They're [management] are now talking about getting new software, all of which will be applied to us. And it's because of the positive attitude, but also we've proven that our skills - which aren't vanishing - can be used to its best capabilities."  
[PAPER 2 : interview 16.10.86]

Moreover, this FOC's perception of future change had clearly been influenced by the positive outcome of the above described earlier change in technology, as he stressed that fully electronic page make-up (on screen), logically required traditional composing skills, such as typography and layout design, than journalistic ones. Hence it would be misleading to posit too pessimistic picture re the craft workgroups' attitude to changing technology. Much depended on the particular circumstances at specific workplaces.



## 6. Attitudes Towards Newspaper Trades Unions Nationally

At this point, attention is turned directly towards the concept of 'sectionalism', and its manifestation amongst the ranks of craft workers, compared and contrasted to all workers.

### a) Involvement/Importance of Union

Two questions were asked in this respect: firstly from a factual point of view:

Question -

"Have you held/do you hold a trade union position at any of the following levels - national, regional/branch/chapel."

table 8.12 : degree of trade union involvement

|       | <u>National</u> | <u>Local</u> | <u>None</u> |
|-------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Craft | 0%              | 48%          | 51%         |
| ALL   | 1%              | 45%          | 53%         |

As with the journalists, craft workers tended to have a high degree of involvement with their unions, with just under a half (48%) of those responding to the survey having been active in their union at a local level (usually as chapel representatives). The craft worker was in fact slightly more likely to be involved with his union at local level than all workers, the latter of whom recorded a 45% involvement rate. No craft worker responding to the questionnaire had held a full-time national level post in the union, although 1% of all workers had done so. Given the small sample number however, little can be deduced from this difference.

There was some divergence between NGA'82 and SGB workgroups on union involvement, with the former recording a 57% involvement rate at the local level, with only 39% of the Scottish craft workers responding similarly. From the evidence of the research, there is no way of explaining this difference, although it could be that Scottish craftsmen have experienced a higher turnover rate than their southern counterparts (with many of the former having had to move south to find work over the years), and thus have not been in the same job for long enough to end up becoming a chapel representative.

The second question to be asked concerning the workers orientation towards his/her own union was designed to gain an approximate measure of how important the workers perceived their union to be in respect of their daily working environments:

Question -

"In respect of your working life in general, do you feel that your union is: very important; fairly important; or not very important."

table 8.13 : how important is your union

|       | <u>Very</u> | <u>Fairly</u> | <u>Not</u><br><u>Very</u> |
|-------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Craft | 46%         | 44%           | 11%                       |
| ALL   | 46%         | 42%           | 11%                       |

The response of both the craft groups and all workers to this question was almost identical, with 46% of both categories stating that the union was very important to their working environments. A further 44/42% of craft/all workers responded that the union was fairly important to them. Only 11% of both groups felt that their unions were not very important. Thus overall, 90% of craft workers felt their union to be a significant factor in their working lives.

Again, there was some divergence between the NGA'82 and SGB workgroup response, with a full 69% of the former but only 22% of the latter stating that their union was very important. However, on taking into account those workers who responded that their union was either very or fairly important, a large majority of both set of craft workers clearly felt their unions to be of some importance, with 97% of NGA'82 members and 78% of SGB members responding positively in this way. Overall, taking both involvement in and importance of the union criteria, NGA'82 workgroups were more likely to see their union as important than were SGB members, perhaps reflecting the greater degree of insecurity felt amongst craft workers south of the border compared to Scotland.

As with other workgroup categories, the craft worker had a complex set of perceptions re his union. In many cases, the growing weakness of the print craft unions, given the radical impact of changing technology was expressed. In particular, many NGA'82 members felt a growing irrelevance of their union, "I think the NGA...in a few years time will have as much clout as the horse and ploughman's preservation society..." [96]. For craft workers in the national press especially, this feeling was generally acute:

"Look how the NGA have been weakened in the last ten years, just ten years...they reckon we'll lose another 30,000 in the next two years...It's got to the point now really, that what the management wants - the management gets...The attitude you can see... 'now we've got the bastards', it's completely turned the other way."

[PAPER 1 : group discussion 3.7.86]

Overall then, despite the large majority of craft workers who felt that their union played an important part in their working lives, many at the same time felt that the craft union (particularly the NGA'82) was in itself, a declining force.

The reverse side of this coin could be seen in the attitude of a number of SGB members, who felt that whilst they were in a relatively secure position after the SGB had merged with SOGAT in 1975, their counterparts in the NGA'82 had 'missed the boat'. Indeed, many SGB members stated that they were originally against amalgamating with SOGAT, but can in retrospect see the logic of it vis-a-vis protecting jobs.

Given the above, it is clear that craft workers in general are both actively involved in their unions and perceive the latter to be an important element in their working lives. As with the journalists then, the following sets of statistics primarily concerning attitudes towards other unions should be interpreted as reflecting the attitudes and perceptions of not just unionised, but union oriented workgroups.

#### b) National Unions Approach

Moving on from the workgroup's attitude to and involvement with their own union, the third question in this section of the questionnaire delved into the attitude of workers towards other unions at the national level:

Question \* -

"What do you think of the print unions approach (nationally) towards changing technology: too defensive; about right; not defensive enough."

table 8.14a : NGA craft workers perceptions of national unions approach to new technology

|       | <u>Too<br/>Defensive</u> | <u>About<br/>Right</u> | <u>Not defensive<br/>Enough</u> |
|-------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| NGA   | 17%                      | 70%                    | 12%                             |
| NUJ   | 44%                      | 35%                    | 22%                             |
| SOGAT | 52%                      | 41%                    | 7%                              |

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\* Given the nature of this question, whilst all categories of worker were asked this question, it is not possible to compare the craft workgroups response to those of all workers. (Previous chapters have examined the attitudes to this issue vis-a-vis the other workgroups involved in this study). Also, whilst a separate set of statistics is given for the SGB, this union section could not be regarded as a union in its own right for the purposes of this question, hence members from other unions were not asked to comment on the SGB.

table 8.14b : SGB craft workers perceptions of national unions approach to new technology

|       | <u>Too<br/>Defensive</u> | <u>About<br/>Right</u> | <u>Not defensive<br/>Enough</u> |
|-------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| SOGAT | 13%                      | 60%                    | 27%                             |
| NGA   | 81%                      | 7%                     | 11%                             |
| NUJ   | 64%                      | 32%                    | 4%                              |

The above findings tend to be unsurprising if one accepts that a high degree of sectionalism exists within the ranks of craft workers. Thus 70% and 60% of NGA'82 and SGB members felt that their respective unions had basically adopted the right approach towards new technology. Whilst usually a majority, or at least the largest percentage, thought that the other unions had been too defensive on this issue. To some extent, many workers felt that it was legitimate for each union to be 'defensive', and that this was a logical position for the respective unions to adopt.

But perhaps a more surprising finding is that 81% of SGB members felt that the NGA'82 had been too defensive towards changes in technology. Whilst this perception was widespread, it was clearly shaped by high profile events in the national press, as one SGB member argued:

"I often think that the English unions have gone about it in the wrong way. I like to think that we were a bit more long sighted about it all. We could see what was coming and took the appropriate steps...But the way the NGA went about it - just said no, no, no...You can't be Luddites all your life. This [new technology] has arrived, you can't stop it, you won't stop it... If you get in and control it, to me that's the better approach than just saying we don't want to have anything to do with it... I have relatively little sympathy with Fleet Street because...the money that was earned in Fleet Street was quite bluntly bloody ridiculous for what they were doing, compared with the rest of the trade."  
[PAPER 3 : SGB interview 29.6.86]

In fact a number of NGA'82 workers also agreed that their union had been slow to adapt to technological change, but that this was more to do with the 'Fleet Street' chapels, than with the national level of the Union. Interestingly, NGA'82 members in the national press itself often expressed the above type of argument, reflected in the quote below:

"Because of the power in Fleet Street, it's the chapels that have held back the national union. The national union wanted to progress and move towards new technology ...They never had the power in the provinces ...if Fleet Street had looked to the provinces when it [new technology] first came in, I don't think we'd be in the mess we're in now."  
[PAPER 1 : NGA group discussion 18.6.86]

Overall, perceptions of how the national unions have handled changing technology appeared to reflect the specific experience of the workgroup surveyed, rather than a more objective assessment of the union at national level overall. Hence the quote above reflects a widely held view amongst national newspaper craft workers of the relationship between Fleet Street newspaper chapels and the national union. On the other hand, at Paper 2, the NGA'82 leadership were perceived by many as a negative factor in the implementation of technological change, especially regarding attempts to negotiate on a joint union basis. As the NGA'82 FOC pointed out during an interview at Paper 2:

"Our national officers were saying to us, 'look, we need a deal which is beneficial to the NGA... We've had Wolverhampton [Express & Star] that's gone against us, we've had Kent Messenger that's gone against us, the tide won't be stemmed.' So we said, alright, we'll try and do a deal which benefits the NGA, but we're not going to do it at the expense of our NUJ colleagues. Therefore, you've [NGA officers] have got to stay out of the negotiations. Because if you get involved, the NUJ national officers will get involved; and at that time they weren't speaking to each other, so therefore the deal wouldn't have been done."  
[PAPER 2 : NGA'82 interview 16.10.86]

In the same way that attitudes towards the craft workers' own union tended to be based on shop-floor level experiences, perceptions of how the other unions had approached technological change also seemed to rest on inter-chapel relations. Craft feelings towards both the NUJ and SOGAT'82 differed considerably because of this factor, and this issue will be explored in the following section of the chapter, which examines one of the key themes - attitudes towards union amalgamation.

c) Attitudes Toward Union Merger

Question -

"Bearing in mind the impact of changing technology, what is your opinion of amalgamation of the three main print unions (NUJ/SOGAT/NGA): a good thing overall; a necessary evil; unnecessary."

table 8.15 : attitudes towards the merger of the 3 print unions: the NUJ, SOGAT'82 & the NGA'82

|       | <u>Good</u><br><u>thing</u> | <u>Necessary</u><br><u>evil</u> | <u>Unneces-</u><br><u>sary</u> | <u>Not</u><br><u>Sure</u> |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Craft | 78%                         | 18%                             | 5%                             | -                         |
| ALL   | 63%                         | 16%                             | 16%                            | 1%                        |

As with the journalists and clerical workers, the craft workgroups were overwhelmingly in favour of amalgamation between the three main print/newspaper unions. In fact, the craft groups were the most oriented category of worker towards the concept of 'one union for the print', with 78% responding that merger would be a 'god thing', compared to 63% for all workers. Only 5% of craft workers felt amalgamation to be 'unnecessary', compared to 16% of all workers. A similar proportion of both groups felt union merger to be 'a necessary evil' - 18% of craft and 16% of all workers.

There was little divergence between the NGA'82 and SGB members on this issue, and given the radical impact of changing technology particularly on the working environment of the craft groups, the above findings were predictable. As one SGB workgroup put it:

"...there's got to be radical changes... there must come a time when there's going to be one union, and there's more work sharing. In other words, when we talk about direct input, we should not be looking at it from the point of view of redundancy amongst our members, our prime aim should be that if management can retrain someone to do our job, it would be a lot easier to retrain us to do their job. So there should be more sharing between - as it stands at the moment - the unions that control the various sections."

[PAPER 3 : SGB group discussion 29.7.85]

An NGA'82 member expressed similar sentiments towards merging with SOGAT'82:

"I think it would be a great thing, I've been campaigning for it for years and years. But it's a shame that we've been forced together rather than come together on our own...because you have terms forced upon you that you wouldn't normally accept...and you think 'have you got a job at the end of the day'."

[PAPER 1 : NGA group discussion 18.6.86]

The statistical preponderance of pro-mergerites amongst the craft workers however, hides many complexities and subtleties of outlook over this question. Certainly, one distinction that can be drawn is between those with a generally optimistic view of union merger, and those who felt that whilst the principle held good, the reality of attaining 'one union in the print' would be extremely problematic. More importantly, whilst union merger was seen as a desirable goal in principle, a complex set of feelings towards amalgamation still manifested itself. Hence, from an optimistic viewpoint, one lino-type operator stated:

"Well, I think it's inevitable. The trade is shrinking fast, it's under lots of pressures...Whether it's a good thing or not I can't honestly say. I would like to think it's a good thing, I would like to think that the journalists will help us to be amalgamated into the new techniques, which embrace them more than...the traditional NGA areas."

[PAPER 1 : NGA'82 interview 17.6.86]

In fact, attitudes generally towards both the NUJ and SOGAT'82 were located within a complex framework, between aspirations of attaining a perceived higher status through merging with the journalists and entering editorial areas, and the realisation that for many craft workers, to stay in the newspaper industry may well require a transfer into 'lower status' areas, associated with SOGAT'82 jurisdiction. Even amongst Scottish craft workers, who had been in SOGAT'82 since the mid 1970s, this feeling was manifest:

"What a lot of comps want when you talk about amalgamation in going into other jobs...they don't want to be machine room sweeper ups or dispatch workers... It's inbred, we feel that class above... If I had a choice of going to the dispatch or editorial department, I would go to the editorial department...but the union amalgamation makes us closer to the dispatch and machine room."

[PAPER 3 : SGB interview 25.7.85]

However, whilst SDGAT'82 organised work areas were generally viewed as low status, this sectionalism amongst the craft worker had its mirror image in perceptions of journalists, who it was largely felt, were themselves highly elitist in character, and would little welcome ex-craft workers into their ranks: "they've always regarded themselves as the officer class and we are the other ranks...they are a profession and they have always stuck to that" [197]. At chapel level, this type of attitude towards the NUJ workgroups led to feelings of mistrust, especially over the future of job demarcation:

"I think the NUJ are pretty well a law unto themselves...the NUJ would want to keep to themselves as long as possible rather than amalgamate with anybody else... Attitudes in the NUJ are defensive...they're the creative department...they've got members unemployed too, so I think they will be looking towards their own members following jobs, because the sub-editors will be disappearing as well under direct input."  
[PAPER 3 : group discussion 29.7.85]

The experience of craft/general print union merger in Scotland over the last decade may not be too representative of the possible impact of future mergers, as the logic of job demarcation and work processes remained locked into a traditional hot-metal pattern, even though photocomposition methods of printing have been used in most Scottish newspapers for a number of years. Hence the SGB workgroups have maintained a strong self-identity whilst being part of a larger union. However, the above quote demonstrates to some extent the limitations of union amalgamation, which in part, has shifted feelings of differentiation from between unions to within one union.



## 7. Attitudes Towards Other Workgroups

Given the problematic nature of the craft workers response to the all embracing question of union amalgamation, it is fruitful to examine the distinct but related questions of pay differentials and the problem of job demarcation.

### a) Impact of New Technology on Inter-Chapel Relations

Before turning to the above issues, it seemed worth asking the respondents what their general impressions of the impact of new technology had been regarding inter-chapel relations:

Question -

"What in your opinion has been the impact of new technology in respect of inter-chapel relations at the shop-floor level."

table 8.16 : impact of new technology on inter-chapel relations

|       | <u>Improved</u> | <u>Little Impact</u> | <u>Worsened</u> | <u>Not Sure</u> |
|-------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Craft | 36%             | 29%                  | 36%             | -               |
| ALL   | 40%             | 30%                  | 25%             | 5%              |

On the whole, craft workers recorded a mixed response to this question, with 36% feeling the changing technology had improved inter-chapel relations, whilst the same percentage believed that inter-chapel relations had worsened. Thus compared to all workers, the largest proportion (40%) of whom felt that relations had improved, the craft worker was slightly more ambiguous on this issue. Objectively, new technology had appeared to have brought into being a number of 'Federated House Chapels', (consisting of representatives of all the unions at a particular newspaper) where none previously existed; and perhaps more importantly, gave to existing Federated Chapels more genuine importance. At Paper 1 for example, the Federated Chapel's chairperson commented that:

"It had been something that was close to my heart for a long time...Various IFDC's in this firm haven't really taken much notice of it, because the way Fleet Street worked ...chapels have always been fairly autonomous, and secretive...I believe the catalyst was probably new technology. And that has really been in the forefront of all our meetings..."

The Federated chairperson went on to argue that the Federated Chapel primary aim had been to protect overall jobs, although it was difficult to estimate how successful it had been in this respect. But nevertheless, the importance of this joint chapel structure was in its breaking down of barriers of information between the separate unions, which had obvious implications for management/union relations:

"We do feel that we have come of age, that the company are now aware that there is a Federated body, they are aware that there are really no secrets to be kept, and it is very difficult for the company... which in the past have played one [union] off against another."

[PAPER 1 : NGA'82 interview 12.6.86]

However, similarly to the attitude of some NUJ members, not all craft workers saw the Federated House Chapel as a wholly positive factor, and sectionalist attitudes often fed into feelings towards the joint chapel. An NGA'82 FOC at Paper 1 for example, felt the his union had its 'back against the wall', and that the NUJ would be after all the work they could get under the new production processes:

"Whatever they [NGA/NUJ General Secretaries] may agree, if it is not endorsed in-house by the NUJ, then it is lost. And unfortunately, the NUJ...are a lot less trade union oriented... will make it easier for them to make decisions which will affect us in a detrimental way."

This FOC went on to argue that the Federated entailed some danger for the NGA'82 chapel:

"We could say we have been too honest, knowing that we're sitting round a table and we're telling them [other unions] just how we're thinking, so collectively they can actually...use that effectively against us."

[PAPER 1 : NGA'82 interview 12.6.86]

Nevertheless, it was accepted that on the other hand, the mere existence of the Federated House Chapel would make it difficult and embarrassing for the other unions to adopt an overtly anti-NGA'82 stance, even if a majority of their respective chapel members wanted this approach.

Overall, for many craft workers, the impact of changing technology on inter-chapel relations was still in the process of developing, hence the ambiguity in the response to this question.

b) Pay Differentials

On the issue of pay differentials, the following question was asked in order to gain some idea as to how the workgroups might respond to inter-chapel relations after one union in the print had been created:

Question -

"In a situation where there was only 1 union in the print industry, what would your attitude be to pay differentials; should they be maintained at present levels; revised along a two-tier skilled/semi-skilled basis; or phased out completely."

table 8.17 : attitudes towards pay differentials

|       | <u>Maintained</u> | <u>Narrowed</u> | <u>Phased Out</u> |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Craft | 41%               | 42%             | 17%               |
| ALL   | 31%               | 42%             | 28%               |

On this particular aspect of work restructuring the craft workgroups manifested contradictory attitudes, mostly centred around the aspiration of maintaining some level of craft identity, even within the framework of radical change in their working environments and inter-group relations.

Thus despite the radical changes that were being experienced by the craft workgroups, and even if union amalgamation had occurred, few (only 17%) felt the need, or saw the logic, to phase out pay differentials between the various categories of worker in the newspaper industry. On the other hand, 41% believed that pay differentials should be maintained along traditional lines, although a similar proportion - 42%, thought that some narrowing of differentials should take place in the context of 'one union in the print'. All workers tended to be more favourably towards erosion of pay differentials, with 28% responding that the latter should be phased out. The problems that differentials have caused between workgroups and unions was acknowledged by the chairperson of the Federated House Chapel at Paper 1, who felt that the joint union body had helped break down hostility on this matter:

"In newspaper areas there is a lot of animosity between different sections...when you get different wage structures for people who sometime seem to be doing the same sort of thing...there's even been animosity between different newspaper houses with people doing the same thing because of difference in wage structures...We try to be very open about what negotiations we're having. We try and

really break down barriers of secrecy etc.  
I think everyone knows what everybody else's  
wages are, apart from maybe the journalists'  
area where they have different wages structures."  
[PAPER 1 : NGA'82 interview 12.6.86]

There was an interesting disparity in response between the NGA'82 and SGB workgroups, with the former being significantly more favourable to the idea of narrowing differentials (61%), whilst only 23% of the SGB members felt similarly, with 64% of this group responding that wage differentials should be kept at their present (1985) levels. Two possible reasons present themselves for this divergence of opinion amongst the craft workers. Firstly, the research undertaken with most SGB members took place in mid-1985, before the 'Wapping' dispute, which for most NGA'82 members surveyed in 1986, had had some impact on their attitudes. But secondly, and probably more importantly, this relative reluctance to 'give-up' this especially important aspect of their skill label (ie higher wages than other newspaper workers) on the part of the average SGB member, was reflective of the perceived greater job security of Scottish craft workers compared to their southern counterparts due to the SGB being a part of the larger SOGAT'82 union. Moreover, it became clear during the course of many group discussions with SGB chapel members, that strong feelings of differentiation had in fact been exacerbated by being a constituent part of the general print union. Most notably, being a small craft section was seen by many as carrying with it the negative aspect of being easily out-voted by a non-craft majority:

"Sometimes it does go against the grain  
when non-craft come in and get a vote, which  
before was in a predominantly craft union...  
It's the same with wages, I think eventually  
wages will need to be the same. But having  
said that, I would hate to see unskilled workers  
that don't have the same responsibility and  
training to command the same wages as us."  
[PAPER 3 : group discussion 29.7.85]

Some of the SGB members raised the issue of what they saw as the rapidly improving pay and conditions of the 'tele-ad girls' (a workgroup organised mostly in the clerical section of SOGAT'82, but also in Scotland organised under the auspices of the SGB), and the general feeling that SOGAT'82 national officials tended to be antagonistic towards their craft section. Strategically, the emphasis on improving the pay and conditions of clerical groups is logical, given their growing centrality to the production process, therefore the SGB chapels may have been commenting on an objective fact, but there is no question that the 'tele-ad' workgroups receive the same level of pay as the existing craft workers.

As in the case of amalgamation, SGB members tended to be antagonistic towards the logic of their position in SOGAT'82, whilst aspiring towards the status that many of them perceived the journalists to have attained. On the issue of wage differentials too, many SGB members looked towards merger with the journalists as a possible opportunity to maintain a relatively higher level of pay than existed amongst the bulk of SOGAT'82 workgroups. However, it would be misleading to surmise from this evidence that sectional/elitist attitudes were being reinforced rather than broken down by work restructuring within the Scottish craft areas of the industry. The logic of changing technology had up to the mid-1980s blurred traditional demarcation lines much more between journalist/craft areas, than it had between clerical/craft areas. Hence craft workers were naturally beginning to think in terms of entering what had traditionally been regarded as NUJ territory in order to preserve jobs. And given the fact that the majority of Scottish craft workers believed that NUJ members received better pay and conditions than SGB chapels, it is not surprising that many of the latter group of workers looked towards NUJ areas in rather more favourable terms than they did towards SOGAT'82 non-craft job areas. It is of course debatable whether or not amalgamation between craft and journalist unions would enable the former workers to retain a skilled wage differential. The FOC of the NGA'82 process workgroup at Paper 3 offered a realistic appraisal of one possible long-term outcome in future trends by commenting that,

"...the people who are left in the other areas could only improve their lot if they were organised as the journalists apparently are. But there will be much fewer of them. Because I think that journalists would tend to be the king-pins throughout the situation and they would lay down the standards, numbers and all the variations on the theme. And the people who are left...their conditions would improve."

[PAPER 3 : NGA'82 interview 26.7.85]

Overall, as was the case with the journalists, the craft workers appeared to be relatively less concerned with the maintenance of wage differentials, than with the problems posed by changing technology in respect of job demarcation, and it is to this issue that we now turn.

c) Job demarcation

A similar question posed re pay differentials was asked regarding job demarcation:

Question -

"In a situation where there was only 1 union in the print industry, what would your attitude be to the demarcation of jobs: jobs to be allocated along broadly traditional NUJ/NGA/SOGAT lines; allocated along revised two-tier skilled/semi-skilled basis; or complete flexibility as practicably possible"

table 8.18 : attitudes towards job demarcation

|       | <u>Traditionally Maintained</u> | <u>Revised</u> | <u>Phased Out</u> |
|-------|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Craft | 47%                             | 30%            | 22%               |
| ALL   | 38%                             | 29%            | 34%               |

As was the case over the issue of wage differentials, craft workers tended to be keener on maintaining traditional job demarcation structures than were all workers - 47% and 38% respectively. Correspondingly, only 22% of craft workers felt that job demarcation should be phased out, compared to 34% of all workers. A similar proportion for both categories, just under a third, thought that some revision of demarcation structures was necessary in the light of changing technology.

Again, it is important to note a divergence between the NGA'82 and SGB membership response to this question. Similarly to attitudes over wage differentials, the NGA'82 workgroups tended to be more favourable towards some form of greater flexibility between workgroups, with 44% choosing this option, compared to only 17% of the SGB members. 39% of NGA'82 members felt that traditional lines of demarcation should be maintained, compared to 56% of SGB members. However, a larger percentage of SGB members than NGA'82 felt that demarcation lines should be phased out (27% and 18% respectively).

Given that the SGB organises both craft and clerical workers in Scotland, it is surprising that the former membership were relatively less inclined to view greater flexibility more positively than their NGA'82 counterparts, but again this could be due to status perceptions and aspirations, and the general desire to maintain a skilled/craft identity, in the context of experiencing a decade or so of perceived skill status erosion within a larger general union. More specifically, the Scottish workers felt somewhat isolated from what had happened in England to the NGA craft workers during the previous few years. The belief that Scottish based management would not act in the extreme Shah/Murdoch

manner was strong. Secondly, and more importantly, being a branch of the largest print union - SOGAT - had enabled craft workers in Scotland to be more flexible regarding *voluntary* job reallocation into non-craft areas. Thus there was less fear than amongst English craft workers of being *forced* out of traditionally held jobs. In short, those Scottish craft workers who wanted to transfer into non-craft areas had some opportunity of doing so, whilst for the majority, there was no further need to increase the degree of job flexibility than already existed north of the border. And thirdly, clerical workgroups in Scotland are also organised in the SGB of SOGAT, thus eliminating the fear of union conflict over the issue of direct input of advertising material.

On this question more than most, attitudes very much reflected the perceived position in the production process of the various workgroups. For example, one NGA'82 platemaking group at Paper 3, manifested a particularly hard-line approach to the question of job flexibility, reflecting their physically isolated position in the plant (working on another floor to the other craft groups), and also a belief that the platemaking process would remain a distinct craft based operation:

"All I'm concerned about is what's happening in here...We'll not be letting people from other unions elbow us out, because we feel that our function...is every bit as essential as theirs. We are not trying to elbow them out, we have our function, they have theirs. As long as everybody adheres to that basis, there should be no problem."

[PAPER 3 : NGA'82 group discussion 9.8.85]

Interestingly, several years before the research took place amongst this group, the platemaking department had been embroiled in an inter-union dispute with what was then the separate SLADE process workers, over jurisdiction of a lazer platemaking machine, which the platemakers had won. This factor may well have had an influence on attitudes towards demarcation. But this isolationist tendency need not necessarily lead to inter-union conflict, and as can be seen from the above quote, there was no bias against any other chapel. However, in the context of an industry which is experiencing radical change in production methods, it was surprising to come across a workgroup that adheres to such an isolationist perspective. Perhaps the platemakers' physical detachment from other craft groups had played some part in this perception. But other workgroups manifested similar attitudes. 'Readers' workgroups also tended to feel that their function would remain a distinct operation. Even on the national newspaper researched, the 'readers' were more inclined to see their work as retaining a high level of skill, and that the reading function would not disappear along with many other distinct craft processes. As one reader expressed it:

"The reading department? Well a reader's job is a reader's job, it won't alter. I don't mind working on screen. I don't think you get the feel of words and feel of the subject that the author's writing...When you're reading in-depth, you're not only reading word for word what's being said by the copyholder ...but you're trying to understand that ...I don't think you quite get that on a screen."  
[PAPER 1 : NGA'82 group discussion 18.6.86]

The tension in the perceptions of this reader can be clearly seen in the quote above, with on the one hand a bold statement that the reader's job won't alter, whilst a tacit acceptance that working 'on screen' in itself changes the nature of the job to some extent. Nevertheless, the readers surveyed in this research did tend to be more positive about their future place in the industry than many other craft groups, especially in the context of the national press. As one group of compositors explained about the 'rubber room' on Paper 1:

"The theory behind the 'rubber room' is that no one will be made redundant against their wish, so that everyone will have a job. But if you cannot be given a particular job in new technology you just have to report your full allotted time and just sit in this room and do nothing...you're not even allowed to have a radio, to make tea, nor take in anything - just sit there. The idea behind that is that you're so 'do-ally', bashing your head against a wall, you're only too pleased to take the money and get out. Hence the 'rubber room'."  
[PAPER 1 : 3.7.86]

However, as on other issues, craft workers in the provincial press tended to view their future in the industry more positively, often centring on the belief that over time the editorial room will be an integrated work area staffed by both journalists and craft workers. Indeed, one NGA'82 FOC felt that the logic of what will probably be the next major change in production techniques - fully electronic page make-up, emphasises the skill of the craft worker rather than the journalist:

"But when the situation arises next time, the facts are [that] any reluctance or opposition won't manifest itself, it just won't be shown, because...that's been proven now that people can move over. Bearing in mind that the next...technological step into full page make-up on screen will involve far more our skills and our techniques than journalists skills."  
[PAPER 2 : NGA'82 interview 31.10.86]



## Summary

Overall then, it can be argued from the above evidence that despite the overwhelming acceptance of the need for print union amalgamation, there exists a keen desire for the maintenance of a job and wages structure based upon traditional craft/non-craft lines, reflecting the strongly held perception of skill and status differentiation amongst the craft workers vis-a-vis other workgroups. It is difficult to assess the extent to which this is based on an objective assessment of actual skill requirements, or on a more defensive group attitude against the feared loss of skill and status in a rapidly changing industry. One particularly salient aspect of this question however, and one that tends to highlight many of the complexities in the perceptions and attitudes of the craft workgroups, concerns the increasing centrality of female labour in the production process, and it is to this issue that the penultimate part of Chapter 8 turns to.

### 8. Attitudes Towards Women Workers

The final question to be examined in this section, concerns attitudes towards women as fellow newspaper workers and trade unionists.

#### Question -

"What do you think will be the effect of more women entering previously male dominated work areas in respect of the following factors: wages; demarcation issues; job security; and union strength."

#### a) Wages -

table 8.19a : male attitudes towards women workers

#### a) impact on wages

|              | <u>Improve</u> | <u>Little Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Craft (male) | 2%             | 32%                  | 65%           |
| ALL (male)   | 2%             | 43%                  | 56%           |

A clear majority of craft workers (65%) felt that women entering previously male dominated work areas would have a deleterious effect on wage levels, whilst only 34% felt that women would either improve or have little impact in this respect. This followed a similar trend as for all workers, whose response was 56% and 45% respectively. On this one criterion then, most male craft workers held very negative views towards women as fellow workers and trade unionists.

b) Demarcation -

table 8.19b : male attitudes towards women workers

b) impact on demarcation

|              | <u>Improve</u> | <u>Little<br/>Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Craft (male) | 1%             | 39%                      | 60%           |
| ALL (male)   | 1%             | 50%                      | 50%           |

On the criterion of job demarcation, craft workers held similar views about women as on the issue of wage levels, thus 60% believed that women entering previously male work areas would exacerbate demarcation problems, whilst 40% felt that women would either improve or have little impact on this problem. This compared to a response from all workers of an approximate 50/50 split, between those with negative and those with positive views about the impact of women on job demarcation disputes.

c) Job security -

table 8.19c : male attitudes towards women workers

c) impact on job security

|              | <u>Improve</u> | <u>Little<br/>Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Craft (male) | 1%             | 29%                      | 70%           |
| ALL (male)   | 1%             | 40%                      | 59%           |

As with the above two criteria, craft workers very much tended to hold negative views on the effect of women on job security, with 70% responding that women entering male areas would worsen the craft workers security. Only 30% felt that job security would improve or would have little impact regarding women entrance into the labour market. For all workers, the trend was similar but less extreme, with 59% of male workers holding negative views, and 41% holding neutral or positive views.

d) Union strength -

table 8.19d : male attitudes towards women workers

d) impact on union strength

|              | <u>Improve</u> | <u>Little<br/>Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Craft (male) | 13%            | 34%                      | 54%           |
| ALL (male)   | 15%            | 42%                      | 43%           |

It was the question of whether or not women entering traditional male areas would have a positive or negative impact on 'union strength' that produced the most mixed response, from both craft and all categories of male worker. Thus whilst a small majority of craft workers (54%) felt negatively towards women in this respect, 47% believed that women would improve or have a neutral impact on union strength. For all male workers, only a minority (43%) felt negatively towards women re this criterion, whilst a majority of 57% thought that women would either strengthen or more likely have little impact on union organisation.

Overall, it is perhaps another reflection of the contradictions in the craft workers attitudes that relatively more of the latter felt positively about the impact of women on union strength than on the other three criteria of wages, job demarcation and security. Hence the realisation that women were increasingly important to the production process meant that despite negative views on specific aspects of this trend, it was seen that union strength ultimately depended on solidarity of all workers (male and female).

The final table looks at the response overall towards women workers based on all four criteria.

e) All four variables considered -

table 8.19e : male attitudes towards women workers

e) wages, demarcation, security & union strength

|              | <u>Improve</u> | <u>Little Impact</u> | <u>Worsen</u> |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Craft (male) | 5%             | 33%                  | 62%           |
| ALL (male)   | 5%             | 44%                  | 52%           |

When all four variables are taken into account, one can see an overall negative trend in the attitudes of male trade unionists towards women as fellow workers and trade unionists, a trend which is particularly marked in the case of craft workers, with 62% of the latter responding that women entering previously male dominated work areas would have a worsening impact on the above four criteria. This compared to a figure of 52% for all workers. Only 5% of both craft and all workers believed that women would have a positive impact on their working environments, whilst 33% of craft workers, and 44% of all workers felt that women would have a neutral impact.

Interestingly, on all four criteria, whilst the trend was similar, SGB craft workers tended to manifest a stronger antipathy towards women as fellow workers and trade unionists than was the case for the NGA '82. For instance,

72% of SGB members responded negatively on all four criteria, compared to 53% of NGA'82 members. This disparity is difficult to explain, but as on other issues examined in this section, probably reflects the exacerbation of perceptions of differentiation (this time on a gender basis) towards other categories of worker who ostensibly are organised in the same union as the craft workers, thus again illustrating the phenomenon of the shift in sectionalism from between trade unions to within a single union.

More importantly though, craft attitudes and perceptions of both NGA'82 and SGB towards women were more complex than the quantitative material suggests. It has already been seen that women's position in the printing industry has been historically limited - in part because of the resistance of male organised labour to females entering the former's skilled labour markets. However, women's increasing importance in the production process is a central feature of changing technology, with single keystroking (DI) bringing two workgroups (with large female numbers) in particular into a key production role - the tele-ad sales, who can now tap advertisements taken over the phone directly into a computer, and journalists, who can now do likewise with a large proportion of editorial matter. Hence to the craft worker, the experience of changing technology as by-passing the composing room is closely connected to the role of women in the printing industry. This factor is interwoven with gender definitions of new technology, as the following quote illustrates:

"Quite frankly, it's a girl's job now, you could be working in a typing pool. You've still got to have knowledge of typesetting ability... but you can take someone out of college - 16/17 years of age, within about a month to six weeks they can do the job..."

[PAPER 1 : NGA'82 group discussion 18.6.86]

Perhaps the most typical overall type of attitude towards women entering the male craft labour markets was summed up in a group discussion with members of the SGB at Paper 3:

"It's a terrible thing, but new technology has wiped out skilled tradesmen and trades... Because you are able to bring in a girl who is pretty good, who comes out of school with a certificate in typing - word processing which they get at schools now - she is going to be sitting at that visual display unit doing the same job, and obviously she is going to want the same money. So you are going to have to recognise this fact... The revolution has been slow in coming but now it's here."

[PAPER 3 : SGB group discussion 29.7.85]

Changing technology then has produced a complex set of attitudes and perceptions amongst the male craft workgroups. Whilst attitudes were on the whole fairly outspoken on the issue of women, they were far from being universally hostile. One NGA'82 FOC at Paper 3, (with many years as a craft worker behind him, and a strong traditionalist orientation to work), stated that "as far as I'm concerned, women are equal with men in everything they aspire to do, and should be treated absolutely equally in everything..." [98]. Furthermore, many craft workers felt that women could perform the job tasks of the modern typesetter more efficiently than the 'old' compositor. In the words of one SGB member:

"I think in this industry women could probably do the job better than men in general for one reason or another...I think they are better at keying...and possibly they are better at paste-up than men would be."

[PAPER 3 : SGB group discussion 29.7.85]

The above types of attitude were of course not aired by all craft workers, but they do illustrate the many sided facets of craft workers attitudes towards women. On the other hand, direct sexism was clearly evident amongst a number of craft workers:

"I sometimes think women are subject to other pressures. To be fair I've never seen them in a position where they had to grit their teeth and say well, what are we going to do here. But I'm only drawing on my experience of where my wife works. The women tend to allow other things ...buying this and that, instead of saying 'look, the principle is this and you sacrifice that if you win or not'...They would weaken the position of a chapel in that they have different attitudes and different aspirations than men."

[PAPER 3 : SGB interview 26.9.86]

Another craft worker on a different paper argued:

"I'm not all that keen about...women coming in the trade. I'm not all that keen about women having to go out to work. I know they've got to earn a living...[but] somewhat selfishly, they do work and do a man out of a job."

However, this same craft worker went on to relate his own historical experience of working with women craft workers, and paid due regard to them for being very capable workers.

"When I came into the trade I worked at a firm that had been a non Soc. [union] firm...Turned out when the War started they had to pay union rates. And there was a section of rather aged women compositors. They had come down from Scotland where it had been quite permissible for many years to have women compositors being in the STA. And we also had a...very efficient young woman, who was the sole prop of the monotype department...And I think she was probably the highest paid person in the composing room."

[PAPER 1 : NGA'82 interview 19.6.86]

One interesting finding that emerged during this part of the field research, was that gender differentiation was often interwoven (and to some extent determined) by status differentiation. In other words there was an interconnection between attitudes towards women as fellow workers, and attitudes towards other unions and work areas. For instance, although many craft workers expressed attitudes that were less than complementary to women workers in general, female journalists were often held in high esteem, both as workers and trade unionists. A SGB FOC at Paper 3 for example, had this to say on the issue:

"You have quite a lot of women journalists, who I must say are more intelligent than most of the other women workers in the industry... they would certainly think better as trade unionists."

[PAPER 3 : SGB interview 25.7.85]

Similarly, at the same newspaper, a NGA'82 FOC commented:

"I feel that women workers are alright in an office...But a man worker is a bread earner, he has responsibility to his family as well as himself. With the journalists it's a completely different situation...there's some excellent women writers who make a career of it."

[PAPER 3 : NGA'82 group discussion 9.8.85]

These were just two comments that illustrate the point, and although unfortunately the questionnaire allowed for no statistical support for this finding, it became apparent during the course of the qualitative research that attitudes towards women journalists differed significantly from those towards other women organised by SOGAT'82 in 'semi-skilled' areas. One can argue therefore, that perceptions towards women as fellow workers and trade unionists are, at least in part, influenced by the craft worker's perception of his skill and status within the industry, rather than being totally determined by societal induced feelings about women in general. Hence the female

journalist was seen as a professional career minded worker, and thus gained greater credibility in the eyes of the craft worker, than did the 'semi-skilled' woman worker in SOGAT '82, who, along with the workers in that union generally, were seen as a 'class below' the craft worker.

Thus in as much as one can generalise from a small scale survey, feelings of gender differentiation often played a secondary role to perceptions of skill and status vis-a-vis the printing industry workforce as a whole. Therefore one should be careful of interpreting these findings in a simplistic sense of being indicative of sexist attitudes amongst craft workgroups. On the whole, one needs to distinguish between attitudes towards women entering previously male dominated work areas that are based on actual experience, and the general perception towards women as trade unionists and fellow workers, which tend to be drawn from broader societal reference points.

## 9. Summary

In summarising this final section, it can be seen that the craft worker's attitudes toward changing technology and inter-workgroup relations are complex, and are not easily located within any simplistic framework. For the craft worker then, changing technology has created a situation where workgroup self perceptions and attitudes towards other groups of workers, have gone through a process of radical restructuring. At the time of research, this perceptual and attitudinal change was in a state of flux, with a marked general acceptance of the need for union amalgamation in principle, but interwoven with strong residues of craft differentiation. Feelings towards 'semi-skilled' clerical workers, and 'professional' journalists workers are thus entangled in a web of uncertainty over the future and a recognition of the need to come to terms with a radically altered newspaper industry.

The final section of Chapter 8 draws the previous sections together, and attempts to analyse the historical and contemporary relationship between manifestations of 'sectionalism' and 'solidarity' within the membership of the NGA '82 and SGB.

## E/ Sectionalism & Solidarity Amongst Craft Workers

The term 'sectionalism' has been used extensively in the field of print industry industrial relations but in a manner that conflates two distinct concepts: that is the structural **sectionalisation** of the production process and collective bargaining system; and the **sectionalism** manifested in the attitudes and actions of the differentiated groups of workers.

Moreover, a uni-dimensional focus on the craft worker has not only failed to explore the dialectical character of changing workgroup relations in the newspaper industry, but also contains within it an inherent bias either for or against craft workers. In other words, without analysing the overall response to changes in industrial relations of all three main categories of worker involved, the response and attitude of the craft worker appears in a void, and has been interpreted either as a 'celebration' or an 'indictment' of the 'traditions' of the print craft chapel organisation. The official histories of print craft unions typically adopt a 'celebratory' perspective, only marginally tackling the problems raised by manifestations of sectionalism and craft exclusiveness (see for example, Howe/Waite 1948; Gillespie 1953; and Musson 1954). On the other hand, an 'indictment' undercurrent is noticeable in Goodhart/Wintour 1986:

"The union [NGA'82] is...finding its past catching up with it as those unions representing clerical workers, journalists and electricians all see an opportunity, through grasping the new technology, to guillotine the labour aristocrats of print."

[GOODHART/WINTOUR 1986 : p.111]

A rather cruder 'indictment' perspective against the main print craft union- the NGA'82, was argued by Brookes/McKay [99], who saw in an 'imminent demise' of the NGA'82, the heralding of a major breakthrough in the creation of a radical press in Britain, by ending the 'excessive' sectional wage claims of NGA'82 chapels in the national press.

Theoretically sophisticated analyses of the character of print craft workers have also been prone to the problem of one-dimensionality. Cockburn 1983 offers a socialist-feminist approach to this question, arguing that:

"The three explosive contradictions in the situation of compositors are the fundamental ones of capitalism, of patriarchy and of the relationship between the two systems...And the men are torn between a working class identity and a masculine one - all too often subordinating the former to the latter..."

[COCKBURN 1983 : p.213]



Whilst not denying that sexism is a constituent element in the overall make-up of male workers generally, Cockburn's approach by focussing only on one group of workers - craft - fails to see the more complex relationship between the differentiated groups of workers at the point of production, which includes, but is not dominated by the relationship between male and female workers. Furthermore whether or not the 'patriarchal' relationship are a prime determinant in worker relations is a subject for empirical research, rather than an *a priori* starting point, which is implicit in Cockburn's work.

In short, analyses of craft workers generally suffer from a uni-dimensional approach, by failing to analyse the changing nature of 'sectionalism' within the ranks of the newspaper industry as a whole, and the sociological implications that follow from this.

To summarise the research findings, the following points can be made regarding the interrelationship between craft sectionalism and changing technology. Firstly, union amalgamation per se, is seen to be by the overwhelming majority of craft workers, a necessary strategy in combating the negative aspects of changing technology. However, skill and status perceptions are still prevalent amongst a large section of the craft workgroups, particularly influencing the latter's reluctance to support the phasing out wage differentials. Secondly, the craft workers attitude towards 'semi-skilled' workgroups has been affected only marginally by the encroachments of technology on job demarcation. Especially in the case of Scottish craft workers, union amalgamation with SOGAT'82 has tended to shift feelings of differentiation from *between* unions to *within* the one union. Thirdly, the craft workers attitude towards what are seen as 'professional' workers - the journalists - is in a state of flux and in general contradictory. On the one hand strong feelings of differentiation still exist, whilst on the other hand, an increasing number of craftsmen are looking towards editorial areas as a means of retaining jobs. And fourthly, the craft workers attitude towards women as fellow workers and trade unionists, whilst on the whole rather negative, is primarily influenced by feelings of differentiation vis-a-vis other workgroups in general, rather than towards women per se. Hence the 'professional' minded career female journalist is held in higher esteem than is the 'semi-skilled' woman worker organised in SOGAT'82.

Generally, the field research in this thesis has strongly challenged any simplistic conceptualisation of craft workgroups that have prevailed in the literature on skilled workers generally, and printers in particular. For example, the five criteria used in this research to gain an approximate understanding of the 'traditionalist-instrumentalist' orientations of craft workers, compared to other categories of worker, have indicated a clear

instrumentalist orientation on behalf of the craft workers, which tends to contradict previous research on print workers. In his classic account, Blauner for example wrote that

"...as employers are many, plants are relatively small and without elaborate hierarchical chains of command, and labour unions have a degree of control over the industry's labour market and plant working conditions which remind one of the medieval guild system. As a result of these factors, printers have a non-alienated relation to their work, which again recalls the craftsman of pre-industrial times."

[BLAUNER 1964 : p.35]

Contained within Blauner's conceptualisation is an emphasis on the size of plant being a determinant, and clearly Blauner's research took place in relatively small American print shops compared to the larger size of newspaper houses surveyed in the present study. However, theoretically, the concept of 'alienation' used by Blauner is problematic, and to some extent used in a too simplistic a way if one wished to understand this concept in a marxist sense. The simplicity of Blauner's use of 'alienation' is underscored by his locating 'plant size' as a determinant of the former. 'Size' of plant may well influence 'job satisfaction', but not 'alienation', in the marxian sense of a necessary divorce of the worker from the commodity produced.

It is beyond the scope of the present study to examine the concept of 'alienation', but in more general terms, it can be argued that the complex, contradictory and varying attitudes expressed by craft workers in the research above, are partly the result of different experiences of previous introductions of new technology. In other words, the better the outcome of previous technological change, the more positive the attitude generally towards new technology. More critically, as in other instances, the key to understanding the complex nature of craft workers perceptions and attitudes is through the analysis of the contradictory tensions within the orientation of craft workgroups, resulting primarily from the changing character of the interrelationship between the latter and the journalist and clerical groups.

The final conclusory chapter in this thesis brings together some thoughts on the concept of 'contradictory tension' and 'sectionalism', in respect of all three categories of worker studied in this thesis.

References (Chapter Eight)

1. I have used the term 'hegemony' carefully, to denote what to a large extent was the craft workers leading role in collective bargaining, and the dominance that craft workgroups often had at the point of production, which was manifested in both other categories of worker (including clerical and journalists) perceiving the craft workers as the dominant group, and also of management often being more favourable to the claims of craft workers than other groups.
2. See Gillespie 1953 '100 Years of Progress: Record of the STA 1853-1952' p.91; and Marshall 1983 'Changing the Word' ch.1.
3. Gillespie op.cit., p.91.
4. ibid.
5. ibid p.112.
6. ibid p.91.
7. ibid p.92.
8. Howe/Waite 1948 'London Society of Compositors'.
9. ibid
10. ibid p.120.
11. Musson 1954 'The Typographical Assocation' p.264-65.
12. Howe/Waite op.cit., p.209.
13. Gillespie op.cit., p.122-23.
14. ibid p.123-24.
15. See for example Marshall op.cit., p.18-20.
16. Gillepsie op.cit., p.93-94.
17. November/December 1863 and January 1864.
18. Gillepsie op.cit., p.102.
19. Quoted in Gillespie op.cit., p.102.
20. ibid.
21. ibid.
22. ibid p.105.
23. Howe/Waite op.cit., p.206.

24. Gillespie op.cit., p.106.
25. ibid p.107.
26. Musson op.cit., p.289.
27. Howe/Waite op.cit., p.195.
28. ibid p.195-96.
29. Gillespie op.cit., p.128-29.
30. Howe/Waite op.cit., p.229.
31. Gillespie op.cit., p.112.
32. ibid
33. Child 1967 'Industrial Relations in the British Printing Industry' p.190-191.
34. Musson op.cit., Appendix.
35. Howe/Waite op.cit., p.340.
36. Child op.cit., p.190-91.
37. See for instance Cockburn 1983 'Brothers: Male Dominance & Technological Change' p.24; and Gillespie op. cit., p.98.
38. Figures in tables gained from various sources.
39. Musson op.cit., p.291-92.
40. ibid p.292-93.
41. ibid p.296.
42. Howe/Waite op.cit., p.297.
43. ibid p.272.
44. ibid p.279; and Musson op.cit., p.278.
45. Musson op.cit., p.294 & 435.
46. For a full discussion see on this issue see Gillespie op.cit., p.209-211.
47. ibid 211.
48. ibid p.212.
49. ibid p.213.
50. ibid p.201

51. *ibid* p.203.
52. Musson *op.cit.*, p.255.
53. *ibid* p.256.
54. *ibid* p.257-58.
55. Howe/Waite *op.cit.*, p.283-84.
56. *ibid* p.283.
57. Gillespie *op.cit.*, p.215.
58. *ibid* p. 203.
59. *ibid* p.204.
60. *ibid* p.205.
61. *ibid* p.206.
62. Howe/Waite *op.cit.*, p.306-9.
63. *ibid* p.540.
64. *ibid* p.309.
65. Gillespie *op.cit.*, p.192.
66. Figures taken from various sources.
67. Gillespie *op.cit.*, p.216.
68. *ibid* p.215-26.
69. See Blande 1976 "Technology in the Printing Industry"  
p.7.
70. *ibid* p.21.
71. For union mergers in the 1960s see Gennard/Dunn 1983  
'Impact of New Technology on the Structure of Print  
Craft Unions' p.17.
72. Blande *op.cit.*, p.9.
73. See Martin 1981 'New Technology & Industrial Relations  
in Fleet Street' p.160.
74. See Blande *op.cit.*, p.7. .
75. Robins/Webster 1982 'New Technology: a Survey of Trade  
Union Response'.
76. Williams/Steward 1985 'Technology Agreements in Great  
Britain'

77. Gennard/Dunn op.cit., p.21.
78. ibid p.22.
79. Martin op.cit., p.105.
80. Print March 1985 p.5.
81. Gennard/Dunn op.cit., p.28.
82. ibid p.28.
83. Figures from NGA c.1979 "Correspondence Course" Part 2, p.26.
84. Figures from various sources.
85. Gennard/Dunn op.cit., p.29.
86. NGA'82 1984 'Delegate Meeting Report' p.55.
87. ibid p.11.
88. idib pp.338-339.
89. ibid pp.333.
90. Print February 1985 pp.1 & 3.
91. NGA'82 op.cit., p.75.
92. NGA'82 op.cit., p.75.
93. NGA'82 1985 'London Region Annual Report' p.11.
94. Figures from various sources.
95. Cannon 1967 'Social Situation of the Skilled Worker' pp.168-169.
96. Quote taken from Paper Two group discussion 27.10.86.
97. Quote taken from SGB group discussion 29.7.85.
98. Quote taken from Paper Three NGA'82 interview 26.7.85.
99. 'Diverse Reports' Channel 4, 20.11.85

## Chapter Nine: CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted two main tasks. Firstly, in an empirical context, to bridge a 'gap' in the literature, in the sense that given the radical nature of change occurring at the point of production, little work had been done on the perspective of the shop-floor worker and the longer term implications for inter-union relationships at the plant level. Hence the present study has focussed on an analysis of the ways in which changing technology has interacted with and influenced the interrelationship between three highly differentiated categories of newspaper industry unionised employees - journalist, clerical and craft workers. And secondly, in a theoretical sense, to develop a conceptualisation which differentiates between structural change in the world of work, and perceptual change within the 'consciousness' of the workers. The main focus of the study was to develop a theoretical conceptualisation of 'sectionalism' through an empirical analysis of the dynamics of inter-workgroup relations in the newspaper industry, with specific reference to changes in production technology.

Indeed, the rationale for basing a theoretical analysis of sectionalism upon an empirical examination of the newspaper industry, lay in the latter's highly differentiated workforce currently experiencing a major restructuring and dynamic realignment of both job content, and inter-workgroup relations. Hence the present study aimed to develop a conceptualisation of sectionalism by researching the phenomenon at a historical moment of change.

It has been argued that although 'sectionalism' as a concept is a problematic, it has tended to be used as a negative term in a theoretically very loose manner. The mere manifestation of 'isolated' action has been perceived as 'sectionalism', defined as being action inherently negative to other groups of workers. In this context, 'sectionalism' is seen as relating to the attitudes, perceptions and actions of separate workgroups/unions, which manifest themselves as defensive/hostile to the interests of other groups of workers. Superficially, one can see the apparent relevance of this basic definition when applied to the newspaper industry, particularly regarding the inter-union rivalry of the mid 1980s.

However, the thesis attempted to develop a more rigorous theoretical understanding of the concept of sectionalism, firstly by looking at the somewhat loose way in which the concept has been used to refer to newspaper workers; and secondly by formulating a critique of two ideal type conceptualisations of sectionalism, the *static-conservative* and the *dynamic-embryonic*, with the aim of developing a sociological understanding of the nature of 'sectionalism' outwith the above two frameworks.

More specifically, it was argued that both Eurocommunists and orthodox Marxist-Leninists have tended to imply that radicalisation of the working class is determined historically or structurally, and thus the working class have either missed its chance for radical change (Eurocommunism), or that the historical factors have yet to manifest themselves, therefore working class radicalism is yet to come (orthodox Marxist-Leninist). But the chances for radicalism come and go, and spaces appear at historical moments, hence the importance of being sociologically rigid in analysing the chances that are created at particular moments, but to recognise the limitations and overall sectional framework that these situations will exist within. In short, sectionalism and class consciousness are not polar opposites (static/conservative), or organically related (dynamic/embryonic), but are locked into a dialectical relationship of tension, in which the terms themselves are but abstract conceptualisations in which to attempt to understand the experience of working class activity.

In other words, the conceptualisation adopted in this study does not understand the sectionalism/consciousness dichotomy in the structural sense (for instance as being historically determined through union merger, or technologically determined), but rather sees it as the total set of relationships within the working class which is continuously being restructured and reformulated. *A priori*, this implies the distinct possibility that forms of sectionalism will coexist alongside manifestations of broader forms of solidarity at the same moment in time within the perceptions of the working class. Following the logic of this approach it was the aim of this thesis to show that although workgroup sectionalism is a profoundly dynamic phenomenon, offering a potential for a broader based unity amongst organised labour, capitalist restructuring (in part reflected in changing technology) leads to a *realignment of sectionalism*, rather than a progressive development towards an abstract idea of 'class consciousness'. More specifically, it was argued that each of the three categories of worker studied in this thesis - journalist, clerical and craft - exhibit a complex set of *contradictory perceptions and attitudes*, within a framework of 'tensions' specific to each group reflecting the historical trajectory of organised labour in the newspaper/printing industry.

In examining newspaper industrial relations since the early 1970s, there has undoubtedly been a sea-change, in terms of both employer/union, and inter-union relations. However, assessing the qualitative extent of this change has been highly problematic, particularly in respect of shop-floor perceptions. It has been suggested that despite all the changes that have taken place in the newspaper industry over the last fifteen years or so, this has not led to an easily definable shift in the balance of power between capital and labour. This is not to say that there



has been no shift in the balance of strength between class forces, the latter has been clearly demonstrated in the mid 1980s, most notably in the national press sector. But whilst the trade unions may have suffered numerically, there is no mechanical relationship between numbers and power, and this factor has very much influenced the thinking and perceptions of all three categories of worker surveyed, in particular over the question of trade union amalgamation.

Thus whilst quantitatively some of the evidence in this thesis indicated a decline of sectionalism (and certainly of sectionalisation), perceptually we can see a complex mix of historical tension and contradictions in the attitudes, perceptions and actions of all 3 types of newspaper worker - journalist, clerical and craft. This was illustrated in the qualitative examination of newspaper workers carried out during the field research.

In the case of the journalists in the NUJ, a historical tension between aspirations of achieving a *professional* status within the industry (reflecting an individualist ethos), and the journalists actual experience of the need to organise *collectively* in a trade union to improve or maintain their wages and conditions, in particular relative to other groups of print workers. In the 1980s this tension was exacerbated due to changes in technology which created heightened conflict with other workers, especially with craft groups. It can be argued that the sectionalism of the journalists has shifted from being based on a desire to be treated as professionals leading to hostility towards craft workers who were perceived to be hegemonic in the production process, towards journalists increasingly perceiving themselves as the dominant group in newspaper production, in that they have largely 'captured' editorial DI and feel that they are in the driving seat re new technology in respect of other workgroups.

Clerical workers in SOGAT'82, have traditionally been poorly organised, low paid and marginalised re the production process and inter union/workgroup relations. This history has produced a marginalised workgroup identity, but one that is rapidly being eroded by a growing awareness of centrality to the production process (especially regarding the 'capturing of advertising DI). Nevertheless, women still occupy a secondary position in the newspaper labour market, and their structural and perceptual history of marginalisation often manifests itself in sectional hostility to other groups, for example over the issue of job task demarcation and the overall retention of work area jurisdiction.

For the craft worker (in the NGA'82 and SGB), historical perceptions of hegemony within the production process, (but within a context of tension between wages militancy and a conservative 'labour aristocratic' ethos), which differentiated craft workers from other groups, have shifted towards an overriding awareness of need for union merger to protect their declining fortunes due to a radical erosion of job tasks in the craft area. This however has taken place within a perceptual context of tension and contradictions between the desire to retain traditionally held beliefs of craft elitism and of growing awareness that craft skills have been/are being largely replaced by increasingly common skills of computer keyboarding and operating VDUs, and hence the prospect of a much reduced 'status' job within the printing industry.

Thus an analysis purely of structural manifestations of inter union/workgroup relationships (for example the structures of collective bargaining, production processes, and union organisation) would logically imply an erosion of sectionalisation, and therefore of sectionalism, in that bargaining procedures have become more integrated (especially over changing technology), the production process has blurred traditional demarcation lines, and print trade unions have gone through a historical process of amalgamation. However, this uni-dimensional focus on sectionalism is challenged when one takes on-board perceptual and activity based criteria. In the case of the newspaper workers, the erosion of structural differentiation has not led to a decrease in sectionalism (or indeed an increase), in the sense of the way that workers perceive and therefore react and interact with structural change, but rather sectionalism has been re-formulated and manifests itself in historically different ways. For example, it has clearly been the case that Scottish craft workers who merged with the 'general' print union SOGAT in the mid-1970s, in many ways manifested a higher degree of attitudinal sectionalism than was the case for their southern counterparts; thus indicating a shift in sectional attitudes from between unions to within the one union.

Overall then, it appears more fruitful in respect of social investigation to see sectionalism as a constant sociological factor, although a historically reformulated phenomenon, (for example because of changing technology, or union restructuring). A more rigid theoretical approach can thus be developed through an analysis of the relationship between three interrelated categories of change: a) *structural* change, such as union/workgroup organisation; b) *perceptual* change, ie the attitudes of workers; and c) the *activity* of the differentiated groups of organised labour, such as conflict and consent in the workplace and union policies etc. All three criteria will in part influence, and be influenced by each other.

It should finally be noted that this conceptualisation of sectionalism need not be viewed as a negative or pessimistic view regarding the ability of the working class to act as an agency of change, or even to act on a more solidaristic class basis. But rather the above study should be viewed as an attempt to understand a section of the working class as it understands itself, and therefore to be able to assess and analyse the possibility of working class activity in the context of its limitations as well as its possibilities.

## APPENDICES CONTENTS

|  | <u>Page</u> |
|--|-------------|
| APPENDIX 1 : List of Abbreviations   | 328         |
| APPENDIX 2 : Glossary of Printing/Newspaper Terms  | 329         |
| APPENDIX 3 : Trade Unions & Employers Associations   | 336         |
| APPENDIX 4 : Description of the Four Newspapers<br>Researched                              | 341         |
| APPENDIX 5 : Survey Questions in Full  | 343         |
| APPENDIX 6 : Questionnaire Data in Full  | 350         |
| APPENDIX 7 : Breakdown of Questionnaire Returns by<br>Newspaper & Worker Category          | 369         |
| APPENDIX 8 : Breakdown of Interviews/Group<br>Discussions by Location<br>& Worker Category | 370         |
| APPENDIX 9 : Print Industry Trades Union Membership<br>Figures: 1890-1987                  | 371         |
| APPENDIX 10: Print Industry Trades Union Family Trees                                      | 374         |

## APPENDIX 1

### LIST of ABBREVIATIONS

ACP - Association of Correctors of the Press  
AEU - Amalgamated Engineering Union (formerly AEUW)  
AJAX - Allied Journalists Against Extremism  
ASPL - Amalgamated Society of Lithographic Printers & Auxiliaries  
BPIF - British Printing Industries Federation  
CRT - Cathode ray tube  
DI - Direct input  
EETPU - Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications & Plumbing Union  
EFCS - Edinburgh Female Compositors Society  
FOC - Father of the Chapel  
IFOC - Imperial Father of the Chapel  
IMOC - Imperial Mother of the Chapel  
IoJ - Institute of Journalists  
JC - Journalist's Charter  
LSC - London Society of Compositors  
LTS - London Typographical Society  
LUC - London Union of Compositors  
MOC - Mother of the Chapel  
NATSOFA - National Society of Operative Printers & Assistants  
NGA - National Graphical Association  
NGA'82 - National Graphical Association 1982  
NPA - Newspaper Publishers' Association  
NS - Newspaper Society  
NSES - National Society of Electrotypers & Stereotypers  
NUB&MR - National Union of Bookbinders & Machine Rulers  
NUJ - National Union of Journalists  
NUPBPW - National Union of Printing, Bookbinding & Paper Workers  
NUPPW - National Union of Printing & Paper Workers  
NUPT - National Union of Press Telegraphists  
OCR - Optical character recognition  
PKTF - Printing & Kindred Trades Federation  
PMMS - Printing Machine Managers' Trade Society  
SGA - Scottish Graphical Association  
SGB - Scottish Graphical Branch  
SGD - Scottish Graphical Division  
SOGAT - Society of Graphical & Allied Trades  
SOGAT'75 - Society of Graphical & Allied Trades 1975  
SOGAT'82 - Society of Graphical & Allied Trades 1982  
SLADE - Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers & Engravers  
SLDNC - Society of London Daily Newspaper Compositors  
SNPA - Scottish Newspaper Proprietors Association  
STA - Scottish Typographical Association  
TA - Typographical Association  
TTS - Teletypetting  
TUC-PIC - Trade Union Congress: Print Industries Committee  
USE - Union Society of Engravers  
VDU/VDT - Visual display unit/terminal

## APPENDIX 2

### GLOSSARY OF PRINTING/NEWSPAPER TERMS

#### The Workers

**Compositor:** both a generic and specific term. Generically, most origination craft workers can be called compositors, including lino-ops (q.v.) and case-hands (q.v.). But specifically the term compositor is used to denote the hand-compositor, or stone-hand (q.v.), who is responsible for actually piecing the printed matter together. Organised in the NGA'82 outside of Scotland, and by the SGB in Scotland. Compositors are now usually keyboard operators or paste-up artists with computerisation.

**Case-hand:** a compositor who set the headlines from a type case attached to a Ludlow machine (q.v.). Case-hands would usually be paid at piece rate scales, as their work output was more easily measured than the other composing groups, who were normally paid a standard 'stab' rate. Organised in the NGA'82 outside of Scotland, and by the SGB in Scotland. Case-hands now defunct with computerisation.

**Editorial assistant:** basically engaged in handling paper copy, and distributing the copy to and from the editorial department. This workgroup is theoretically redundant with fully electronic printing, but in practice function still remains for editorial assistants. Organised by SOGAT'82

**Foundry worker:** stereotypers and electrotypers who moulds the page of type into a saddle shaped 'flong', which is essentially a method of producing a hardened image of the original metal type so as to allow for extended printing runs where metal type would otherwise wear out. Organised in NGA'82, and now operates laser platemaking equipment under computerisation.

**Gatherers & processors:** the organisation of journalists work can be seen as a dichotomy between news gatherers (reporters) and news processors (the sub-editors q.v.).

**Library worker:** responsible for keeping newspaper cuttings and other forms of research material, to liaise with the reporter/sub-editor when the latter needs background information on a particular subject. Increasingly using data-base search systems with computerisation. Organised by SOGAT'82.

**Linotype operator (lino-op):** the keyboard operator of the linotype/intertype mechanical typesetting machine. Traditionally a piece-worker, especially in the national press, the lino-op was the highest wage earner in the newspaper industry for many years. Organised in the NGA'82 outside of Scotland, and by the SGB in Scotland. Lino-ops now defunct with computerisation.

**Piece-hand:** both the lino-operators and case-hands would usually be paid at piece rate scales, as their work output was more easily measured than the other composing groups, who were normally paid a standard 'stab' rate. Hence the term 'piece-hands'. Organised in the NGA'82 outside of Scotland, and by the SGB in Scotland. Piece-hands now defunct with computerisation.

**Process worker:** the artist/retouchers and camera operators, responsible for preparing and developing artwork and photographic images (half-tones) prior to insertion on the page. The process workers, until amalgamation with the NGA in 1982, were in a highly organised autonomous craft union - the Society of Lithographic Designers & Engravers (SLADE).

**Reader (or corrector of the press):** checks for errors in the proofs that are sent into the reading room at various stages of the process (for example 'galley proofs' when the type is first set, page proofs when the page is initially made-up, and machine revises as the page is being printed). A major aspect of the reader's skill requirement is the knowledge of proofreading symbols (64 in all). Organised in the NGA'82 outside of Scotland, and by the SGB in Scotland. Most reading work now done on VDU screen, in some instances by a reader, but increasingly by other workgroups, especially in editorial room.

**Readers assistant:** act as 'copy holders' to the apprenticed trained reader, and read out the copy as the latter corrects the proof. This workgroup is theoretically redundant with reading on screen, but in practice function still remains for reading assistants. Organised by SOGAT'82

**Receptionist (or front office) worker:** deal mostly with enquiries from the general public, and write down on paper the advertisements brought into the newspaper by hand, to be passed onto the composing room to be set in type. Now has the ability to directly input adverts into central computer and by-pass composing room under computerisation. Organised by SOGAT'82.

**Stone-hand:** a hand compositor (q.v.) who working on a flat metal work-bed (stone) makes the necessary corrections to a page, adding headlines and illustrations (half-tones) where appropriate. The hand compositor then assembles the type into a required format, such as a page or as an advertisement to be placed in the page at a later stage. The hand compositor is occasionally responsible for setting lines of individual pieces of type from a 'type case' (although this is a rare task in newspaper work). The compositor 'imposes' the printing matter - i.e. the made-up page the 'stone' in a way that ensures the correct positioning of the page when it is finally printed in the machine room. Organised in the NGA'82 outside of Scotland, and by the SGB in Scotland. Stone-hands job has now been replaced by paper paste-up with computerisation.

**Sub-editor (sub):** the job of the sub-editor is essentially to correct, edit and possibly restructure the reporter's and outside contributor's editorial material, carrying out copy instructions along the way (for instance concerning 'style of the house' typography). Organised primarily in the NUJ, and increasingly becoming central workgroup with computerisation.

**Tele-ad sales:** the tele-ad sales workgroup, have two basic functions: firstly, to take classified adverts over the telephone and transcribe them onto paper; and secondly, to canvass by telephone regular advertisers in order to boost advertising sales. Organised predominantly in SOGAT'82, tele-ad sales increasingly becoming central workgroup with computerisation.

**Wire-room operator:** are employed to receive agency news copy over a telex machine (or teletype printer). This copy is then handed to the linotype operators to be set in type. Wire-room operators are mostly drawn from the ranks of compositors. Organised by the NGA'82.

### The Workers Organisations

**Chapel:** unionised workgroup. Basic unit of organisation at the plant level in the printing/newspaper industry. Usually, there is more than one chapel for each trade union represented in a newspaper house, particularly in hot-metal days. For example, the NGA'82 may have individual chapels for several separate workgroups, eg piece-hands (linotype operators and headline setters), time-hands (page make-up compositors), process workers and foundry workers. As technology has eroded these traditional job demarcation structures, chapels have tended to merge, sometimes in the form of 'Imperial House Chapels' (q.v.), sometimes as a 'Federated House chapel' (q.v.). In more recent times, given the increase in job flexibility, all the members in the origination are of one union usually have just the one chapel to represent them. However, in the case of the NGA'82, it is usual for the machine minders to be in a separate chapel from the compositors (origination workers). Likewise, machine minders and assistants organised in SOGAT'82 almost invariably have a separate chapel to the SOGAT'82 'white-collar' workgroups in the clerical and advertising sections. For the NUJ, there is usually just one chapel at any one newspaper.

**Father of the Chapel (FOC):** a male shop-steward in the printing and newspaper industry, who represents an individual workgroup chapel.



**Federated House Chapel:** a federation of chapels drawn from all (or most) unions in the enterprise. Normally, NUJ, SOGAT'82, NGA'82, AEU and EETPU chapels would be represented in a Federated chapel in a typical newspaper house.

**Federated Imperial F/MOC:** a male/female convenor, representing all chapels and union in a Federated house. The Federated Imperial F/MOC has found him/herself in a particularly difficult position in recent years given the problems of inter-union/chapel relationships coming under strain because of new technology.

**Imperial F/MOC:** a male/female convenor, representing all the chapels represented in the 'Imperial chapel'. Very often, this position carried little real authority (although obviously in part depending on the individual). However, in more recent times as new technology has eroded demarcation lines, an Imperial F/MOC could occupy a critical position in the union at shop-floor level.

**Imperial House Chapel:** usually a federated grouping of all chapels from one union in the particular enterprise. A typical NGA'82 Imperial chapel would consist of the composing room, and machine room chapels.

**Mother of the Chapel (MOC):** a female shop-steward as above.

### The Firm

**House:** the firm, or enterprise, but at the plant level. Thus the term 'house' is not synonymous with a particular employer, but with the individual plant the workers work in; hence a 'newspaper house' refers to for example the plant where the 'Daily Telegraph is printed. The term 'shop' is used interchangeably with 'house'.

**Style of the House:** the specific typographical style that a newspaper house adopts, eg regarding the use of size of headlines, type faces, spacing and general layout. Style of the House is of particular importance when editing or correcting proofs.

## The Technology

**Flexible specialisation (neo-fordism):** the moving away of industrial techniques from 'Fordist' methods of mass production, large scale centralised workforce structures, towards a radically more flexible administration, marketing, production and distribution system; whereby economies of scale can be achieved on relatively small-scale batch production, multi-purpose machinery, through computerisation and micro-chip technology. Concomitant with these technological changes is the requirement for a more flexible workforce, not rigidly demarcated either by union structures or mass production line principles of minutely defined work tasks.

**Fully electronic system:** a printing technology that performs all of its functions on screen, including page make-up and correcting. The logical implication is that no paper is used, although in practice paper has proved an indispensable adjunct to even the most advanced electronic systems.

**Letterpress printing:** the principle of a relief surface making an impression on paper (or other suitable material), is the oldest method of printing, dating back to 8th Century Japan.

**Lithography:** printing from a damped flat surface using greasing ink, based on the principle of the mutual repulsion of oil and water. A porous stone was used in the early days of this technology, but more recently grained zinc and other metal plates are used.

**Photocomposition:** the generic term for the technology which superseded letterpress as the method of printing newspapers. In general, the basic principles of photocomposition are as follows. All photocomposing machines produce a piece of film or sensitised paper bearing the required image. The character images are exposed to a light source, which through an optical system of prisms and lenses, are ultimately positioned on the photographic film or paper. The system is very flexible, different type sizes being produced merely by an adjustment of lenses, and the matter produced is of very high quality.

## The Techniques

**Cathode ray tube (CRT):** a viewing screen, used in early typesetting machines.

**Data-base:** integrated file of individual data items, usually recorded on tape or disc, used for example for modern library information systems.

**Direct input (DI):** a term which is itself complex and needs further exploration. To begin with, DI has not had such a straightforward impact on the production process as is sometimes inferred, particularly as there are approximately a dozen individual job tasks that could possibly be affected by single keystroking, only about half of which, given present 'state of the art' technology, are suitable for immediate use of DI. Thus, DI in practice, still leaves some scope for the typesetting of editorial and advertising matter to be done by the craft workgroups, although in much reduced quantity. DI is also known as 'single keystroking' and 'front end systems'.

**Half-tone:** process by which continuous tones are simulated by a pattern of angled dots of varying sizes, used for gaining a relief impression of a photograph in letterpress printing.

**Hard copy:** a proof printed out from the computer.

**Linotype/Intertype:** a mechanical typesetting machine, developed in the 1890s, which has a 90-key keyboard layout, rather different from the standard 'qwerty' boards used in typewriters and computer keyboards, which produces individual lines of type - slugs. (The machine operators however are generally known as 'lino-operators'). The principle of both machines are the same; the machines being in a single unit in which the setting and casting of the type are performed by one operator, who also hyphenates and justifies each line. The matrices are assembled in word formation by the depression of a keyboard, and the casting and delivery of the metal slug is done automatically. An average of 3-5 lines of type can be produced per minute using this method, with a reasonable operator making one mistake every 10-20 lines.

**Ludlow and Nebitype:** used for casting display lines (large type as used in newspaper headlines). The matrices are set by hand, and have to be distributed back into the matrix case by hand.

**Optical character recognition (OCR):** the electronic scanning of copy for conversion to typeset matter without a keyboard operation.

**Portable terminals:** used on an increasing scale by reporters, now that they are no longer just moveable, but very light and portable (weighing just 5-10lbs). The latest machines have access to message facilities such as 'Telecom Gold', and can store up to 15 stories at once. The reporter can take a terminal out on a story and relay it back directly to the editorial room.

**Proof:** the type printed on paper for the purposes of reading and correcting.

**Teletypetting (TTS):** a technique initially developed in the 1930s for separating the keyboarding function from the actual production of type. Instead, the TTS operator produced a punched tape which could be fed into any number of line casting machines to produce the metal slugs automatically. Furthermore, the tape could be used simultaneously in several plants. Also, the use of punched tape in one machine was quicker than with an orthodox operator tapping out the metal type directly.

**Visual display unit/terminal (VDU/VDT):** attached to the computer keyboard, this cathode ray tube could display 'chunks' of type at the press of a code button, enabling the journalist to correct errors in the typeset matter, thus eradicating much of the work traditionally done by craft readers. VDU's and computer keyboards then (or 'front-end' systems) offered the technological potential for a fairly far reaching restructuring of the origination production process, and a radical change in the job content of both journalists and craft workers.

## APPENDIX 3

### TRADE UNION & EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATIONS

The following is by no means a comprehensive list of print industry trade unions or employers associations, but is rather a mechanism for quick reference of those organisations that are relevant to and/or mentioned in the thesis.

#### The Trade Unions

##### **Allied Journalists Against Extremism (AJAX):**

An apparently short-lived right-wing journalist pressure group, formed in the late 1970s to argue against the militant wages campaign of that period.

##### **Amalgamated Engineering Union (AUE):**

Formerly the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW), the Union organises engineering maintenance staff in the newspaper and printing industry.

##### **Amalgamated Society of Lithographic Printers & Auxiliaries (ASLP):**

One of two previously autonomous lithographic unions, with a membership primarily in the machine room, it transferred its engagements into the NGA in 1969.

##### **Association of Correctors of the Press (ACP):**

The time-served readers' union, which transferred its engagements into the NGA in 1965.

##### **Edinburgh Female Compositors Society (EFCS):**

First established in 1898, with the assistance of the STA, this is one of the very few recorded craft based female unions, in the one part of the country where women established a foothold in the composing room. It appears to have been short lived, but was reconstituted again as a branch of the STA in 1911. By this stage, women had been effectively excluded from the composing area, and soon the EFCS became extinct.

##### **Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications & Plumbing Union (EETPU):**

The EETPU has traditionally been a minority union in the printing industry, organising electricians (maintenance workgroups) in the newspaper and printing industry, developed an increasingly aggressive recruitment stance in the newspaper industry in the 1980s, based on the rationale that changing technology was creating new areas logical to EETPU job tasks.

**Institute of Journalists (IoJ):**

Created in 1890 when the former NAJ gained its Royal Charter, the IoJ is a professional oriented association, representing a very small number of journalists.

**Journalist's Charter (JC):**

Pressure group formed within the NUJ in the mid-1970s created to put forward a left-wing/anti-sectionalist line within the Union vis-a-vis new technology.

**London General Trade Society of Compositors:**

Established in 1826 in friendly rivalry to the London Trade Society of Compositors, it merged formally with the latter union in 1834 to form the LUC.

**London Society of Compositors (LSC):**

Founded in 1848, the LSC was the London based union for general trade compositors, and from 1853 for newspaper compositors, who had served a craft based apprenticeship. Amalgamated with the PMMTS in 1955 to form the LTS, and then with the TA in 1964 to form the NGA.

**London Trade Society of Compositors:**

The foundation stone of the present NGA'82, in the sense that this union is the first recorded to have a direct link with the unions that became established in the 19th Century, c.1816.

**London Typographical Society (LTS):**

Formed out of the merger between the London compositors (LSC) and machine managers (PMMTS) unions in 1955, and in 1964 joined with the TA to form the NGA.

**London Union of Compositors (LUC):**

The LUC was formed out of a merger between the London Trade Society of Compositors q.v. and the London General Trade Society of Compositors in 1834. Was reconstituted in 1845 as the LSC Branch of the TA, after a merger with the latter union, but split again in 1848 to become an autonomous union - the LSC.

**Members of the Phoenix:**

One of the earliest recorded trade union type societies of compositors c.1790s, had no direct linkage with future unions.

**National Society of Operative Printers & Assistants (NATSOPA):**

Formed in 1889 in the wave of the 'new unionism', NATSOPA was traditionally classed as a semi-skilled print union, which was a constant source of tension between the Union and the craft unions, which have historically resisted non-apprentice trained labour from being promoted, eg as machine managers. Hence the ampersand in the Union's title is significant, as it denotes the refusal of NATSOPA to accept its members being confined to non-skilled work. In 1982, NATSOPA merged with SOGAT'75 to form SOGAT'82.

**National Graphical Association (NGA):**

Formed in 1964 through an amalgamation of the London based craft union the LTS and the provincial craft union the TA.

**National Graphical Association 1982 (NGA'82):**

The present day main craft workers union, which was formed in 1982 from an amalgamation between the then NGA and SLADE.

**National Society of Electrotypers & Stereotypers (NSES):**

The foundry workers society that transferred its engagements into the NGA in 1967.

**National Union of Bookbinders & Machine Rulers (NUB&MR):**

Formed in 1911 from an amalgamation of several bookbinding unions, and in 1921 joined with the NUPPW to create the NUPBMR&PW, and thus the NUB&MR is a founding union of the present day SOGAT'82.

**National Union of Journalists (NUJ):**

Created in 1907 when a group of journalists broke away from the IoJ to build a more trade union oriented association. The NUJ is now the major union for journalists in the printing and media industries.

**National Union of Press Telegraphists (NUPT):**

The wire room operatives union which transferred its engagements into the NGA in 1965.

**National Union of Printing, Bookbinding & Paper Workers (NUPBPW):**

Essentially formed in 1921 as the NUPBMR&PP, through an amalgamation of the NUB&MR and the NUPPW, the union shortened its name to the NUPBP in 1928, and was one of the foundation stones of the present SOGAT'82.

**National Union of Printing & Paper Workers (NUPPW):**

Formed in 1914 from an amalgamation of several paper making and warehouse workers unions, the NUPPW joined with the NUB&MR in 1921 to form the NUPBMR&PW, and thus constitutes an important originator of the present day SOGAT'82.

**Printing & Kindred Trades Federation (PKTF):**

Formed originally in 1861, and reconstituted in 1901, the PKTF was the joint union body for collective bargaining and coordinating purposes until its demise in 1974.

**Printing Machine Managers' Trade Society (FMMS):**

An autonomous press room union, for apprentice trained machine operatives, merged with the LSC in 1955 to form the LTS.

**Scottish Graphical Association (SGA):**

Briefly the title of the Scottish craft workers union between 1973-75, at which time it amalgamated with SOGAT, to become the SGD of SOGAT'75.

**Scottish Graphical Branch (SGB):**

The title given to the former SGD of SOGAT'75 reflecting its position as a Branch rather than a Division of SOGAT'75 shortly after it had merged with the latter union in 1975. The SGB is the current name of this section of SOGAT'82.

**Scottish Graphical Division (SGD):**

The SGD was the title given to the SGA on merging with SOGAT in 1975. A few years later this was changed to the SGB.

**Scottish Typographical Association (STA):**

The autonomous Scottish compositors and machine managers' union, which became the SGA in 1973 when it recognised its widened recruitment area.

**Society of Graphical & Allied Trades (SOGAT):**

Formed in 1966 through an amalgamation of the then two main general print unions, the NUPBP and NATSOFA. The two unions split again in 1970, essentially leaving the former union as SOGAT.

**Society of Graphical & Allied Trades 1975 (SOGAT'75):**

Formed when SOGAT and the SGA merged in 1975, creating the merger of an essentially non-craft and craft based union in the printing industry.

**Society of Graphical & Allied Trades 1982 (SOGAT'82):**

Formed from a re-amalgamation of the then SOGAT'75 and NATSOFA in 1982, creating just one general print union in the industry.

**Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers & Engravers (SLADE):**

The main lithographic origination workers unions, which amalgamated with the NGA to form the NGA'82 in 1982.

**Society of London Daily Newspaper Compositors (SLDNC):**

Formed in 1820 as an autonomous newspaper based union, the SLDNC merged with the LSC in 1853.

**Trade Union Congress: Print Industries Committee (TUC-PIC):**

Set-up in 1974 under the auspices of the TUC to replace the PKTF as the joint union body in the industry.

**Typographical Association (TA):**

The provincial compositors and machine managers society, amalgamated with the LTS in 1964 to form the NGA.

**Union Society:**

An early recorded compositors union c.1801-10. Had no direct linkage with future unions.

**Union Society of Engravers (USE):**

Small group of lithographic based craft workers who transferred its engagements into the SLADE in 1973.



## The Employers Associations

### **British Printing Industries Federation (BPIF):**

The trade association for the general printing trade, which up to 1980, negotiated jointly with the NS. Formerly the British Federation of Master Printers (BFMP).

### **Newspaper Publishers' Association (NPA):**

Employers' association for national daily and Sunday newspapers. Although historically the NPA has represented the majority of individual national publishers for collective bargaining purposes with the unions, it has rarely had all publishers in its Association. Over the years, publishers have joined and left depending on exigencies of the time.

### **Newspaper Society (NS):**

Represents employers in the regional press in England, Wales Belfast, and also London based local newspapers. Up to 1980, it negotiated jointly with the BPIF, but has since ceased doing so.

### **Scottish Newspaper Proprietors Association (SNPA):**

Scottish equivalent of the NPA and NS, represents 42 Scottish daily and weekly newspaper publishers. Up to 1944, operated on an extension of NPA agreements, but since then conducts its own bargaining.

## APPENDIX 4

### DESCRIPTION of the FOUR NEWSPAPERS RESEARCHED

The field work was carried out between the summer of 1985 and autumn of 1986. For the purposes of discretion, the newspapers in which the research took place are referred to as 'Paper 1', 'Paper 2', 'Paper 3', and 'Paper 4'. Whilst it is not possible to describe the papers in too much detail without giving away their identity (given the relatively high profile of the individual firms that constitute the newspaper industry), a brief description is presented of each paper to allow the reader to ascertain some of the organisation characteristics of the latter.

By way of setting the newspapers in a general context, all four were long established papers in their regions, and of the workgroups researched, all tended to have a stable, relatively long-serving staff with a low turnover, except for Paper One's clerical section, which had a relatively high-turnover.

**Paper One** is a medium size national quality daily paper in which research was conducted for some four weeks in the summer of 1986 amongst NUJ, SOGAT clerical and NGA'82 chapels. The newspaper is part of a relatively small grouping of media interest, which has voting shares in a television company and independent local radio. The paper has a circulation of some 475,000 (mid-1980s), and employed approximately 1,000 staff (at the time of research). In May 1987, it turned over to a fully computerised direct input production system, after several years of operating a hybrid hot-metal/photocomposition production operation. Like most other 'Fleet Street' newspapers, it moved its plant out of Central London to a new site in London's East End in 1987, and concomitantly shed a large percentage of its staff, some 50% in the craft areas.

**Paper Two** is a large provincial daily & evening newspaper situated in the Anglian region of England, and the research took place in this paper over a period of three weeks during the autumn of 1986 amongst NUJ, SOGAT clerical and NGA'82 chapels. The newspaper is the principal subsidiary of a larger group which publishes some 20 daily, evening and weekly newspapers. The researched paper employs just over 400 staff, and has a daily circulation of just under 50,000, and an evening circulation of just under 40,000 (all figures at the time of research). The paper first began to introduce computerisation in 1966, and turned over to photocomposition in 1974. In 1985, the first phase of direct input was introduced in the editorial room, and in

1986, advertising direct input was achieved. At the time of research, the company was negotiating with the unions to introduce further elements of direct input.

**Paper Three** is a Scottish regional daily & evening, in which research amongst SGB and NGA '82 craft chapels was undertaken initially over a period of four weeks over the summer of 1985. Some follow-up interviews were conducted in the spring of 1986, to up-date the original research. The newspaper is part of a large multinational company, which has a wide range of interests, the largest single one being printing and publishing. The daily newspaper has a circulation of approximately 125,000, and an evening circulation of 180,000 (c. summer 1985). In 1980, the newspaper moved over from hot-metal to photocomposition overnight, and at the time of research, was in the very early stages of talking to the unions about direct input. In the mid 1980s, the company employed some 1,200.

**Paper Four** is a Scottish regional daily & evening, in which a small piece of research was conducted amongst a SGB craft chapel at the paper in the spring of 1986. The paper is a part of a large multinational company, with considerable interests in the regional press. The company researched has a daily circulation is approximately 94,000, and its evening circulation is 122,000. At the time of research, the paper employed a staff of about 960. The newspaper had been converted to photocomposition in the late 1970s, and was in the process of negotiating with the trade union over direct input during the time of research.

APPENDIX 5

SURVEY QUESTIONS in FULL

A/ Questionnaire distributed to NUJ and NGA '82 workgroups

B/ Questionnaire distributed to SOGAT Clerical workgroups

C/ Questionnaire distributed to M/FDCs

QUESTIONNAIRE : All Workgroups

The following questions are designed to gain an understanding of the attitudes of various workgroups in the newspaper industry to the problems and opportunities presented by changing technology.

Please circle (except for Q6) the appropriate box(es)

Please  
Leave Blank

A/ Personal Details

1. Occupation: (if more than 3 functions, just circle 3 main jobs)  
 Reporter  [01] Sub-editor  [02] Keyboard-op  [03] Paste-up  [04]  
 Reader  [05] Artist  [06] Camera-op  [07] Platemaker  [08]  
 Clerical  [09] Dispatch  [10] Other  [11] [ ] 104
2. Age:  
 25 or under  [01] 26-35  [02] 36-45  [03] 46-55  [04] 56 or over  [05] [ ] 105
3. Sex:  
 Male  [01] Female  [02] [ ] 106
4. Trade Union:  
 NUJ  [01] NGA '82  [02] SOGAT '82  [03] SGB of SOGAT '82  [04] [ ] 108
5. Did you serve an apprenticeship/indentured  
 Yes  [01] No  [02] [ ] 109
- [ ] 110

B/ Attitudes Towards Your Job

6. Number in order of priority (from 1-5) those factors that you feel were/are most important in your job in respect of both old and new technology:
- |                              |                          |                          |     |       |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----|-------|
|                              | i.Hot-metal              | ii.Photo-composition     |     |       |
| a. Skills                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] | 11 16 |
| b. Job satisfaction          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] | [ ]   |
| c. Control over work process | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] | 12 17 |
| d. Wages                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] | [ ]   |
| e. Job security              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] | 13 18 |
|                              |                          |                          | [ ] | [ ]   |
7. What has been your experience of previous introductions (if any) of new technology in respect of the following factors:
- |                              |                               |                               |                               |        |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
|                              | Improved                      | Little impact                 | Worsened                      |        |
| a. Skills                    | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 21 |
| b. Job satisfaction          | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 22 |
| c. Control over work process | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 23 |
| d. Wages                     | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 24 |
| e. Job security              | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 25 |
| f. Stress                    | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 26 |
8. What do you think will be the impact of further changes in newspaper technology in respect of the following factors:
- |                              |                               |                               |                               |        |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
|                              | Improved                      | Little impact                 | Worsened                      |        |
| a. Skills                    | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 27 |
| b. Job satisfaction          | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 28 |
| c. Control over work process | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 29 |
| d. Wages                     | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 30 |
| e. Job security              | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 31 |
| f. Stress                    | <input type="checkbox"/> [01] | <input type="checkbox"/> [02] | <input type="checkbox"/> [03] | [ ] 32 |

C/ Attitudes Towards Trade Unions

9. Have you held/do you hold a trade union position at any of the following levels:  
 National [01] Regional/Branch [02] Chapel [03] [ ] 33 34 [ ] [ ]
10. In respect of your working life in general, do you feel that your union is:  
 Very important [01] Fairly important [02] Not very important [03] [ ] 36 [ ]
11. What do you think of the print unions approach (nationally) towards changing technology: (Please comment on all the unions if you wish)
- |                            | Too defensive | About right | Not defensive enough |        |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------------------|--------|
| a. NUJ                     | [01]          | [02]        | [03]                 | [ ] 37 |
| b. NGA '82                 | [01]          | [02]        | [03]                 | [ ] 38 |
| c. SOGAT '82               | [01]          | [02]        | [03]                 | [ ] 39 |
| d. SGB (For Scotland only) | [01]          | [02]        | [03]                 | [ ] 40 |
12. What in your opinion has been the impact of new technology in respect of inter-chapel relations at the shop-floor level:  
 Improved [01] Little impact [02] Worsened [03] [ ] 41
13. In view of the impact of changing technology, what is your opinion of amalgamation of the 3 main print unions (NUJ/NGA/SOGAT) in respect of both your particular union and print unions as a whole:
- |                      | i. Your union | ii. All print unions |               |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|
| A good thing overall | [01]          | [01]                 | 42 45 [ ] [ ] |
| A necessary evil     | [02]          | [02]                 | [ ] [ ] 43 46 |
| Unnecessary          | [03]          | [03]                 | [ ] [ ] 44 47 |

D/ Attitudes Towards Other Workgroups

[In a situation where there was only 1 union covering the print industry, what would your attitude be to the following issues:]

14. Pay differentials:  
 Maintained at present levels [01] [ ] 48  
 Revised on two-tier skilled/semi-skilled basis [02]  
 Phased out completely [03]
15. Demarcation of jobs:  
 Jobs to be allocated along broadly traditional NUJ/NGA/SOGAT lines [01] [ ] 49  
 Allocated along revised skilled/semi-skilled basis [02]  
 Complete flexibility as practicably possible [03]
16. Women workers - what do you think will be the effect of more women entering previously male dominated work areas in respect of the following factors:  
 \*\*Women workers please ignore this question
- |                       | Improve | Little impact | Worsen |        |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|--------|--------|
| a. Wages              | [01]    | [02]          | [03]   | [ ] 50 |
| b. Demarcation issues | [01]    | [02]          | [03]   | [ ] 51 |
| c. Job security       | [01]    | [02]          | [03]   | [ ] 52 |
| d. Union Strength     | [01]    | [02]          | [03]   | [ ] 53 |
17. Journalists - if you were in the same union as journalists, what do you think would be its effect in respect of the following factors:  
 \*\*Journalists please ignore this question
- |                       | Improve | Little impact | Worsen |        |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------|--------|--------|
| a. Wages              | [01]    | [02]          | [03]   | [ ] 54 |
| b. Demarcation issues | [01]    | [02]          | [03]   | [ ] 55 |
| c. Job security       | [01]    | [02]          | [03]   | [ ] 56 |
| d. Union strength     | [01]    | [02]          | [03]   | [ ] 57 |

18. NGA '82 craft workers - what do you think will be the consequence of merging with the NGA '82 in respect of the following factors:

\*\*NGA '82 members please ignore this question

|                       | Improve                  | Little impact            | Worsen                   |         |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| a. Wages              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 158 |
| b. Demarcation issues | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 159 |
| c. Job security       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 160 |
| d. Union strength     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 161 |

19. SOGAT '82 production workers - what do you think will be the consequence of merging with SOGAT '82 in respect of the following factors:

\*\*All SOGAT '82 and SGB members please ignore this question

|                       | Improve                  | Little impact            | Worsen                   |         |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| a. Wages              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 162 |
| b. Demarcation issues | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 163 |
| c. Job security       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 164 |
| d. Union strength     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 165 |

20. SOGAT '82 clerical workers - what do you think will be the consequence of merging with SOGAT '82 in respect of the following factors:

\*\*All SOGAT '82 and SGB members please ignore this question

|                       | Improve                  | Little impact            | Worsen                   |         |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| a. Wages              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 166 |
| b. Demarcation issues | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 167 |
| c. Job security       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 168 |
| d. Union strength     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 169 |

21. \*\*For SGB and SOGAT '82 members in Scotland only

Given that in Scotland, the SGA amalgamated with SOGAT in 1975, what do you feel has been the consequence of this merger in respect of the following factors:

|                       | Improve                  | Little impact            | Worsen                   |         |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| a. Wages              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 170 |
| b. Demarcation issues | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 171 |
| c. Job security       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 172 |
| d. Union strength     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | [ ] 173 |

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill-out this detailed questionnaire. If you are interested in being interviewed further over the issues raised here, would you please write your name and address (and telephone number if you have one) so that I may contact you outside of working hours. For your information, I have been a member of the NGA (London Region) since 1973, and at present am a research student at Glasgow University.

*Bob Mason*

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel.....

QUESTIONNAIRE : SOGAT '82 Clerical Chapel

The following questions are designed to gain an understanding of the attitudes of various workgroups in the newspaper industry to the problems and opportunities presented by changing technology

Please  
Leave  
Blank

Please circle the appropriate box(es)

A/ Personal Details

1. Occupation(s):

Tele-ad sales [01] Librarian [02] Circulation [03]  
Editorial Auxiliary [04] Secretarial [05] Other Clerical [06] [ ]04

2. Age:

25 or under [01] 26-35 [02] 36-45 [03] 46-55 [04] 56+ [05] [ ]05

3. Sex:

Male [01] Female [02] [ ]06

4. How long have you been a member of SOGAT '82

Not a member [01] 1yr or less [02] 1-5yrs [03] 5-10yrs [04]  
Over 10yrs [05] [ ]07

5. How many years have you worked in the printing industry

1yr or less [01] 1-5yrs [02] 5-10yrs [03] 10yrs or more [04] [ ]08

B/ Attitudes Towards Your Job

Given the changes in working practices taking place in the newspaper industry at the present time, what is your opinion of the following -

6. Demarcation of jobs between different unions:

Jobs to be allocated along broadly traditional NUJ/NGA/SOGAT lines [01]  
Allocated along revised skilled/semi-skilled basis [02]  
Complete flexibility as practicably possible [03] [ ]09

7. Pay differentials between different unions:

Maintained at present levels [01]  
Revised along two-tier skilled/semi-skilled basis [02]  
Phased out completely [03] [ ]10

If you have had any experience of working with new technology (eg direct input of advertising, using computer based data systems in library) please answer the following questions -

8. What has been your experience of previous introductions of new technology in respect of the following factors:

|                     | Improved | Little impact | Worsened |       |
|---------------------|----------|---------------|----------|-------|
| a. Skills           | [01]     | [02]          | [03]     | [ ]11 |
| b. Job satisfaction | [01]     | [02]          | [03]     | [ ]12 |
| c. Wages            | [01]     | [02]          | [03]     | [ ]13 |
| d. Stress           | [01]     | [02]          | [03]     | [ ]14 |

9. What do you think will be the impact of further changes in newspaper technology in respect of the following factors:

|                     | Improved | Little impact | Worsened |       |
|---------------------|----------|---------------|----------|-------|
| a. Skills           | [01]     | [02]          | [03]     | [ ]15 |
| b. Job satisfaction | [01]     | [02]          | [03]     | [ ]16 |
| c. Wages            | [01]     | [02]          | [03]     | [ ]17 |
| d. Stress           | [01]     | [02]          | [03]     | [ ]18 |



C/ Attitudes Towards Trade Unions

10. Have you held/do you hold a trade union position at any of the following levels:  
National [01] Regional/Branch [02] Chapel [03] [ ] 11'
11. In respect of your working life in general, do you feel that your union is:  
Very important [01] Fairly important [02] Not very important [03] [ ] 12'
12. What do you think of the print unions approach (nationally) towards  
changing technology (please comment on all unions):
- |              |           |       |               |       |         |
|--------------|-----------|-------|---------------|-------|---------|
|              | Too       | About | Not defensive | Don't |         |
|              | defensive | right | enough        | know  |         |
| a. NUJ       | [01]      | [02]  | [03]          | [04]  | [ ] 12' |
| b. NGA '82   | [01]      | [02]  | [03]          | [04]  | [ ] 12' |
| c. SOGAT '82 | [01]      | [02]  | [03]          | [04]  | [ ] 12' |
| d. SGB       | [01]      | [02]  | [03]          | [04]  | [ ] 12' |
13. What in your opinion has been the impact of new technology in respect of  
inter-chapel relations at the shop-floor level:  
Improved [01] Little impact [02] Worsened [03] Don't know [04] [ ] 12'
14. Are you in favour of SOGAT '82 amalgamating with the NGA '82 in the near future:  
Yes [01] No [02] Not sure [03] [ ] 12'
15. Are you in favour of SOGAT '82 amalgamating with the NUJ in the near future:  
Yes [01] No [02] Not sure [03] [ ] 12'
16. Overall, what is your opinion of amalgamation of the 3 main print unions  
(NUJ/NGA/SOGAT) in respect of both your particular union and print unions  
in total:
- |                  |      |         |
|------------------|------|---------|
| A good thing     | [01] | [ ] 12' |
| A necessary evil | [02] |         |
| Unnecessary      | [03] |         |
| Not sure         | [04] |         |

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill-out this detailed questionnaire.  
If you are interested in being interviewed further over the issues raised here, would  
you please write your name and address (and telephone number if you have one) so that  
I may contact you outside of working hours.  
For your information, I have been a member of the NGA (London Region) since 1973, and  
at present am a research student at Glasgow University.

*Bob Mason*

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone.....

Please  
Leave Blank

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

01 02 03

QUESTIONNAIRE : FOC's/MOC's

The following questions are designed to gain an understanding of the structural changes in collective bargaining at the shop-floor level due to changing technology.

Please circle the appropriate box(es)

- Q1. Trade Union: NUJ  NGA '82  SOGAT '82  SGB of SOGAT  04 [ ]
- Q2. Union Office Held: FOC  Dep FOC  MOC  Dep MOC  05 [ ]
- Q3. At what stage during the introduction of new technology have negotiations taken place between your chapel and management (circle as many stages as apply):
- a. Initial planning for changing over technology  06 [ ]
  - b. Selection of specific systems  07 [ ]
  - c. Implementing new technology on the shop-floor  08 [ ]
- Q4. Do you believe that the amount of consultation over new technology issues between your chapel and management changed compared to negotiations over other collective bargaining issues:
- More consultation over new technology than other issues  09 [ ]
  - About the same amount of consultation over all issues
  - Less consultation over new technology than other issues
- Q5. Do you believe that inter-chapel relations are changing because of new technology:
- Better inter-chapel relations  10 [ ]
  - Little change
  - Worse inter-chapel relations
- Q6. In negotiations with management over new technology issues, how often does your chapel negotiate jointly with one or more other chapels (approximately):
- Once per month or more  11 [ ]
  - Once every two - six months
  - Less than twice per year
- Q7. In negotiations with management over other general collective bargaining issues, how often does your chapel negotiate jointly with one or more other chapels (approximately):
- Once per month or more  12 [ ]
  - Once every two - six months
  - Less than twice per year
- Q8. How often do you as a union official meet with officials of other chapels when discussing both new technology issues and other general collective bargaining issues (approximately):
- |                             |                          |                          |        |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
|                             | i.New technology         | ii.Other issues          |        |
| Once per month or more      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 [ ] |
| Once every two - six months | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14 [ ] |
| Less than twice per year    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |        |
- Q9. Has the structure of your chapel altered since the introduction of new technology:
- More chapel representatives  15 [ ]
  - The same number of chapel representatives
  - Less chapel representatives

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill-out this questionnaire.

## APPENDIX 6

### QUESTIONNAIRE DATA in FULL

The following statistical material, mostly in the form of bar charts, represents the findings of the quantitative survey undertaken in four newspapers in 1985 and 1986.

The following points should be noted which will hopefully assist the reader in understanding the following charts.

1. The statistics distinguish between the two unions representing craft workers - the NGA'82 and SB, and thus there are four groups, rather than just the three given in the tables throughout the text, but which are nevertheless tables drawn from the statistics below.

2. The 'ALL' category represents the average response for all four separate groups, and is calculated on the basis of adding up the total percentage given for each group, and dividing by four. This is a simply method, but gives a more accurate assessment of the total response as categorised by worker type. An alternative method would have been to recalculate the 'ALL' figure by totalling the individual responses, but this would have meant a large distortion in a workgroup analysis (the basis of the thesis), as there was a large divergence in total numbers responding to the questionnaire in each category of worker, eg there were over 40 craft respondents in each craft group, but only 34 clerical. Hence the use of the simply method of adding up the results of each group, and then dividing by four, which negated the numerical bias in workgroup returns.

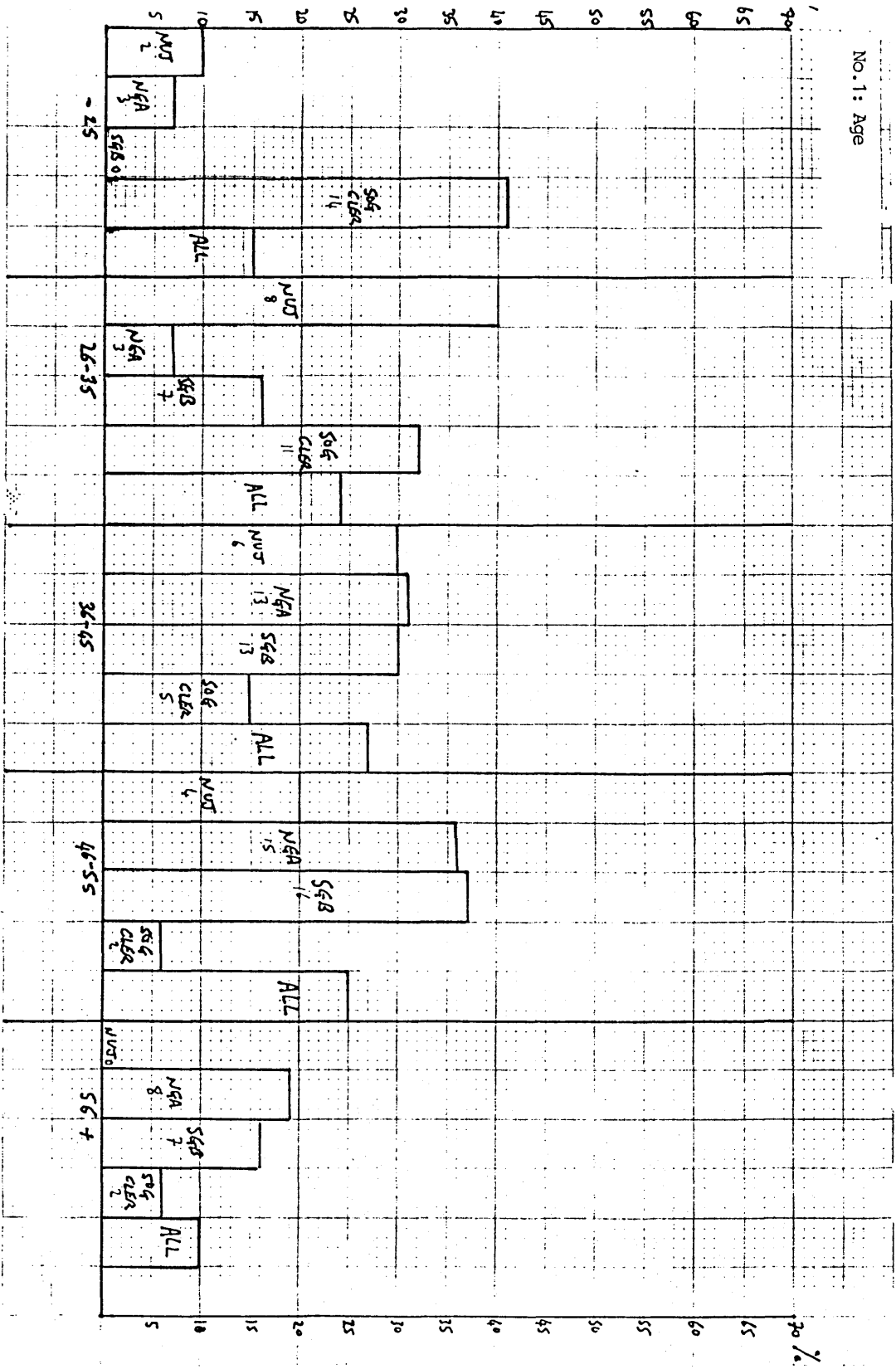
3. The 'weighted' figure refers to the multiplication of the absolute number of respondents to each question asked in the survey, when less than 100% of respondents answered. (Usually one or two questions were left blank on most forms). This was done to level out differences in questions left unanswered. Thus if out of the 42 NGA'82 respondents, only 40 supplied an answer to one particular question, this was averaged out, by dividing 42 by 40 = 1.05, and giving the absolute number a multiplier of 1.05 (eg 35 NGA'82 respondents answered 'yes' to union amalgamation, thus  $35 \times 1.05 = 36.75$ ). This multiplied figure represented an estimate (based on the average of those who answered the question) of what the total number would have been with a 100% answered question. The figure was then divided by the total number of respondents, in the NGA'82 case = 42, so as to find the percentage. In the example given, this would have meant  $36.75 \times 100$  divided by 42 = 87.5%. This percentage was then taken to the nearest whole figure to simplify, which in our example would have been 88%. This method leaves room for an error of 1% plus or minus.

## CONTENTS

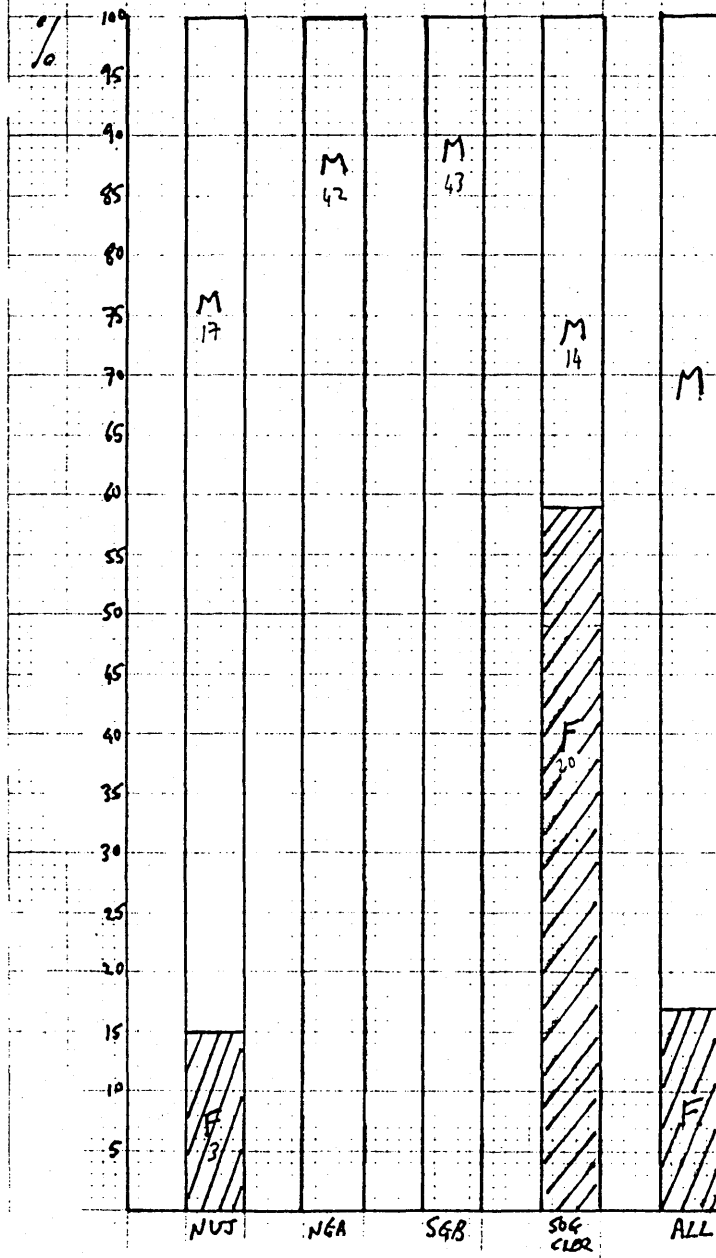
- A. Profile of Respondents:
  - 1. Age
  - 2. Sex
  - 3. Apprenticed/indentured (journalist & craft only)
  - 4. Experience in print industry/length of union membership (clerical only)
  
- B. Work Orientation of Workgroups (journalist & craft only)
  - 1. Importance of skills
  - 2. Importance of control over the labour process
  - 3. Importance of wages
  - 4. Importance of job security
  - 5. Importance of job satisfaction
  
- C. Attitude Towards New Technology
  - 1. Experience of previous introductions of new technology: regarding skills, job satisfaction, wages and stress
  - 2. Expectations of future introductions of new technology regarding: skills, job satisfaction, wages and stress
  - 3. Previous experience & future expectations compared: regarding all four variables combined
  
- D. Attitude Towards Print/Newspaper Trade Unions Nationally
  - 1. Involvement with/importance of workers' trade union
  - 2. Opinion of national unions approach toward new technology
  - 3. Attitude towards print union merger
  
- E. Attitude Towards Other Categories of Workgroup: perception of impact of new technology at shop-floor level; attitudes towards pay differentials; and attitudes towards job demarcation
  
- F. Male Workers Attitude Towards Women Workers (journalist & craft male workers only)
  - 1. Effect on wage levels; job demarcation; job security; and trade union strength
  - 2. All four variables combined
  
- G. F/MOC Survey: Changes in Inter-Chapel Collective Bargaining Structures Due to New Technology
  - 1. Phase of collective bargaining/consultation involvement
  - 2. Extent of collective bargaining/consultation re new technology in relations to other issues
  - 3. Changes in chapel relations re new technology
  - 4. Joint chapel collective bargaining re new technology
  - 5. Joint chapel collective bargaining re other issues
  - 6. Joint chapel consultation re new technology
  - 7. Joint chapel consultation re other issues
  - 8. Change in representative structure because of new technology

A. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

No. 1: Age

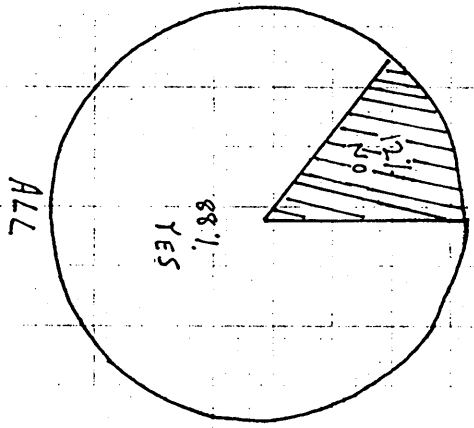
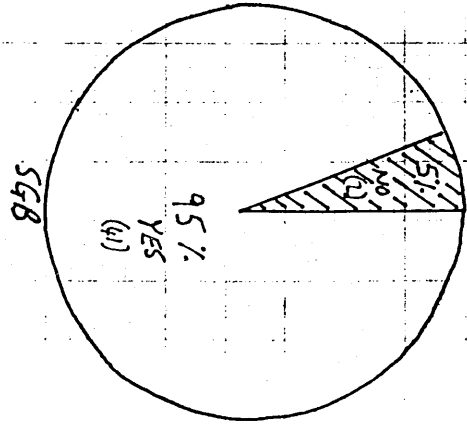
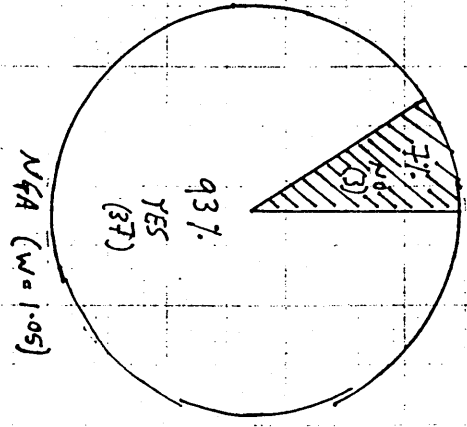
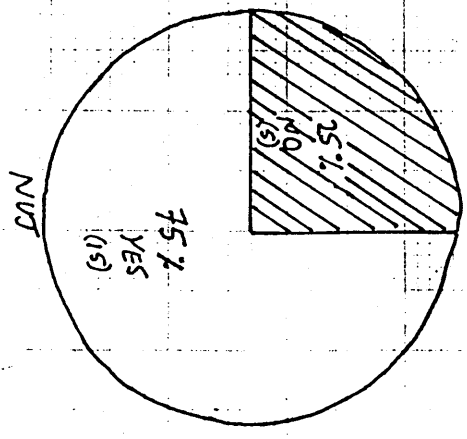


PROFILPOF RESPONDENTS  
 No. 2: Sex



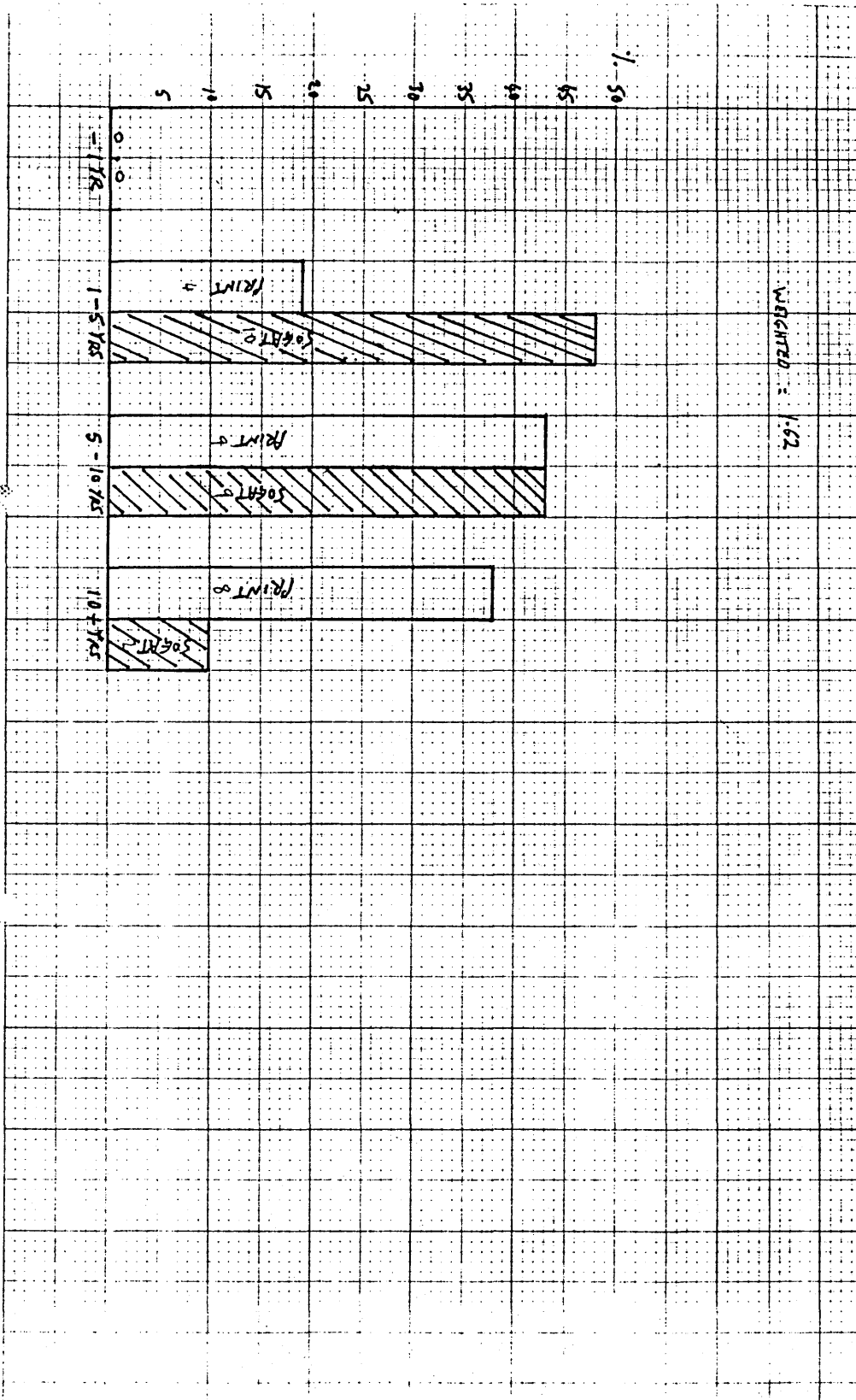
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

No. 3: Apprenticed/Indentured



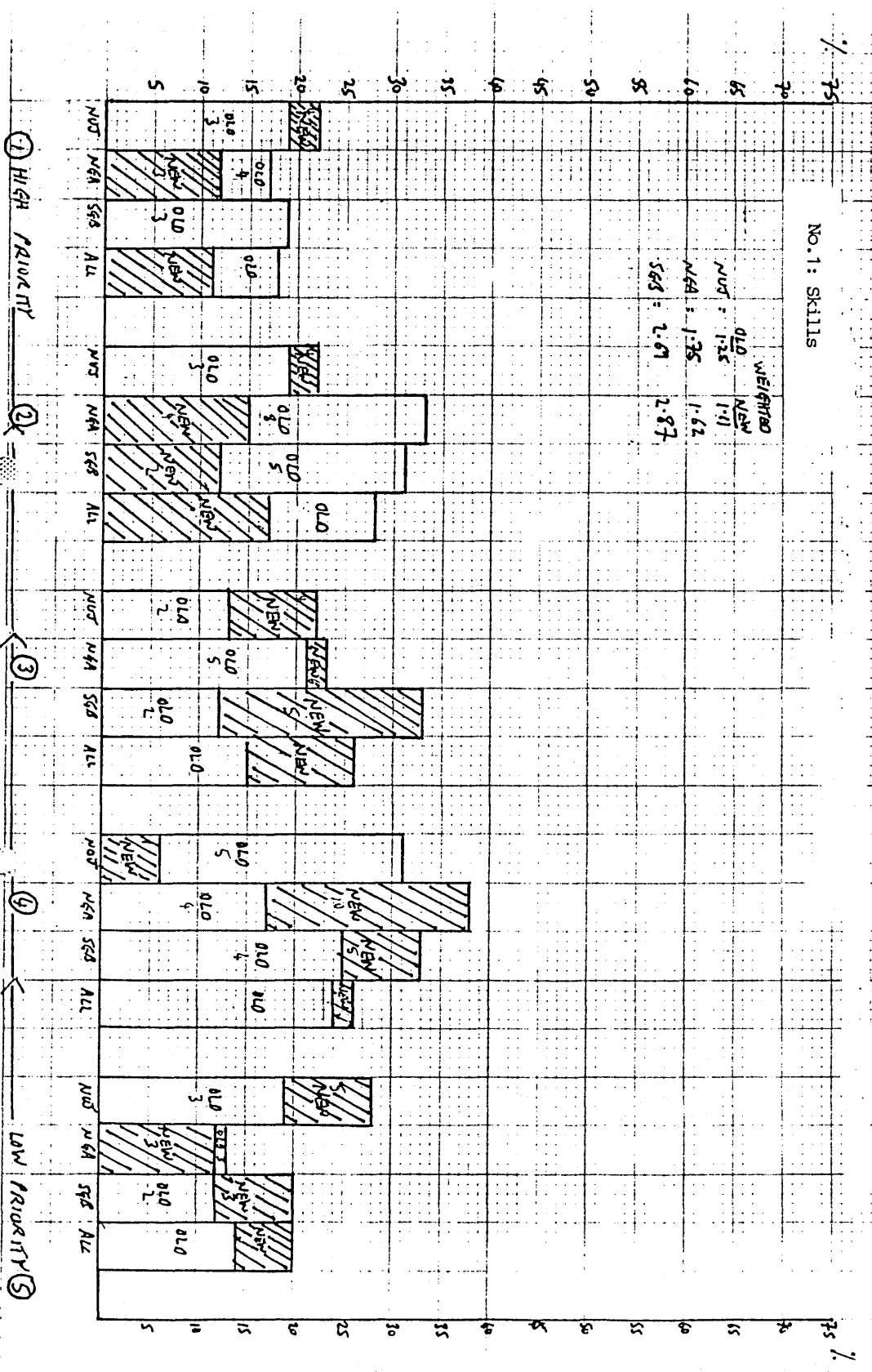
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

No. 4: Experience in Print Industry/  
Length of SOGAT membership

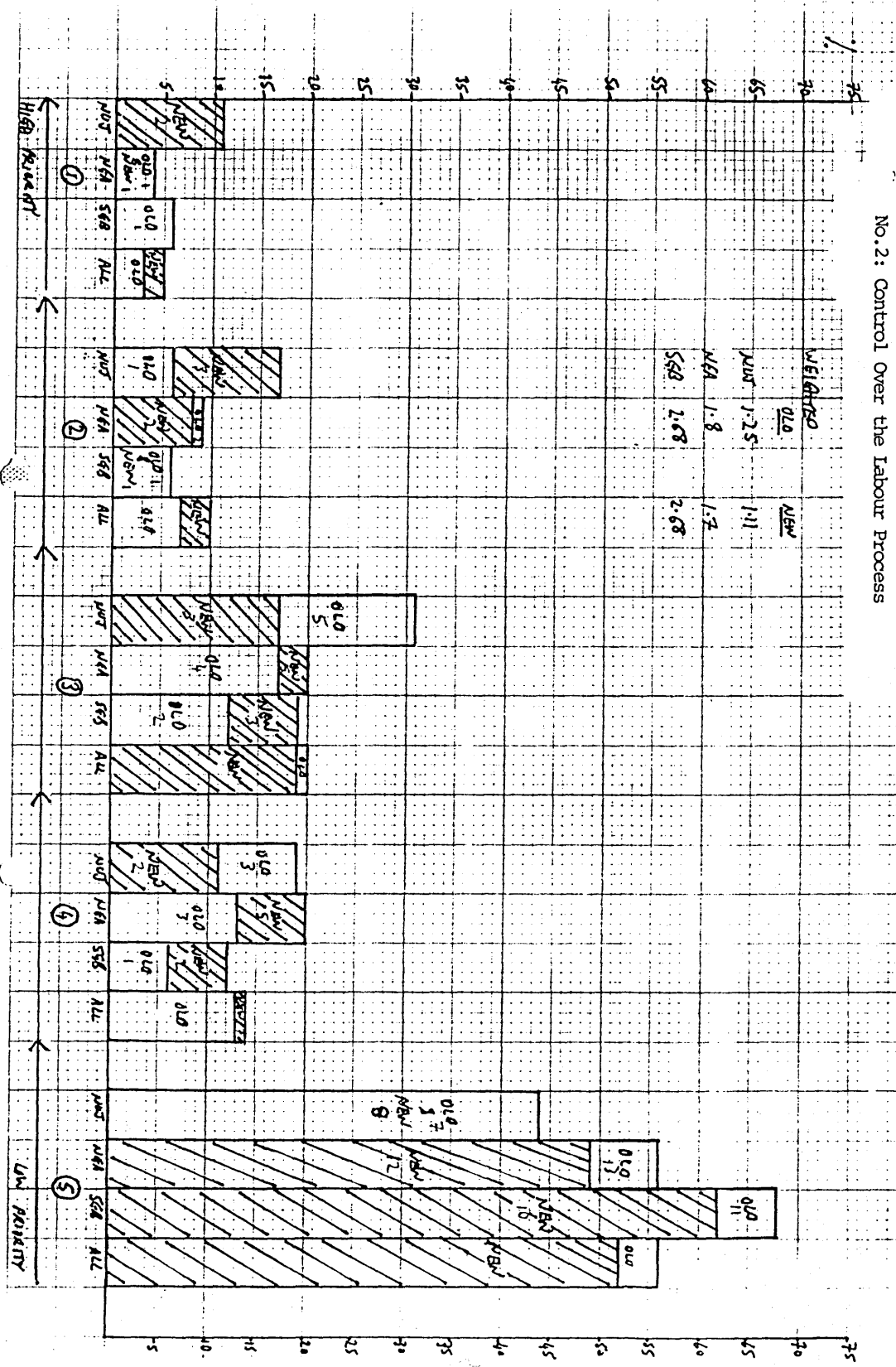




B. WORK ORIENTATION OF JOURNALIST & CRAFT GROUPS

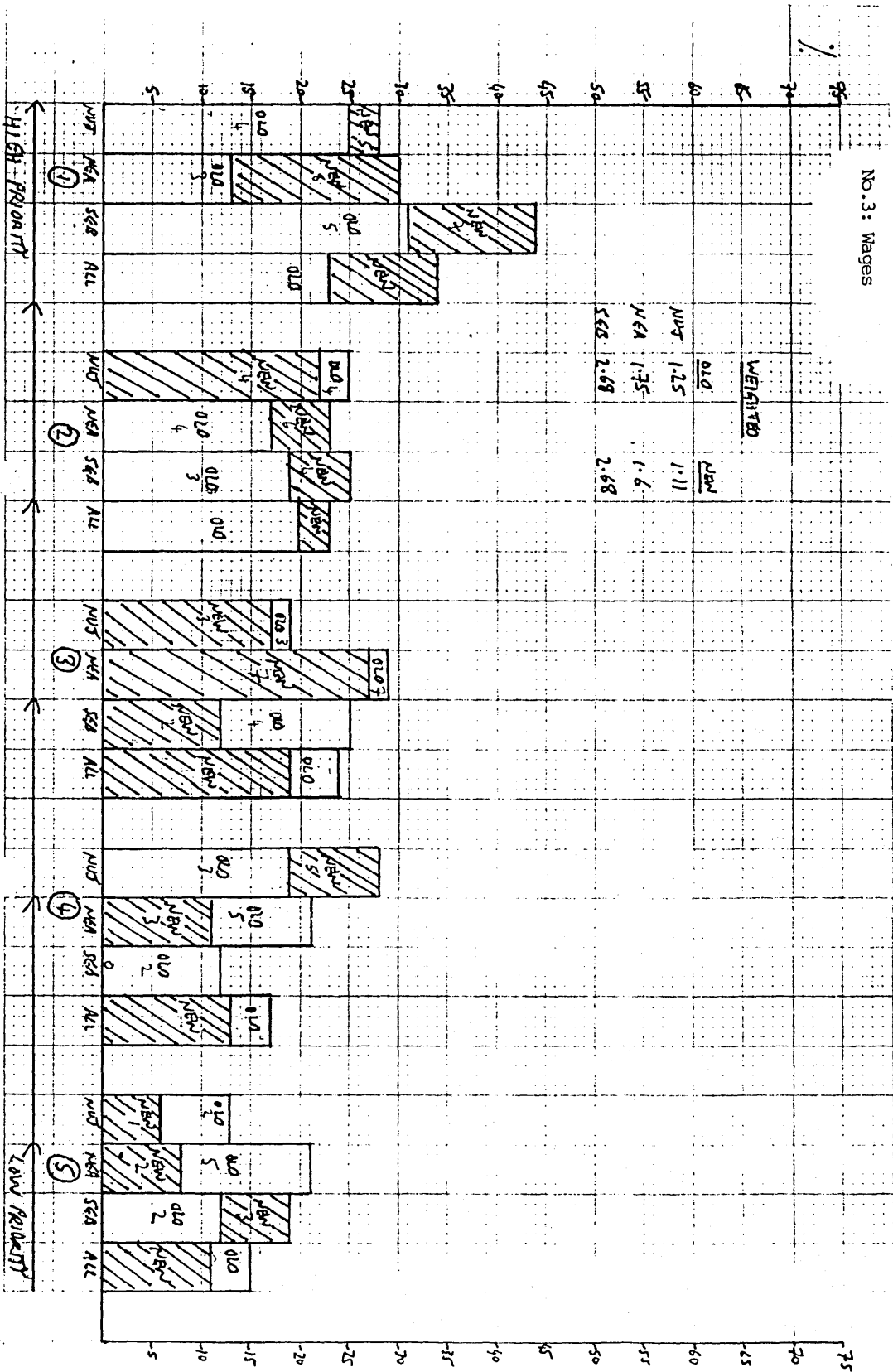


No. 2: Control Over the Labour Process



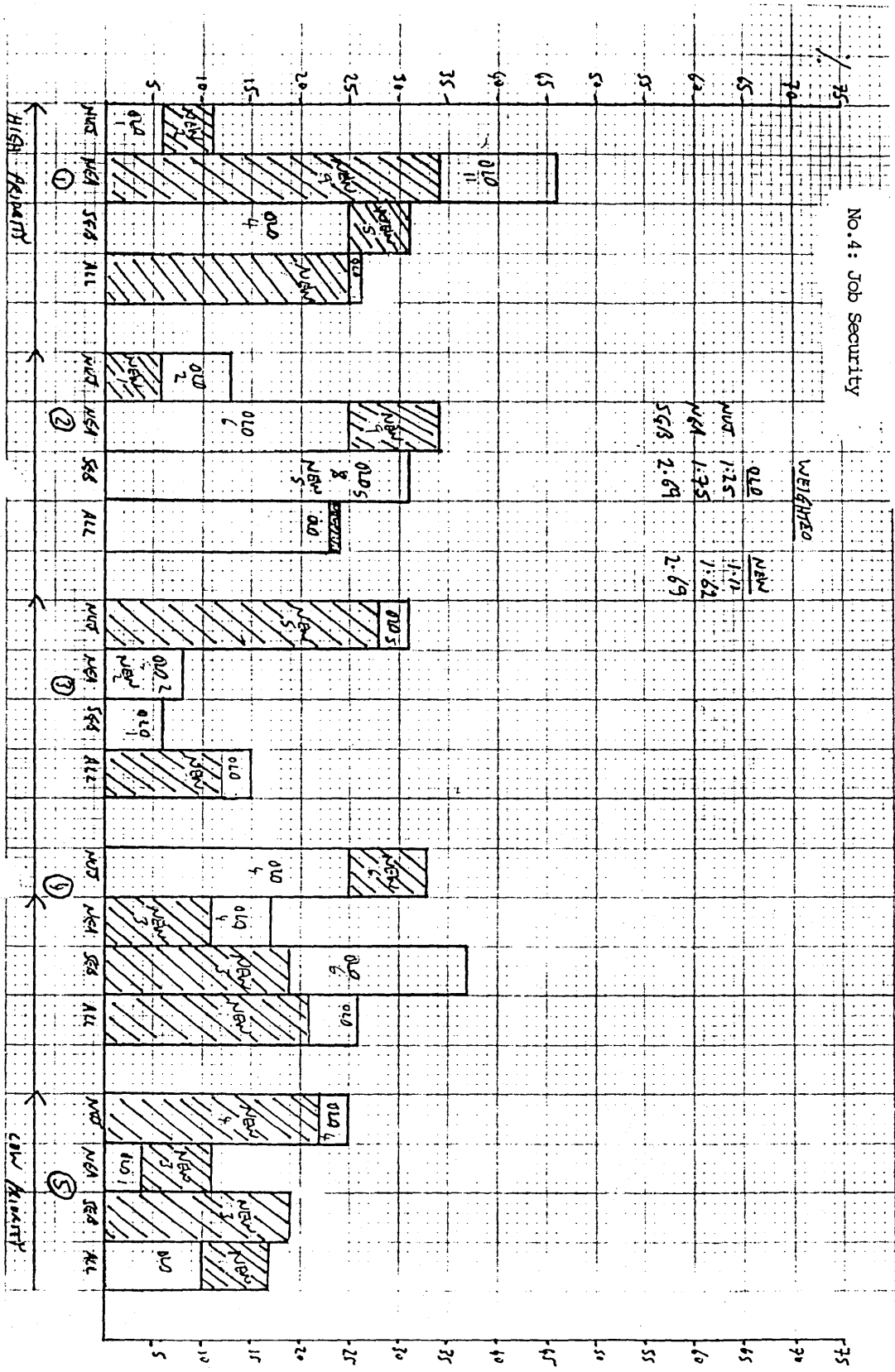
WORK ORIENTATION OF JOURNALIST & CRAFT GROUPS

No. 3: Wages



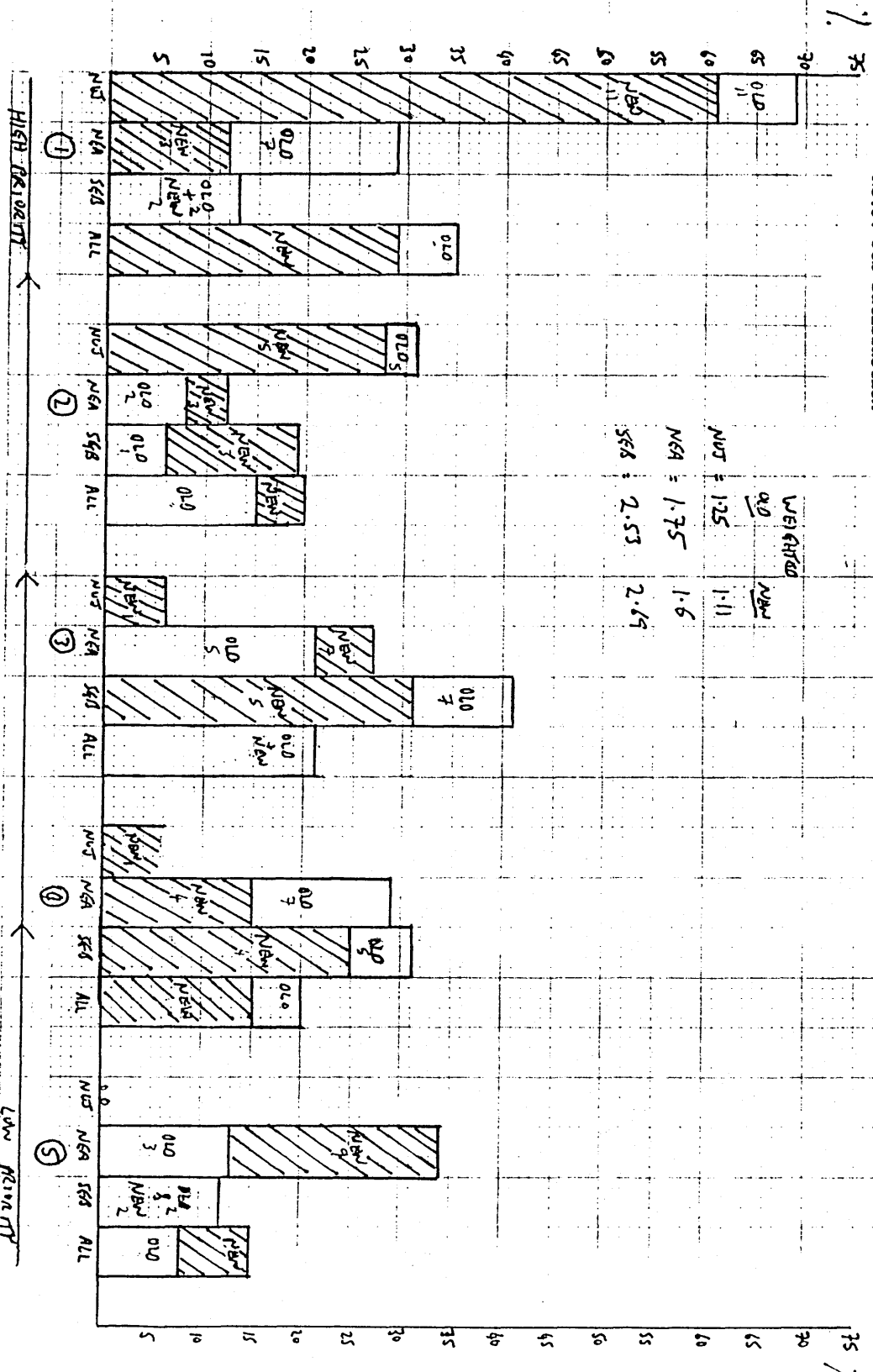
WORK ORIENTATION OF JOURNALIST & CRAFT GROUPS

No.4: Job Security



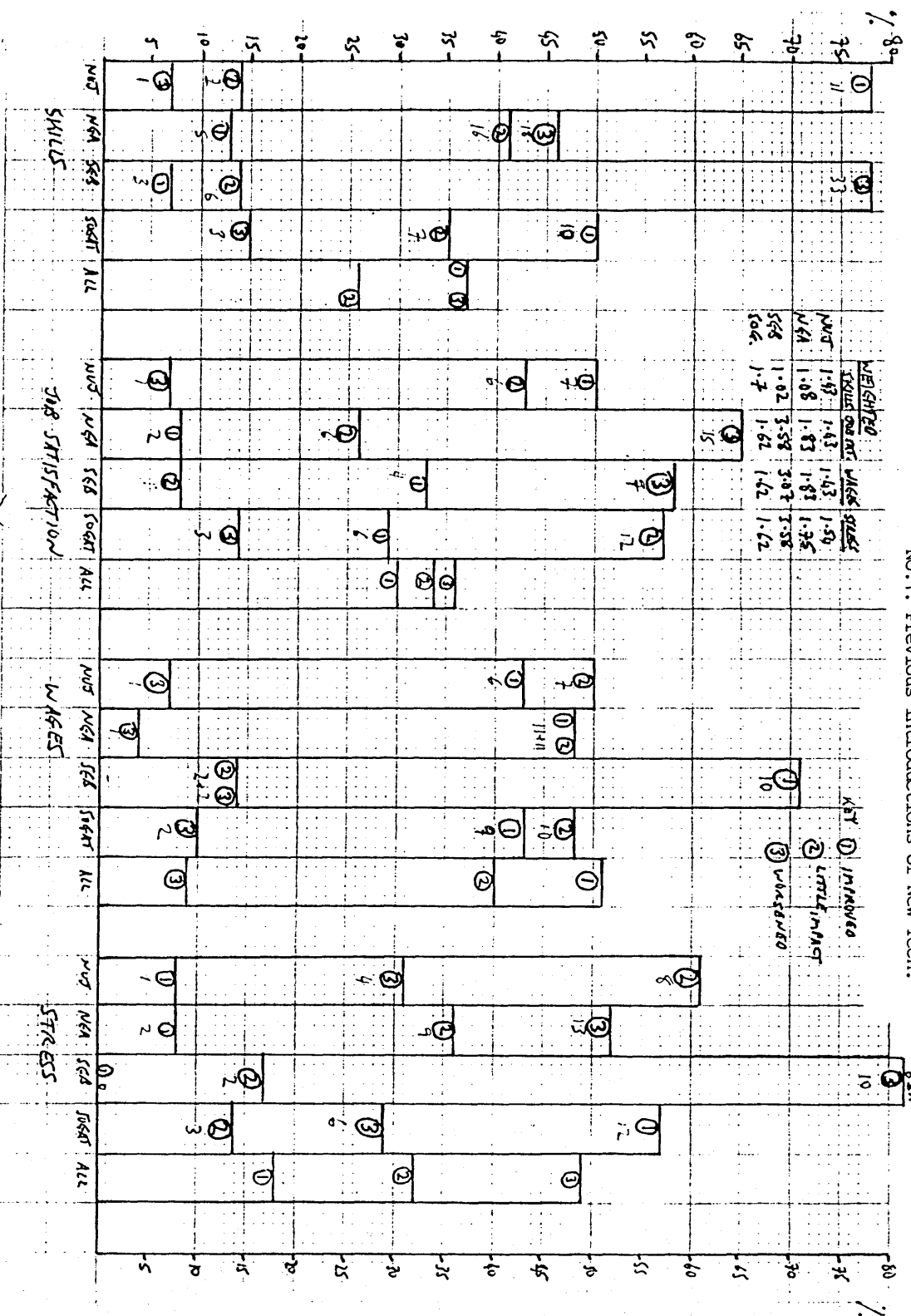
WORK ORGANIZATION OF JOURNALIST & WRITER GROUPS

No.5: Job Satisfaction



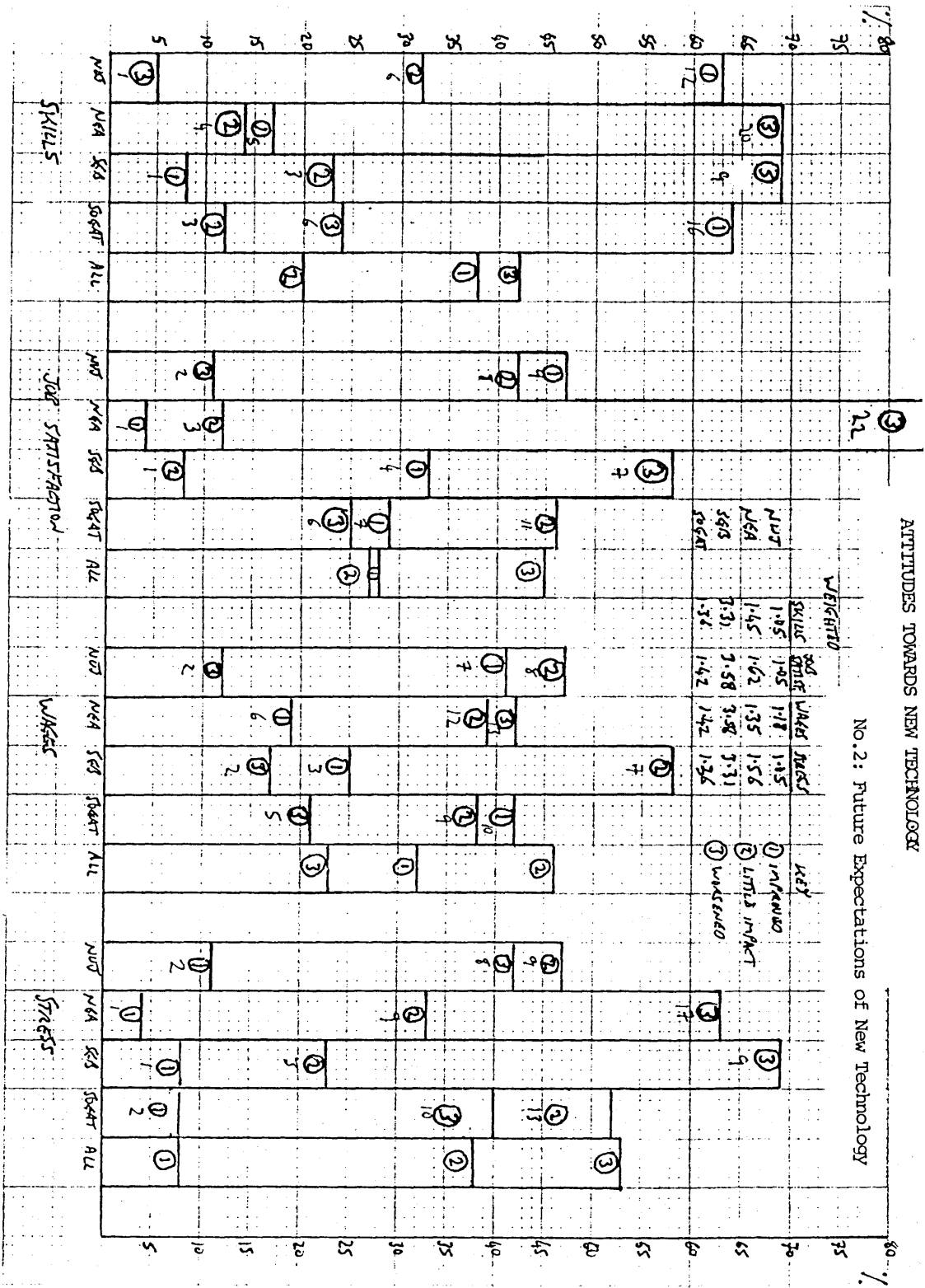
C. ATTITUDE TOWARDS NEW TECHNOLOGY

No. 1: Previous Introductions of New Tech.



ATTITUDES TOWARDS NEW TECHNOLOGY

No. 2: Future Expectations of New Technology



ATTITUDE TOWARDS NEW TECHNOLOGY

No.3: All Responses to Questions 1, 2, 3 & 4

| No. | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 | Q9 | Q10 | WEIGHTED |     | KEY |                 |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----------|-----|-----|-----------------|
|     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | RAW      | AVG |     |                 |
| 1   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  | ① IMPROVED      |
| 2   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  | ② LITTLE IMPACT |
| 3   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  | ③ WORSENERD     |
| 4   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 5   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 6   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 7   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 8   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 9   | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 10  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 11  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 12  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 13  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 14  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 15  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 16  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 17  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 18  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
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| 23  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 24  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 25  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 26  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
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| 28  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
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| 47  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 48  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 49  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 50  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 51  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 52  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 53  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 54  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 55  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 56  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 57  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 58  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 59  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 60  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 61  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 62  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 63  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 64  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 65  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 66  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 67  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 68  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 69  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 70  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 71  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 72  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 73  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 74  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 75  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 76  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 77  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 78  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 79  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |
| 80  | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10  | 10       | 10  | 10  |                 |

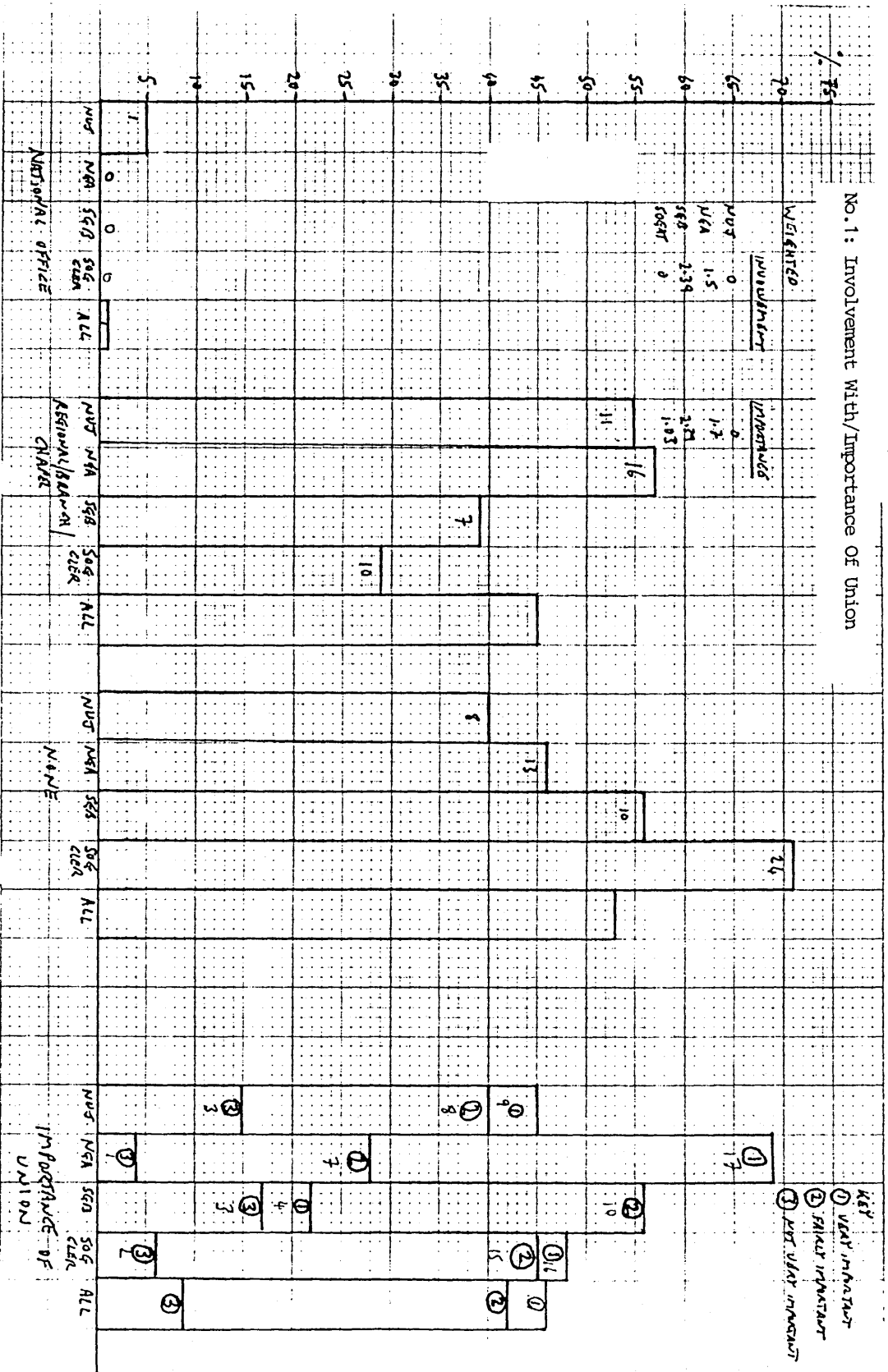
12th. SEMESTER  
 NUT  
 12th. SEMESTER  
 NGA  
 12th. SEMESTER  
 SSB  
 12th. SEMESTER  
 SOGAT  
 12th. SEMESTER  
 ALL

KEY  
 ① IMPROVED  
 ② LITTLE IMPACT  
 ③ WORSENERD



D. ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRINT/NEWSPAPER TRADE UNIONS

No. 1: Involvement With/Importance Of Union

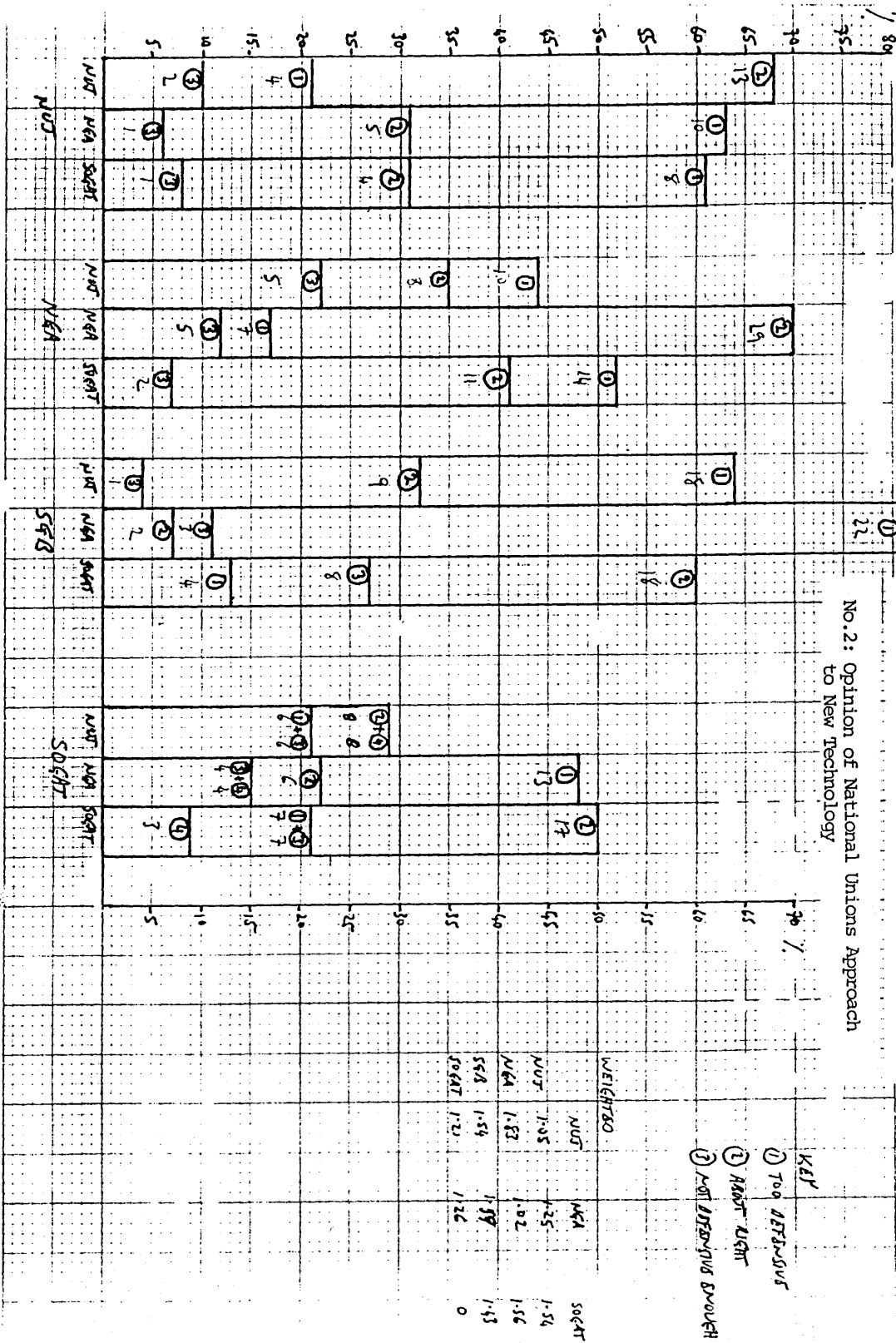


KEY  
 ① VERY IMPORTANT  
 ② SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT  
 ③ NOT VERY IMPORTANT

IMPORTANCE OF UNION

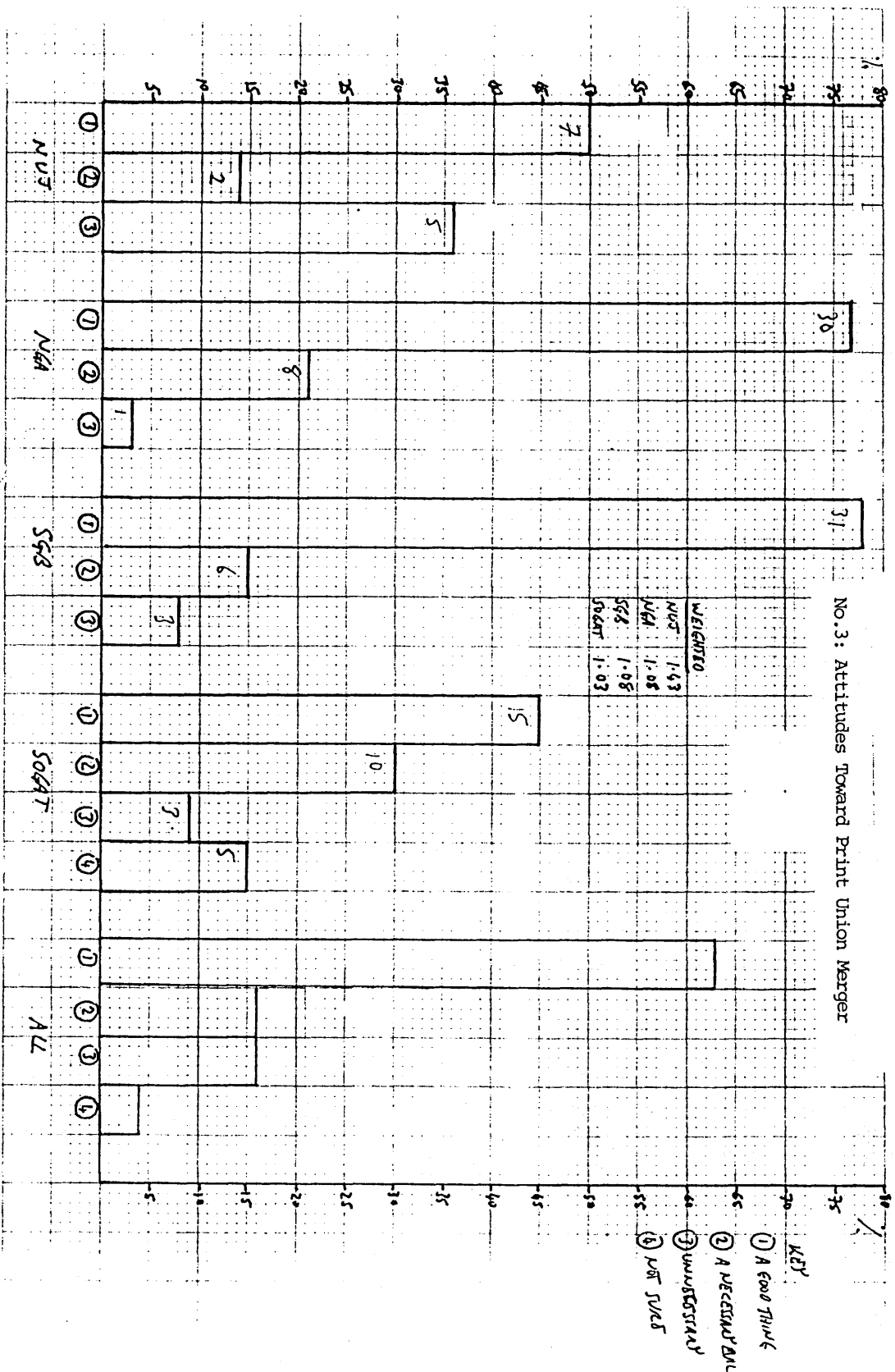
ATTITUDES TOWARDS PRINT/NEWSPAPER TRADE UNIONS

No. 2: Opinion of National Unions Approach to New Technology

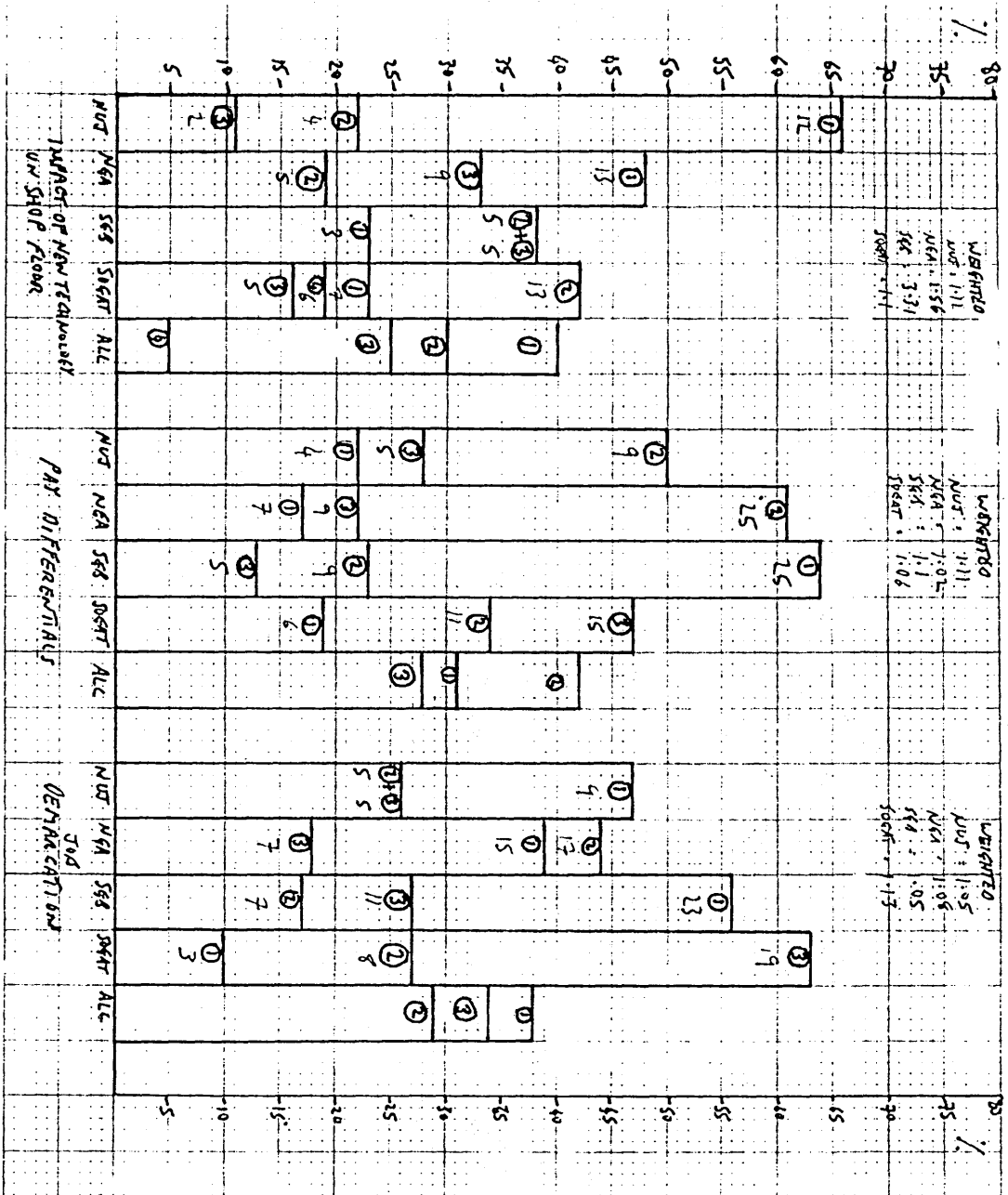


ATTITUDES TOWARD PRINT/NEWSPAPER TRADE UNIONS

No.3: Attitudes Toward Print Union Merger



E. ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHER WORKGROUPS

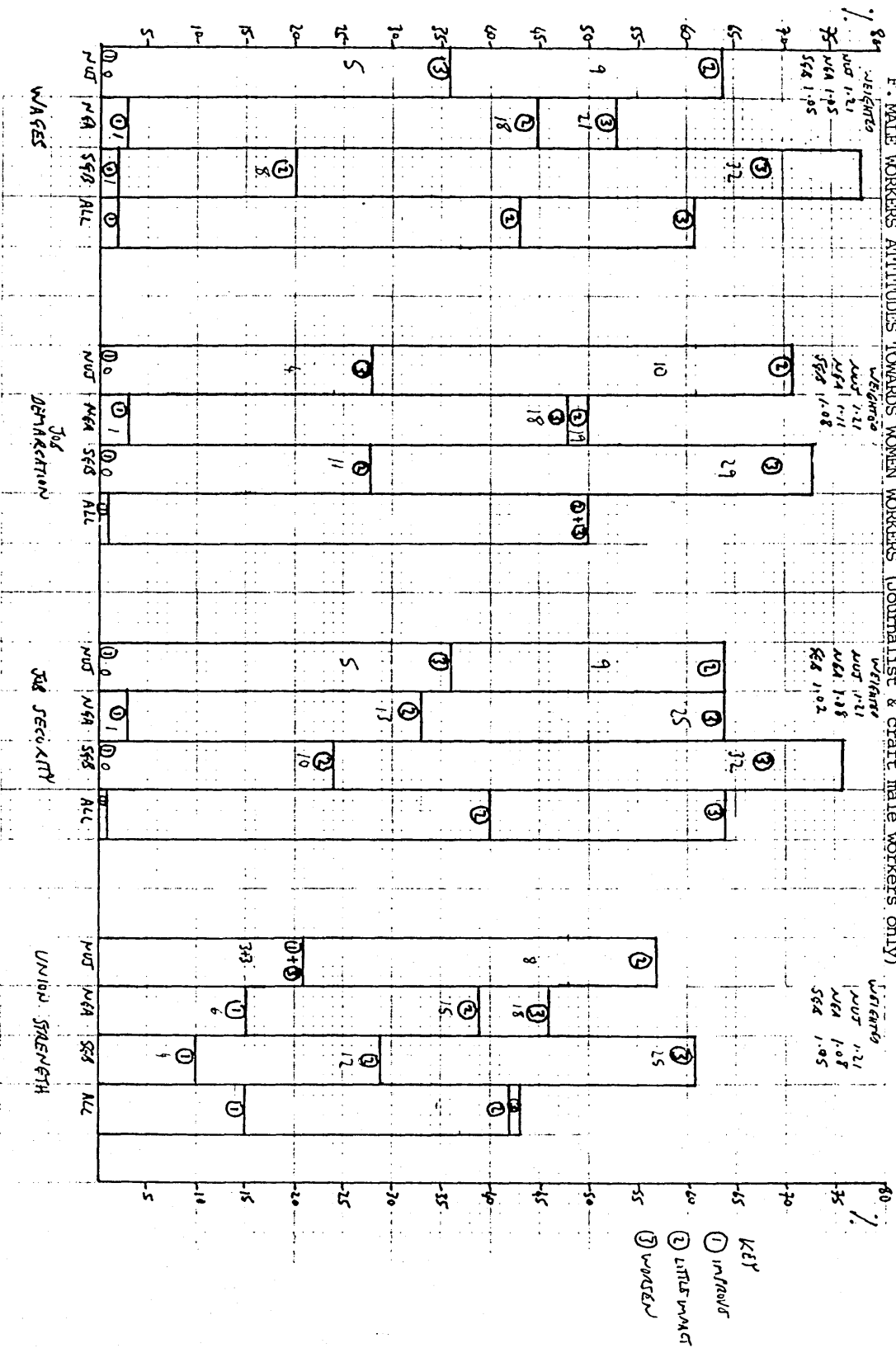


KEY: (Star/Book Impact)  
 ① IMPACT  
 ② LIMIT IMPACT  
 ③ WORKBENCH  
 ④ HOT SPOT

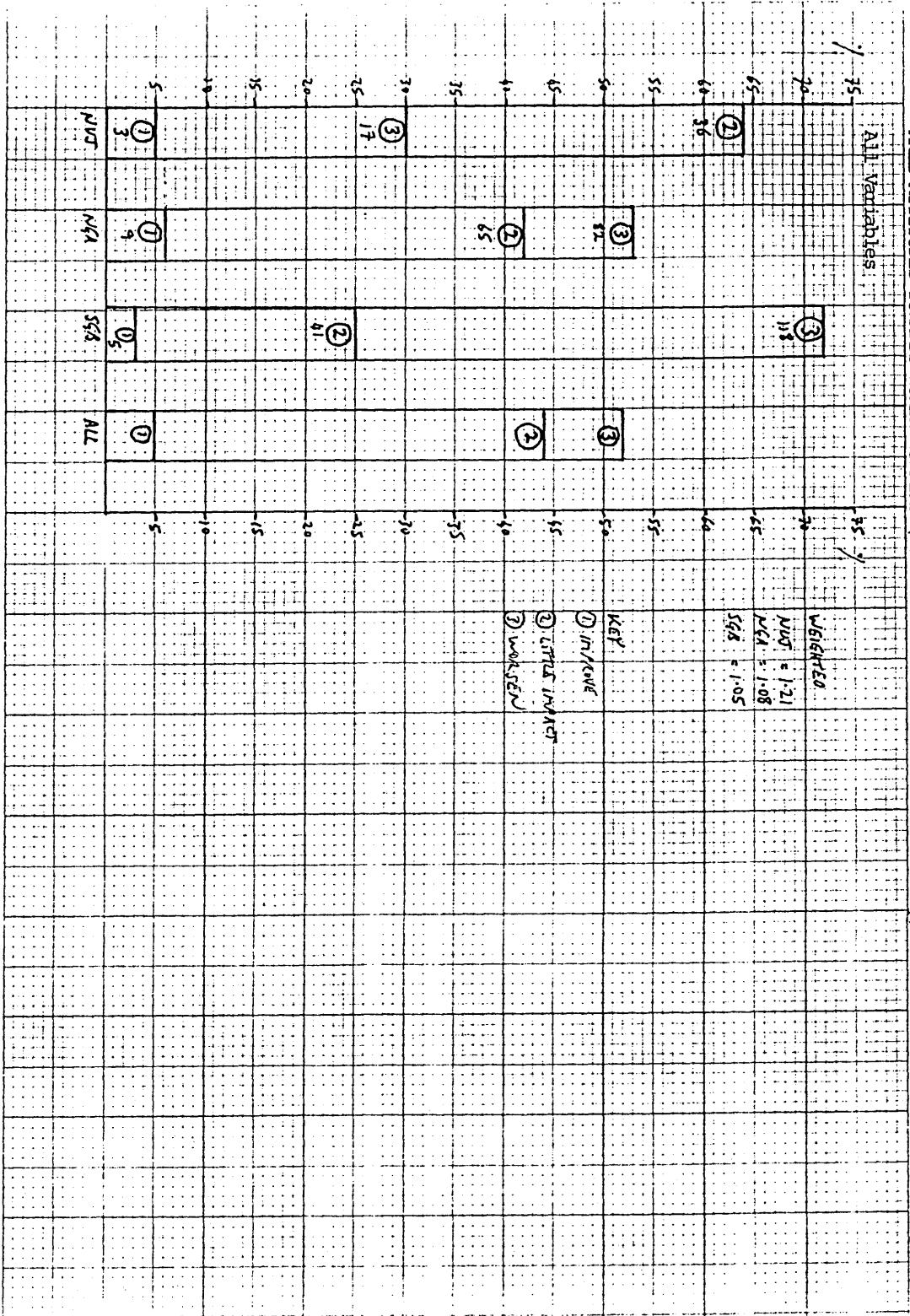
KEY: (PAY DIFFS)  
 ① MAINTAIN  
 ② NARROW  
 ③ WIDE-RANGE

KEY: (JOB DEMANDS)  
 ① TRANSITIONAL/TRANSITIVE MAINTENANCE  
 ② ROBOTIC ASSEMBLY SKILLED/SEMISKILLED STRUCTURE  
 ③ CONVERTS FLEXIBILITY

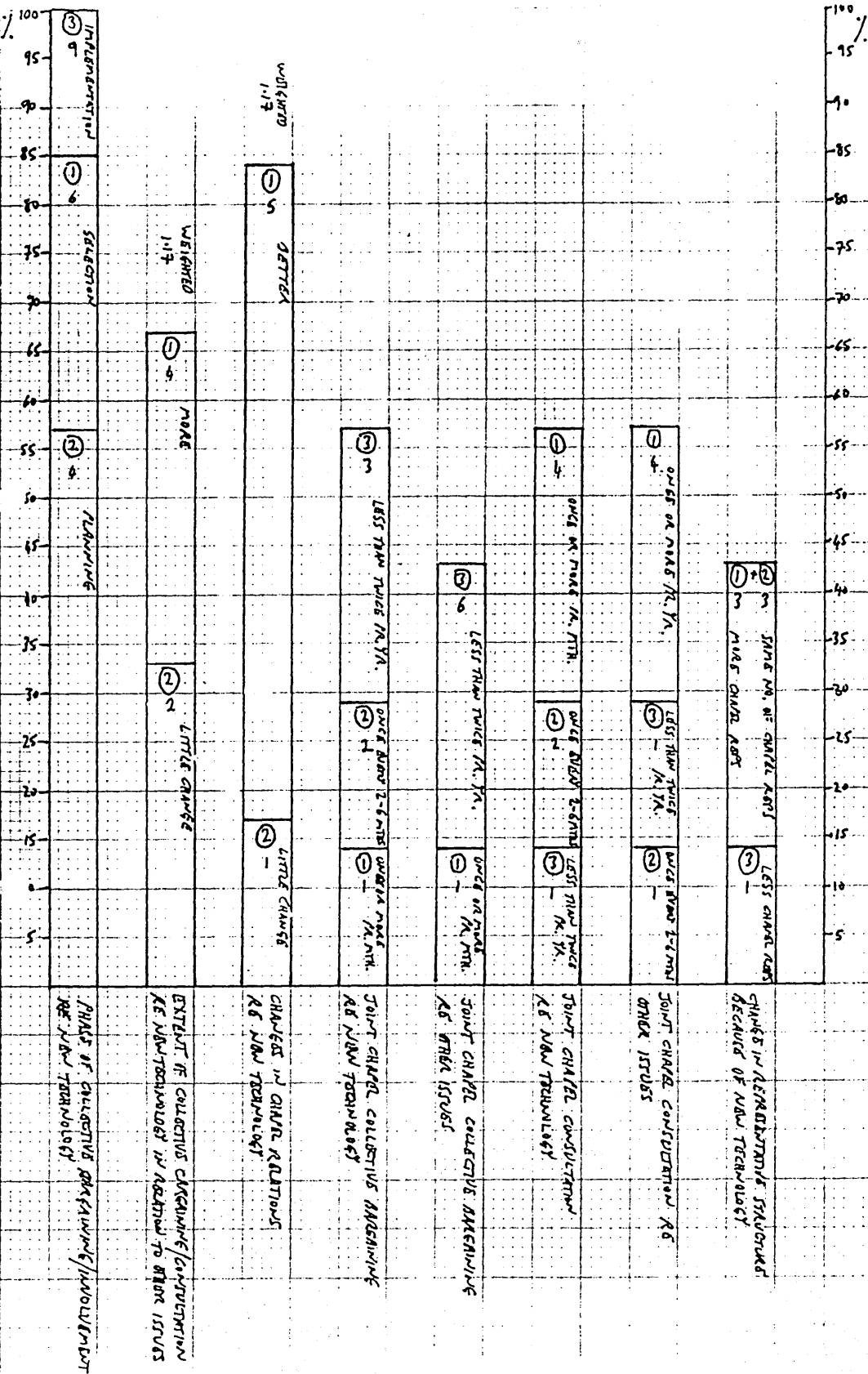
E. MALE WORKERS ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN WORKERS (Journalist & craft male workers only)



MALE ATTITUDES TOWARDS WOMEN WORKERS (Journalist & craft male workers only)



G. F/MOC SURVEY: Changes in Inter-Chapel Collective Bargaining Structure Due to New Technology



APPENDIX 7

BREAKDOWN of QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS by NEWSPAPER & WORKER CATEGORY

| <u>Newspaper</u> | <u>Worker Category</u> |          |              |     | Total |
|------------------|------------------------|----------|--------------|-----|-------|
|                  | Journalist             | Clerical | Craft<br>NGA | SGB |       |
| Paper 1          | 10                     | 13       | 10           | -   | 33    |
| Paper 2          | 10                     | 16       | 17           | -   | 43    |
| Paper 3          | -                      | 5        | 15           | 30  | 50    |
| Paper 4          | -                      | -        | -            | 13  | 13    |
| -----            |                        |          |              |     |       |
| Total            | 20                     | 34       | 42           | 43  | 139   |



APPENDIX 8

BREAKDOWN of INTERVIEWS/GROUP DISCUSSIONS by LOCATION & WORKER CATEGORY

| <u>Location</u>      | <u>Worker/Union Category</u> |          |              |     | Mgt | Total |
|----------------------|------------------------------|----------|--------------|-----|-----|-------|
|                      | Journal.                     | Clerical | Craft<br>NGA | SGB |     |       |
| Paper 1              | 9                            | 4        | 12           | -   | 1   | 26    |
| Paper 2              | 7                            | 7        | 8            | -   | 4   | 26    |
| Paper 3              | -                            | -        | 13           | 22  | 1   | 36    |
| Paper 4              | -                            | -        | -            | 2   | 1   | 3     |
| Wapping<br>Activists | -                            | 2        | 1            | -   | -   | 3     |
| Union<br>officials   | 1                            | 1        | 1            | 1   | -   | 4     |
| -----                |                              |          |              |     |     |       |
| Total                | 17                           | 14       | 35           | 25  | 7   | 98    |

\* The above table only includes those people interviewed on an official basis, normally tape recorded, and does not include countless numbers of workers, line and higher managers, trade union representatives, and 'News International' pickets spoken to throughout the period of the research between summer of 1985 and Autumn of 1988. To these and all of those represented in the table above, the research is indebted to.

APPENDIX 9

PRINT INDUSTRY TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP FIGURES: 1890-1987

Total Print Union Membership (Union Density in Print Industry)

1890 - 40,000 (24%)  
 1914 - 90,000 (31%)  
 1920 - 190,000 (in PKTF)  
 1939 - 217,000 (in PKTF)  
 1945 - 205,000 (in PKTF)  
 1946 - 219,000 (in PKTF)  
 1949 - 270,000 (40%)  
 1974 - 415,374 (70%)

Organised Journalists

| <u>Year</u> | <u>NUJ</u> | <u>IoJ</u> |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| 1886        | -          | 250 (NAJ)  |
| 1900        | -          | 2930       |
| 1907        | 738        | -          |
| 1915        | 3127       | 1989       |
| 1920        | 4888       | 2119       |
| 1925        | 4827       | 2036       |
| 1930        | 5574       | 2164       |
| 1935        | 5919       | 2465       |
| 1940        | 7092       | 2758       |
| 1945        | 8400       | 2878       |
| 1950        | 11684      | 2653       |
| 1955        | 13364      | 2619       |
| 1960        | 15244      | 2660       |
| 1965        | 19621      | 2400       |
| 1966        | 19613      | -          |
| 1967        | 19613      | -          |
| 1968        | 21290      | -          |
| 1969        | 22404      | -          |
| 1970        | 24801      | 2300       |
| 1971        | 26792      | -          |
| 1972        | 27587      | -          |
| 1973        | 28082      | -          |
| 1974        | 29433      | -          |
| 1975        | 28274      | 2396       |
| 1980        | 32637      | -          |
| 1986        | 32260      | 2000       |
| 1987        | 30000      | -          |

SOGAT '82 and its Forebears

| <u>Year</u> | <u>NATSOFA</u> | <u>NUFPW</u> | <u>NUB</u>       | <u>STA</u> | <u>S&amp;DTU</u> | <u>MC&amp;T</u> |
|-------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1889        |                |              | 2242             | 3000       |                  |                 |
| 1900        |                |              |                  | 4000       |                  |                 |
| 1901        |                |              | 4085             |            |                  |                 |
| 1914        | 6000           | 15000        |                  | 5000       |                  |                 |
| 1918        |                |              | 21700            |            |                  |                 |
| 1920        | 20000          | 70000        |                  |            |                  |                 |
|             |                |              | <u>NUFBMRPW</u>  |            |                  |                 |
| 1921        |                |              | 100000+          |            |                  |                 |
| 1926        | 20359          |              | 70000            |            |                  |                 |
| 1939        | 28000          |              | 90000+           |            |                  |                 |
| 1940        | 26956          |              | 81240            | 7000       |                  | 804             |
| 1947        |                |              | 100000+          |            |                  |                 |
| 1948        |                |              | 120000           |            |                  |                 |
| 1951        |                |              | 141728           |            |                  |                 |
| 1955        |                |              | 150000+          |            |                  |                 |
| 1957        |                |              | 163000           |            |                  |                 |
| 1958        |                |              |                  | 7462       |                  |                 |
| 1962        |                |              |                  |            |                  | 1000            |
| 1964        | 46351          |              |                  |            |                  |                 |
|             |                |              | <u>SOGAT</u>     |            |                  |                 |
| 1966        |                |              | 224452           | 7130       | 1539             |                 |
| 1967        |                |              |                  |            | 3333             |                 |
| 1968        |                |              | 229089           | 7221       | 1481             |                 |
| 1969        |                |              | 235927           | 7050       | 1731             |                 |
|             | <u>NATSOFA</u> | <u>SOGAT</u> |                  |            |                  |                 |
| 1970        | 50981          | 192920       |                  | 7050       | 2026             |                 |
| 1971        | 50587          | 183276       |                  | 6987       | 2300             |                 |
| 1972        | 55691          | 183276       |                  | 6697       | 4000+            |                 |
| 1973        | 56146          | 187580       |                  | 6702       |                  |                 |
| 1974        | 55992          | 193804       |                  | 6418 (SGA) |                  |                 |
|             |                |              | <u>SOGAT '75</u> |            |                  |                 |
| 1975        |                |              | 190473           |            |                  |                 |
| 1976        |                |              | 195107           |            |                  |                 |
| 1977        |                |              | 198182           |            |                  |                 |
| 1978        |                |              | 201665           |            |                  |                 |
| 1979        |                |              | 205784           |            |                  |                 |
| 1980        |                |              | 199877           |            |                  |                 |
| 1981        | 53260          |              | 184910           |            |                  |                 |
| 1982        | 51906          |              | 178176           |            |                  |                 |
|             |                |              | <u>SOGAT '82</u> |            |                  |                 |
| 1983        |                |              | 216639           |            |                  |                 |
| 1984        |                |              | 210118           |            |                  |                 |
| 1985        |                |              | 206898           |            |                  |                 |
| 1986        |                |              | 202019           |            |                  |                 |
| 1987        |                |              | 196231           |            |                  |                 |

NGA '82 & its Forebears

| <u>Year</u> | <u>TA</u>  | <u>LSC</u>     | <u>FMMS</u> | <u>ACF</u> | <u>ASLP</u> | <u>SLADE</u> |
|-------------|------------|----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1890        | 9556       | 8910           | 400+ (AAP)  |            |             |              |
| 1900        | 16179      | 11287          |             |            |             |              |
| 1914        | 23783      | 12384          |             |            |             |              |
| 1920        | 31234      | 15500          |             |            |             |              |
| 1925        | 31918      | 14750          |             |            |             |              |
| 1927        | 31953      | 14670          |             |            |             |              |
| 1930        | 34098      | 14800          |             |            |             |              |
| 1934        | 35163      | 14290          |             |            |             |              |
| 1935        | 35784      | 14180          |             |            |             |              |
| 1936        | 36482      | 14130          |             |            |             |              |
| 1939        | 38277      | 14255          |             |            |             |              |
| 1940        | 39384      | 13996          | 4670        | 1455       | 7780        | 8300         |
| 628         |            |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1945        | 41000      | 12865          |             |            |             |              |
| 1946        | 43381      | 13015          |             |            |             |              |
| 1947        | 44321      | 13100          |             |            |             |              |
| 1948        | 45664      |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1949        | 46511      |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1954        |            | 14000          | 5000        |            |             |              |
|             |            | <u>LTS</u>     |             |            |             |              |
| 1955        |            | 19000          |             |            |             |              |
| 1963        | 62601      |                |             |            |             |              |
|             | <u>NGA</u> |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1964        | 81937      |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1965        | 85551      |                |             | 1449       |             |              |
| 1540        |            |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1966        | 85805      |                |             |            |             | 16032        |
| 1967        | 90861      |                |             |            | 12987       |              |
| 1968        | 92066      |                |             |            | 13216       | 15959        |
| 1969        | 107373     |                |             |            |             | 16145        |
| 1970        | 107761     |                |             |            |             | 16579        |
| 1971        | 107708     |                |             |            |             | 16541        |
| 1972        | 108053     |                |             |            |             | 16293        |
| 1973        | 108296     |                |             |            |             | 16600        |
| 1974        | 108792     |                |             |            |             | 16925        |
| 1975        | 108676     |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1976        | 107723     |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1977        | 109438     |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1978        | 109904     |                |             |            |             | 25561        |
| 1979        | 111541     |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1980        | 116438     |                |             |            |             | 22388        |
| 1981        | 113905     |                |             |            |             |              |
| 1982        | 112299     |                |             |            |             | 25103        |
|             |            | <u>NGA '82</u> |             |            |             |              |
| 1983        |            | 133949         |             |            |             |              |
| 1984        |            | 131584         |             |            |             |              |
| 1985        |            | 131721         |             |            |             |              |
| 1986        |            | 131730         |             |            |             |              |
| 1987        |            | 130992         |             |            |             |              |

## APPENDIX 10

### PRINT INDUSTRY TRADE UNION FAMILY TREES

- Diagram 1 : National Union of Bookbinders & Machine  
Rulers (NUB&MR) [1786-1911]
- Diagram 2 : National Union of Printing & Paper Workers  
(NUP&PW) [1840-1919]
- Diagram 3 : Original Society of Papermakers (OSP)  
[1800-1837]
- Diagram 4 : Amalgamated Society of Papermakers (ASP)  
[1854-1894]
- Diagram 5 : Amalgamated Association of Pressmen (AAP)  
[1834-1891]

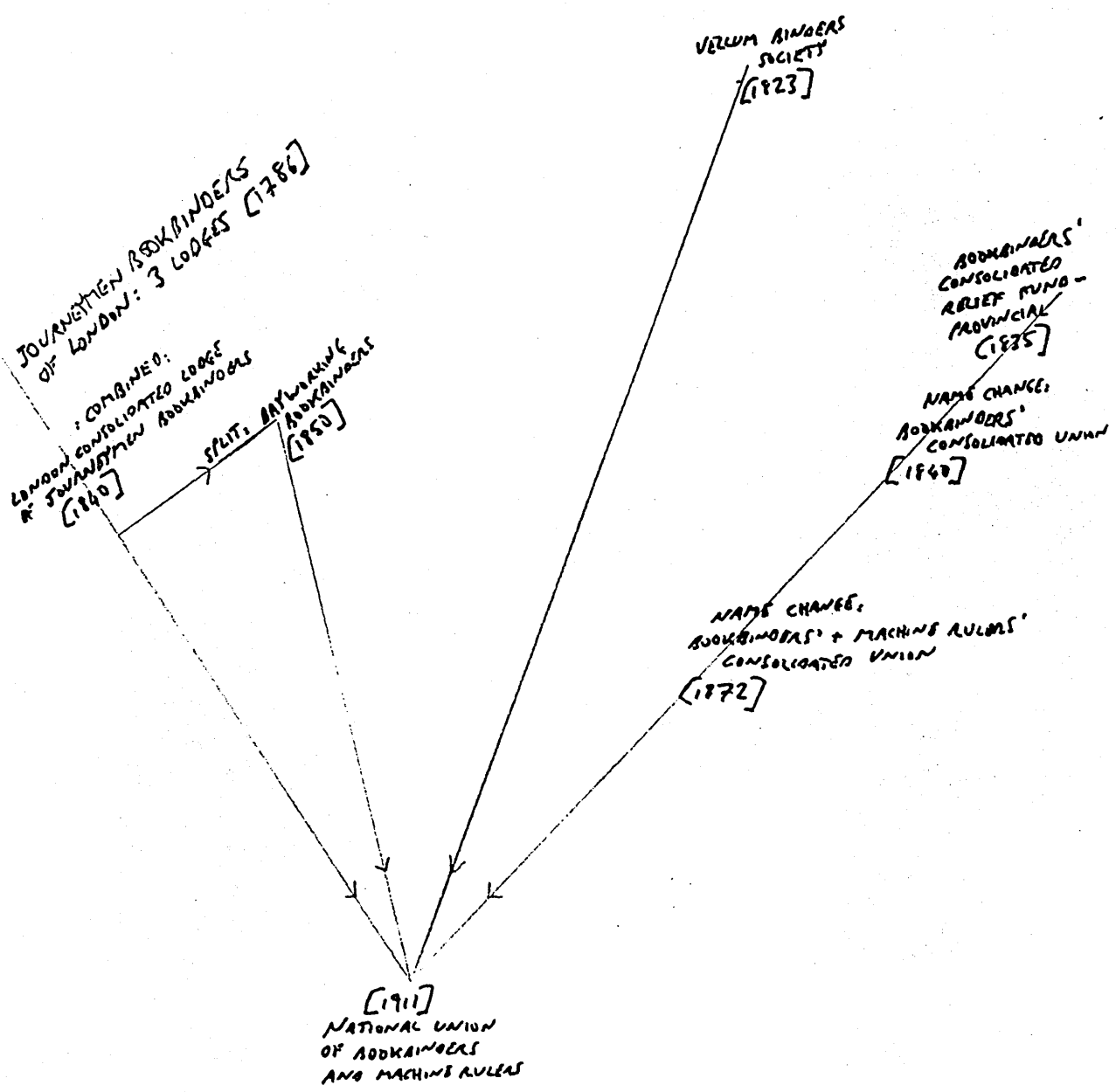


Diagram 1:  
National Union of Bookbinders & Machine Rulers [1786-1911]

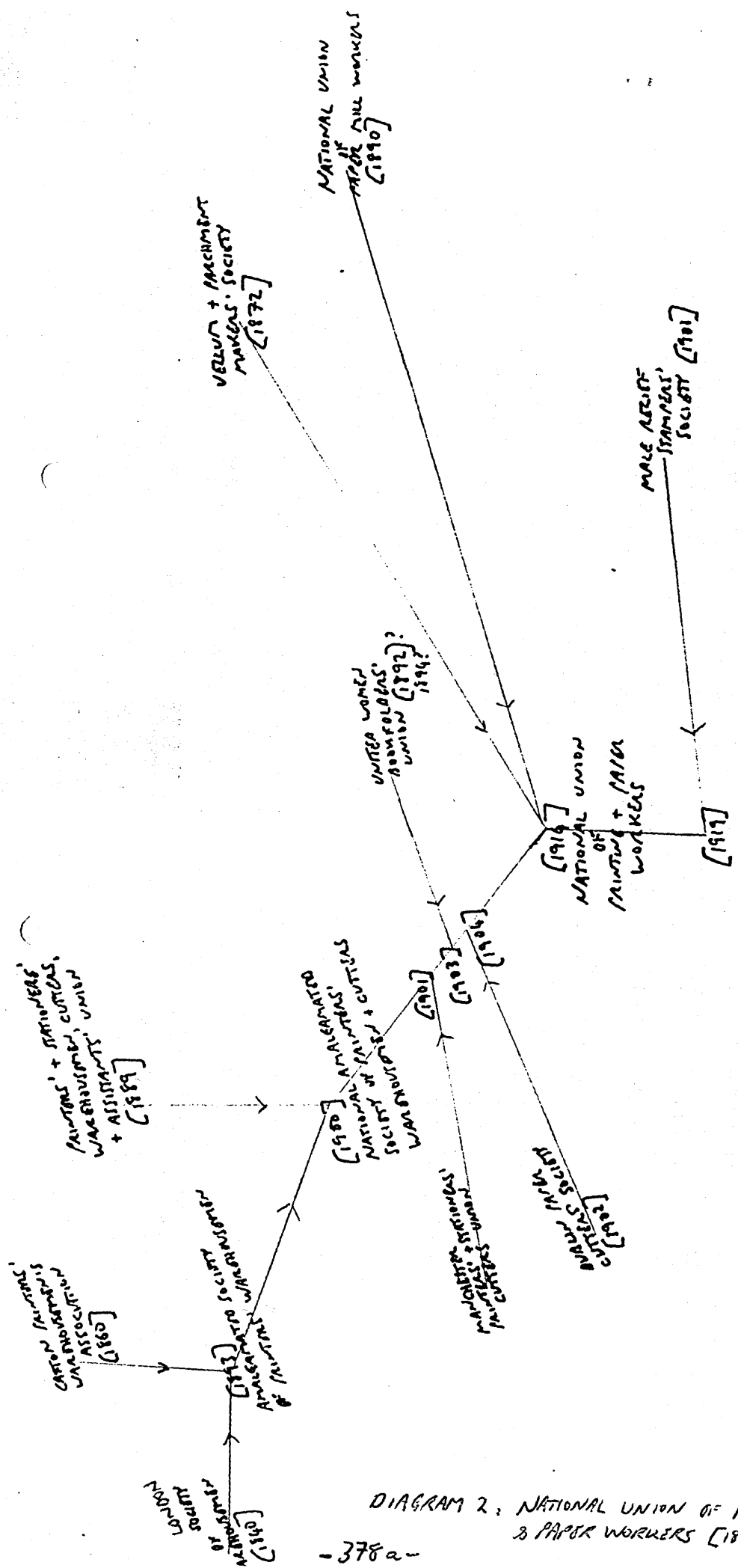


DIAGRAM 2: NATIONAL UNION OF PRINTING & PAPER WORKERS [1840-1919]

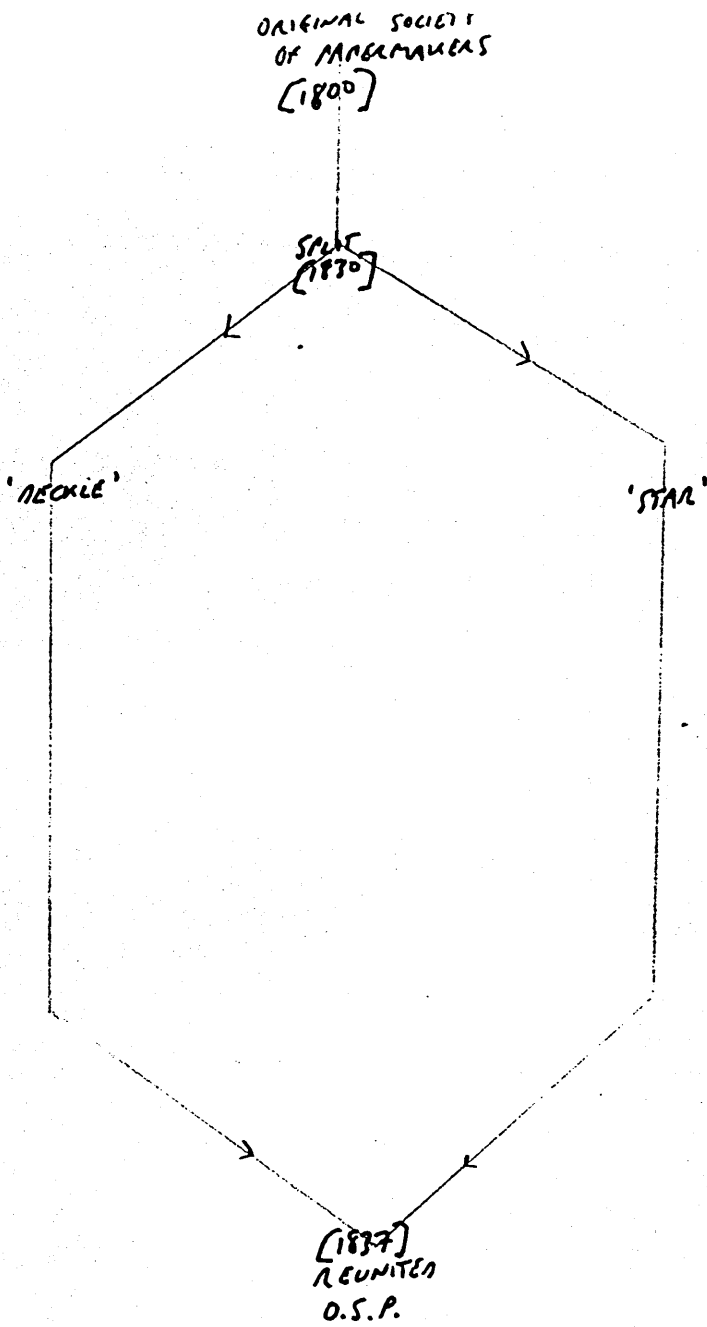


Diagram 3 : Original Society of Papermakers [1800-1837]



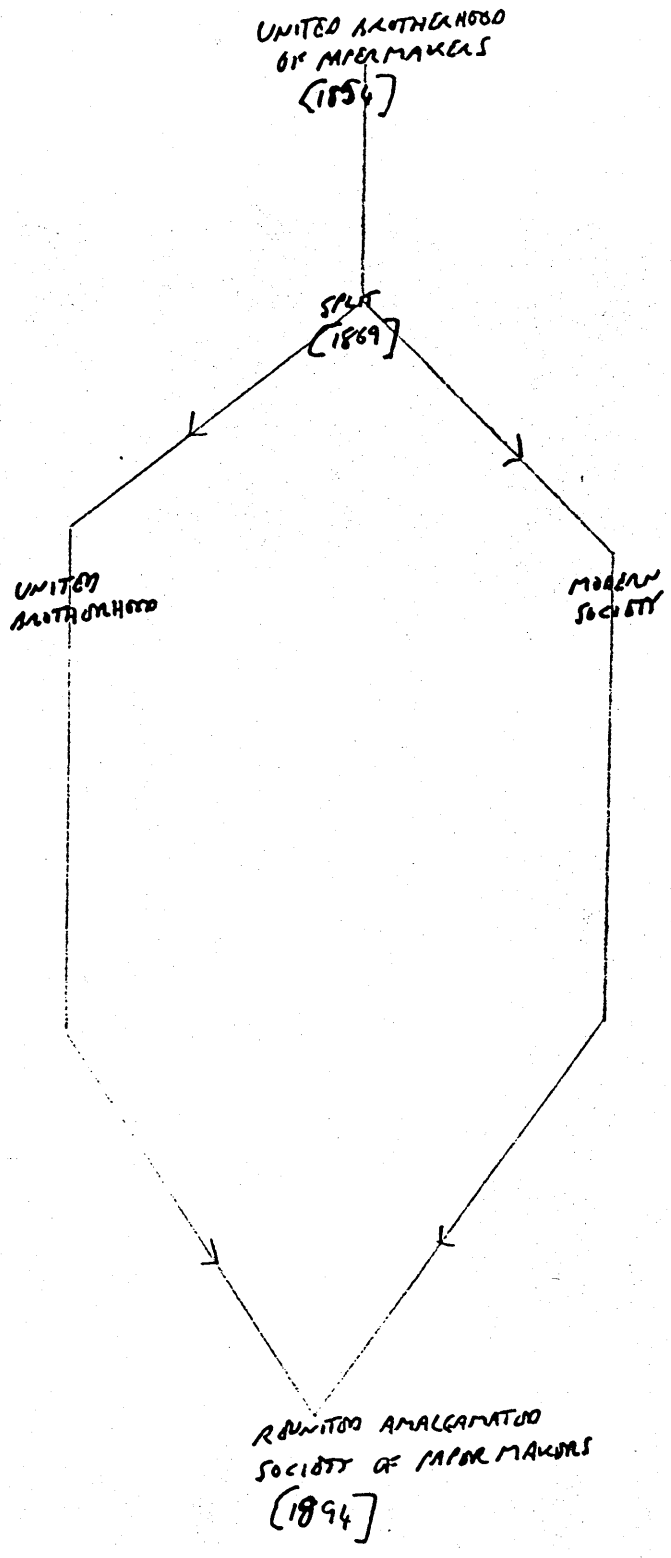


Diagram 4 : Amalgamated Society of Papermakers [1854-1894]

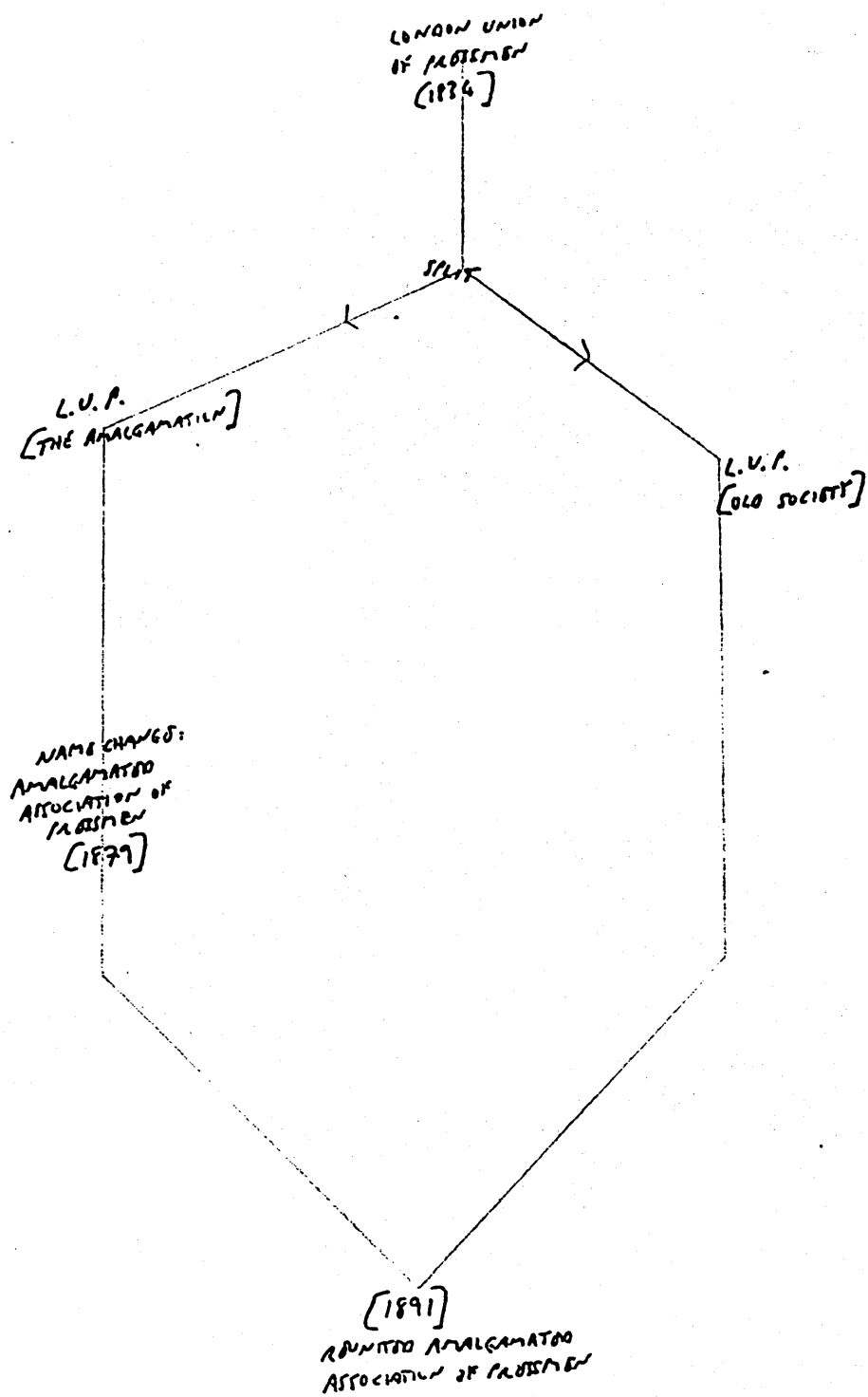


Diagram 5 : Amalgamated Association of Pressmen [1834-1891]

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The following references are for both the source material used in the present thesis, and also for further reading, ie books and articles that may not appear directly in this study, but are relevant to the overall subject matter.

The following categories are cross-referenced, therefore some references appear more than once.

The references are organised into the following categories, with each being sub-divided into types of publications -

|  | <u>Page No.</u> |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Printing in Britain:                                  | 380             |
| a) pre-1945  | 380             |
| b) pre-1970  | 381             |
| c) post-1970   | 382             |
| d) new technology  | 384             |
| e) disputes  | 387             |
| 2. Printing International                                | 394             |
| 3. Printing Workgroups & Trade Unions:                   | 397             |
| a) journalists   | 397             |
| b) craft   | 399             |
| c) semi-skilled  | 402             |
| d) women   | 403             |
| 4. New Technology & Industrial Relations                 | 404             |
| a) empirical   | 404             |
| b) theoretical   | 405             |
| 5. Sectionalism, Class Formation<br>& the Labour Process | 406             |
| 6. Print Trade Union/Employers Association<br>Documents  | 408             |
| 7. Miscellaneous References                              | 409             |
| 8. Audio-visual material used in Thesis                  | 410             |

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- 07.01.86 : Hague H/Snoddy R 'Murdoch to take charge of Wapping talks'
- 13.01.86 : McLoughlin 'Murdoch orders presses to roll' (First editions of News Int. titles at Wapping get go-ahead)
- 22.01.86 : Lloyd J/Thomas D 'Murdoch printing unions vote for action'
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- 24.01.86 : Lloyd J/Hague H 'Murdoch papers prepare to endure strike'
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- 30.01.86 : Brindle D/Thomas D 'Jobs outlook bleak for Murdochs strikers'
- 17.02.86 : Bassett P 'NGA leaders seek legal way to fight Murdoch'
- 10.03.86 : Bassett P 'News Int. claims Wapping victory'
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- 24.02.86 : Mitchell S/Roberts K 'Inside fortress Wapping'
- 08.04.86 : Wintour P 'Murdochs PR diversion on unions  
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- 09.05.86 : Travis A 'Talks aim to curb violence at Wapping'
- 19.05.86 : Wintour P 'How hate can breed extremists (anger  
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- 07.11.86 : Wintour P 'Sun journalists suspend payment of  
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- 26.01.87 : Wintour P 'Shields & batons v. bricks, bottles &  
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- 04.09.87 : Wintour P 'Low morale among Wapping print staff'
- 26.04.88 : Milne S 'Scars linger after retreat from Wapping'  
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20.09.85 : Lloyd J 'Maxwell threat of single union deal at Mirror'  
07.11.85 : Labour Corres. 'Printers vote for action over Manchester closure' (Redundancies at Thomson Withy Grove)  
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13.04.85 : Goodhart D 'Print workers defy sacking ultimatum' (WES/NGA dispute)  
17.04.85 : Labour Corres. 'Fresh disruption at Portsmouth News possible' (PSN/NUJ dispute)



- 18.07.85 : Labour Corres. 'Journalists face pay cut over new tech' (York Evening Press/NUJ dispute)
- 08.07.87 : Buxton J 'Scotsman sacks journalists in new technology dispute'

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- 02.04.86 : Morrison J 'Unions vote on Record peace deal'

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- 23.08.86 : Smith G 'Talks fail to break deadlock in dispute'  
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- 26.08.86 : Labour Corres. 'Striking print union rejects proposal of talks at ACAS' (Aberdeen Press & Journal dispute)
- 18.06.87 : Labour Corres. 'Deadlock in technology dispute at the Scotsman'
- 02.07.87 : Ross D 'Journalists union declares an all-out strike' (Scotsman/NUJ dispute)
- 04.07.87 : Corres. 'Talks plea by striking journalists' (Scotsman/NUJ dispute)
- 11.07.87 : Reekie C 'Journalists agree to return to work at the Scotsman'

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- 23.08.85 : Wintour P 'NUJ deal to end six-year dispute' (NEP to reinstate NUJ)
- 28.12.85 : Wintour P 'Hitch to newspaper peace' (NEP fail to recognise NUJ after joint union new technology deal)
- 25.02.86 : Wintour P/Stead J 'Maxwells staff defy Scottish sackings' (Daily Record dispute)
- 06.03.86 : Wintour P 'Printers occupy Maxwells plant' (Occupation at the Scottish Daily Record)
- 31.03.86 : McLaughlin J 'Journalists ask TUC to help at Record' (Scot. Daily Record dispute)
- 02.04.86 : Wintour P 'Maxwell in talks as deadline nears' (Scot. Daily Record dispute)

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- 01.07.87 : Corres. 'Scotsman journalists to hear of talks outcome'

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(New York papers embark on new technology deal  
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Should Resist It (Pamphlet)

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(NUJ options in News Int. dispute)

28.01.86 : Lloyd J '9 journalists at Times stay out of  
Wapping'

07.04.86 : Hague H 'NUJ calls meetings over dispute'  
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- 13.04.85 : Goodhart D 'Print workers defy sacking ultimatum' (WES/NGA dispute)
- 10.06.85 : Wintour P 'Print union rejects NGA 50/50 tele-ad proposal'
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- 17.02.86 : Bassett P 'NGA leaders seek legal way to fight Murdoch'
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- 01.11.75 : Labour Corres. 'Printing unions will insist on social & humane policies'
- 20.05.78 : Harper K 'NGA orders return to work' (Observer dispute)
- 09.10.79 : Collins R 'Times rejects new NGA demands'
- 27.10.84 : Wintour P 'NGA plans for jobs rejected'
- 04.07.85 : Wintour P 'NGA expected to reject newspaper group's offer over technology' (Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers dispute)
- 07.02.86 : Dubbins T 'Traits Murdoch cannot stand' (NGA gen.sec.)
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- 13.01.86 : Labour Corres. 'Maxwell group fires Sogat man' (Sunday People FOC sacked after industrial action)
- 11.02.86 : Bassett P 'No move to dodge seizure of funds' (Sogat policy towards sequestration during Wapping dispute)
- 22.05.86 : Bassett P 'Wapping activists take aim at leadership'
- 30.05.86 : Bassett P 'Ballot issue highlights tension within Sogat'
- 09.10.86 : Bassett P 'Sogat dashes hopes of Wapping peace deal'

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- 12.03.77 : Labour Corres. 'The Times dispute' (NATSOPA action)
- 12.03.77 : Leader 'Normal working is resumed' (NATSOPA dispute)
- 12.08.78 : Thomas C 'Fresh threat to Sunday Times' (SOGAT dispute)
- 30.07.85 : Wintour P 'Sogat seeks one-union deal'
- 03.09.85 : Hague H 'Sogat disquiet as Mirror resumes'
- 27.12.85 : Wintour P 'Sogat to hold mass meetings as Murdoch deadline passes'
- 05.03.86 : Wintour P/Halsall M 'Judge tightens noose around Sogat '82 neck' (Court action during Wapping dispute)
- 11.12.86 : Wintour P 'Sogat goes for a new brand image'

- 05.01.87 : Wintour P 'Sogat plan to merge branches'  
(Cost cutting exercise due to loss of national  
paper jobs)
- 12.03.97 : Wintour P 'Printers excluded women from best paid  
jobs' (EOC find Sogat in breach of sex  
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INDEPENDENT

- 14.01.87 : Clement B 'Sogat vote against levy hits Wapping  
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SOCIALIST WORKER

- 25.05.86 : Editorial 'The roasting she deserves' (on  
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- 12.03.77 : Labour Corres. 'The Times dispute' (NATSOPA  
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dispute)
- 12.03.77 : Labour Corres. 'The Times dispute' (NATSOPA  
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d) Women Workers

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JACOBS A (1983) "Film & Electronic Technology in the Production of TV News: a Case Study of the Introduction of Electronic News Gathering in an Independent TV Company" PhD Southampton

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[Report & Conference Paper]

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## 6. PRINT TRADE UNION/EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION DOCUMENTS

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'Correspondence Course' (1970s)

'New Technology' (1978)

(Conference discussion paper, London, June)

'Project Seethrough' (1983)

(Reply to NS 'Project Breakthrough' published in PRINT December)

'The Way Forward: New Technology in the Provincial Newspaper Industry' (1984) (Published in PRINT March)

'The Way Forward' (1984)

(Paper presented to & endorsed by the Biennial Delegate Meeting November)

'Delegate Meeting Report (1984)'

(Report of the 6th Biennial Delegate Meeting 5th-9th Nov)

'London Region Half-Yearly Conference Report' 11th May 1985

'London Region Annual Report for Year Ended 30th June 1985'

'National Council Report to 1986 Biennial Delegate Meeting 29th June-4th July: Keep Print Organised'

'Print' - official monthly journal

[Rule Books]

London Region NGA'82 (1985)

National Graphical Association 1982 (1988)

### b) National Union of Journalists

'Journalists & New Technology' (1980)

(Published by the NUJ as a pamphlet)

'The Journalist' - official monthly journal

### c) Society of Graphical & Allied Trades 1982

General Rules for the Government of Sogat'82 (1984)

'Sogat Journal' - official monthly journal



d) Newspaper Society

'Breakthrough: Project for Survival' (1983)  
(Newspaper published by NS updating DI developments)

'Project Breakthrough: Will Your Newspaper Survive' (1983)  
(Glossy newspaper published by NS propagating new technology)

'Project Breakthrough': Ref.PB47 (14th May 1984)  
Ref.PB48 (17th May 1984)  
Ref.PB49 (18th May 1984)

'Briefing on Project Breakthrough' Nos.1-21 (1984-85)

'Circular from NS to Chief Executives of Affiliates'  
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(9th January 1985)

'NUJ/NGA Initial Starting Position on Direct Input' (early 1985)

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**a) Television Programmes:**

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Channel 4 News, 20.11.85 (New technology in Fleet Street)

Channel 4 Diverse Reports, 20.11.85 (Prospects for 'left' wing press in respect of new technology)

Channel 4 News, 13.1.86 (Rupert Murdoch's new Wapping plant)

Channel 4 News, 14.1.86 (EETPU splits from print unions over Wapping)

BBC1 Panarama, 20.1.86 (Eddie Shah's impact on Fleet Street)

Channel 4 News, 20.1.86 (Eddie Shah's 'Today')

Channel 4 News, 21.1.86 (Debate between Andrew Neal and Tony Dubbins)

Channel 4 Business Program, 26.1.86 (City investment in new papers)

BBC1 This Week/Next Week, 2.2.86 (Debate between Murdoch, Dean & Grant)

Channel 4 News, 12.2.86 (Rupert Murdoch's impact on Fleet St)

BBC2 Newsnight, 13.2.86 (The law and Wapping dispute)

BBC2 Money Program, 23.2.86 (Eddie Shah and Fleet Street)

Channel 4 Union World, 29.5.86 (Wapping dispute)

LWT The London Program, 27.6.86 (London's evening newspapers)

Channel 4 News, 4.8.86 (Shah loses control of 'Today')

BBC2 Newsnight, 13.8.86 (Newspapers move out of Fleet Street)

Channel 4 News, 3.10.86 ("Independent's" chances of survival)

Channel 4 News, 7.10.86 ("Independent's" launching day)

BBC1 Panarama, January 1987 (Rupert Murdoch's global empire)

**b) Radio Programme:**

Radio 4 The Tuesday Feature, 15.7.86 ('A Free Press?' - free-sheets)