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## An Exploratory Investigation of the Indifferent Pattern of Accommodation to Work-Related Organizations

John E. Blissick

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**AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF THE  
INDIFFERENT PATTERN OF ACCOMMODATION  
TO WORK-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS**

by

**John E. Blissick**

**A Thesis submitted to the  
Faculty of the School of Graduate  
Studies in partial fulfillment  
of the  
Degree of Master of Arts**

**Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
July 1965**

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John E. Blissick

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been growing interest in the nature of workers' attitudes, values, and behavior.<sup>1</sup> One area of special concern has been a particular behavior pattern frequently observed among blue collar workers called indifference, and it generally refers to a lack of identification with one's work and work organization. Indifference is a phenomenon which occurs among almost all major groups of workers to some degree, but it has been observed most often and in its most intense forms among blue collar workers. In various forms it has been called apathy, noninvolvement, and unaffectedness. It has been observed not only among individuals in their work, but also among individuals in their attitudes towards the other roles which they play, for example, union members toward their union, voters toward elections and toward their political party,

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<sup>1</sup>One indication of this interest is the prodigious number of contributors and contributions to this area of knowledge. A standard textbook, D. C. Miller and William H. Form, Industrial Sociology (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), lists 362 contributors. On trade unions alone, a bibliographical review by Daisy L. Tagliacozzo, "Trade Union Government, Its Nature and Its Problems," American Journal of Sociology, 1956, pp. 554-581, lists 429 contributions for a ten-year period from 1945 to 1955.

and voluntary association members toward their respective organizations.<sup>1</sup> Although several relationships have been observed between selected independent variables and various indices of indifference, apathy, non-involvement and the like, there is still much important work to be done before this phenomena is understood sufficiently to develop a comprehensive theory about it. This study will explore one aspect of just such a theory.

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<sup>1</sup>Further statements on these topics can be found in Saul D. Alinsky, Reveille for Radicals (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), and Charles L. Wright and Herbert Hyman, "Voluntary Association Membership of American Adults: Evidence from National Sample Surveys," American Sociological Review, Vol. 23, 1958, pp. 284-94; Robert E. Agger, Marshall Goldstein, and Stanley Pearl, "Political Cynicism: Measurement and Meaning," The Journal of Politics, XXIII, 1961, pp. 477-506; William Buchanan, "An Inquiry into Purposive Voting," The Journal of Politics, XVIII, 1956, pp. 281-296; Angus Campbell, "The Passive Citizen," Acta Sociologica, VI, 1962, pp. 9-21; Gordon M. Connelly and Harry H. Field, "The Non-Voter: Who He Is, What He Thinks," Public Opinion Quarterly, VIII, 1944, pp. 175-187; Dwight G. Dean, "Alienation and Political Apathy," Social Forces, XXXVIII, 1960, pp. 185-189; Bernard Hennessy, "Political and Apoliticals: Some Measurements of Personality Traits," Midwest Journal of Political Science, III, 1959, pp. 336-355; Edward L. McDill and Jeanne C. Ridley, "Status, Anomia, Political Alienation and Political Participation," American Journal of Sociology, LXVIII, 1962, pp. 205-217; David Riesman and Nathan Glazer, "Criteria for Political Apathy," in Alvin Gouldner, ed., Studies in Leadership (New York: Harper, 1950), pp. 540-547; Arnold M. Rose, "Alienation and Participation: A Comparison of Group Leaders and the 'Mass,'" American Sociological Review, XXVII, 1962, pp. 834-838.



## Statement of the Problem

### Purpose of the study

This study will deal with the phenomena of worker indifference. It will subject to research one aspect of a theoretical classificatory schema proposed by Robert Presthus.<sup>1</sup> In doing so, the investigation will be concerned with the worker's orientation to his work and to his union, his union involvement, and his background characteristics.

Certain selected hypotheses about the relationship among these and other factors will be tested and interpreted with reference to Presthus' theoretical formulation.

In this chapter, Presthus' theoretical framework will be described, followed by a discussion of related literature, and subsequently followed by a brief discussion of the relationship between Presthus' theoretical framework and the problem. This topic will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter II.

## Theoretical Framework

### Three patterns of adaptation

Presthus describes three patterns of accommodation to large organizations, the "upward mobile," the "ambivalent," and the

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Presthus, The Organizational Society: An Analysis and a Theory (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).

"indifferent." He sees these patterns as being evoked by the "bureaucratic situation" which consists of the total environment provided by large organizations, including elaborate specialization, a clear-cut hierarchy, a tendency toward control by the few, and interpersonal relationships explicitly differentiated by authority.<sup>1</sup>

Presthus characterizes the "upward mobiles" as those who react positively to the bureaucratic situation and succeed within it; the "ambivalents" as a small, perpetually disturbed minority who can neither renounce their claims for status and power nor play the disciplined role that would enable them to cash in on such claims; and the "indifferents" as the uncommitted majority who see their jobs as mere instruments to obtain off-work satisfactions.<sup>2</sup> This investigation will focus on the latter form of reaction, the indifferent pattern of accommodation.

#### The reaction of the indifferent

Presthus views the indifferent pattern as a reaction to blocked upward mobility within the organization of the work plant. In referring to the organization, Presthus views the union organization and the plant organization as combining in their total effect and

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<sup>1</sup>loc. cit., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>loc. cit., p. 15.

structuring the conditions of participation in the organization.<sup>1</sup> This is not to say, however, that they are not distinct entities, but rather that the union does not remove barriers to mobility, and that the union organization is part of the plant organization. These impediments to upward mobility within the organization fall into two categories, those inside of the organization and those outside of the organization. Structural conditions within the organization include: (1) the worker's limited share in the ownership of the organization, (2) the worker's limited power in influencing the decisions which affect him, (3) the size and impersonality of big organizations and the standardized process-determined nature of the worker's job in addition to reduced skill and education demands, (4) the high degree of education necessary for upward mobility within the organization, and (5) the general shift of attention and energy from work to recreation and leisure. Social factors which restrict mobility include: (1) social class and (2) education, both of which operate through the process of socialization by equipping the individual with the necessary tools and desire for upward mobility.<sup>2</sup> Presthus

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<sup>1</sup>loc. cit., p. 228.

<sup>2</sup>loc. cit., pp. 206-09.

points out, however, that education is becoming increasingly more important as an avenue of mobility.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these obstructions to mobility, the individual rejects striving for organizationally-defined values such as security, prestige, and power, and instead, he seeks personal satisfaction outside of his work. Presthus points out that withdrawal from the organization is not necessarily a pathological development, but basically a healthy reaction, and he also states that the indifferent is not necessarily an unhappy worker; in fact, he may be just the opposite because job satisfaction is a product of the relations between aspirations and achievement. In the indifferent pattern aspirations are based on a realistic appraisal of existing opportunities. Presthus concludes that a person who accommodates through this pattern<sup>2</sup>

separates his work experience from a more meaningful personal area. Work becomes a tool with which he buys satisfactions totally unrelated to work. . . This separation of work from "personal life" underlies the indifferent's perception of the bureaucratic situation. . . The bureaucratic struggle is observed with detachment. The capacity to be aware of majority values, to understand their fascination for others, yet to escape becoming involved personally is a major item in his personality.

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<sup>1</sup>loc. cit., p. 229.

<sup>2</sup>loc. cit., pp. 225-26.

He also notes that the indifferent commonly transfers his mobility claims to his children. Another result of the indifferent mode of accommodation seems to be alienation from political and community affairs. "The indifferent tends to reject his company, his union, his political party, and other voluntary organizations."<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

Presthus, then, sees the behavior of the indifferent as a reaction to blocked mobility within the organization by both organizational and social influences. Unlike the upward mobile, the indifferent does not have the desire to achieve. His orientation lies outside of the organization, and he is free from any major status anxiety because of his realistic appraisal of his chances for mobility. As a result of this pattern of accommodation, the indifferent jealously views any work commitments as an encroachment upon his more satisfying outside-of-work life, and he thus rejects his company and his union.

### Related Literature

Many social scientists have noted the phenomena of the indifferent worker. Robert Dubin, for example, in a study of the central

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<sup>1</sup>loc. cit., pp. 254-55.

life interests of industrial workers concluded that:<sup>1</sup>

only 24 per cent of all the workers studied could be labelled job-oriented in their life interests. Thus, three out of four of this group of industrial workers did not see their jobs and work places as central life interests for themselves. They found their preferred human associations and preferred areas of behavior outside of employment.

And, while the typical industrial worker may not be totally indifferent to his work, he is more likely to attach a different meaning to work than the typical white collar worker. N. C. Morse and R. S. Weiss in a national sample found that for the typical white collar worker in a middle class occupation working means having a purpose, gaining a sense of accomplishment, or expressing one's self. On the other hand, for the typical man in a working class occupation working simply means "having something to do."<sup>2</sup>

By the same token, in their attitudes toward their union, industrial workers, who are most likely to be found in the indifferent category according to Presthus, have been found to exhibit a similar non-involvement. Jack Barbash, for example, concludes that:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Dubin, "Industrial Worker's Worlds: A Study of the Central Life Interests of Industrial Workers," Social Problems, Vol. 3, (January, 1956), p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>N. C. Morse and R. S. Weiss, "The Function and Meaning of Work and the Job," American Sociological Review, Vol. 20, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup>Jack Barbash, Labor's Grass Roots (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 200.

For perhaps the largest number of union members the union serves a function, not a mission. The primary function of the union as these rank-and-filers see it is protection from the unbridled rule of management.

Barbash adds that although the typical union member is not totally involved in the union, he often has a "deep-rooted perception of the protective function of the union."<sup>1</sup> Other social scientists have noted that the bulk of the union membership gives passive support to the union and usually becomes active only in crisis situations.<sup>2</sup>

Seymour M. Lipset sees a connection between the worker's lack of identification with his work and his lack of involvement in his union. Lipset, whose frame of reference is the society, attributes union indifference to the society's stress on the occupational role and the familial role; all other roles are less important and are on the periphery. These secondary roles would include membership in associations such as trade unions. As a result, "when members are not impelled to action by organizational crisis, the outcome of which may directly affect them, various forces draw them away from active participation."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Joel Seidman and others, The Worker Views His Union (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 253.

<sup>3</sup>Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man (New York: Anchor Books, 1963), p. 406.

## Summary

The phenomena of the indifferent pattern of accommodation has been observed by many social scientists including Dubin, Morse, Weiss, Lipset and others. Underlying their observations is a basic element, the worker's separation of his work from his off-work activities. Presthus' analysis, which is based on a large number of empirical studies,<sup>1</sup> stresses this important factor. And Presthus' analysis, like Lipset's, deals with the relationship between the worker's job and his union involvement. This investigation will employ the indifferent pattern of accommodation as formulated by Presthus in examining this relationship.

### Relation of the Problem to the Theoretical Framework

In line with the above theoretical propositions, this study will attempt to analyze information dealing primarily with the indifferent worker. More specifically, it will test certain selected hypotheses suggested by Presthus' formulation of the indifferent pattern of accommodation.

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<sup>1</sup>The list is extensive, but some of the most frequently cited works are: William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956); G. R. Walker and R. H. Guest, The Man on the Assembly Line (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952); C. Wright Mills, White Collar (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1951); E. Chinoy, Automobile Workers and the American Dream (New York: Random House, 1955).



### Scope of concepts

Presthus fails to provide a summary statement of his conception of the indifferent worker. The following description, therefore, includes statements that were scattered throughout his general formulation but which summarize for this writer Presthus' intent.<sup>1</sup>

The indifferents are the uncommitted majority who see their jobs as mere instruments to obtain off-work satisfactions... The upward mobile regards organizations as excellent instruments for satisfying his claims, but the indifferent defines them as calculated systems of frustration. He refuses to compete for the rewards they promise... The indifferents are those who have come to terms with their work environment by withdrawal and by a redirection of their interests toward off-the-job satisfactions... he is often the most satisfied of organization men. He rejects the status anxiety, the success striving, the self-discipline, and the conformity demanded of self and family that confront the upward mobile... His off-the-job activities rarely reinforce his occupational role... Work becomes a tool with which he buys satisfactions totally unrelated to work... he resists the image of himself as a commodity... he is not included in the bargain... retaliation may take the form of deprecating the product... emotional commitments at work that may expose one to frustration or to exploitation are avoided... instead of advancement they expect security... Clearly, he is not driven by exceptional needs for power and success.

Subjecting this entire formulation to research, of course, would be beyond the scope and the resources available to the researcher. However, Presthus strongly emphasizes that the key element of the

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<sup>1</sup> op. cit., Presthus.

indifferent pattern of accommodation is the individual's separation of his work from his personal life.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that in adopting this pattern of accommodation a worker places a major emphasis upon a "self-orientation" as opposed to a "collectivity-orientation." The meaning of the concepts "self-orientation" and "collectivity-orientation" in this research essentially is that described by Parsons and Shils.<sup>2</sup> The choice facing the individual is that between considering an act solely with respect to its personal significance (self-orientation) or considering it with respect to its significance for a collectivity (collectivity-oriented). Parsons and Shils note that actions may be long term or short term, they may be planned or concrete, prescribed or carried out. Thus, the orientation can be interpreted as encompassing both concrete behavior and tendencies or predispositions toward such behavior.<sup>3</sup>

### The problem

This study will investigate whether the worker who adopts the indifferent pattern, and thus is likely to be self-oriented to his work, is self-oriented to his union. Presthus states that the indifferent,

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<sup>1</sup>op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>2</sup>Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, eds., Toward a General Theory of Action (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>ibid.

among other things, tends to reject his union. It would seem, then, that the worker who is self-oriented toward his work would be likely to be self-oriented to his union.

In addition to self-orientation to work, it will determine whether other independent variables are related to a self-orientation including skill, seniority, education, union involvement, and satisfaction. The reasons for the selection of these variables, along with the actual research design, will be discussed further in Chapter II.

## CHAPTER II

### DESIGN AND METHODS

Every research design is a subtle interplay between the requirements set up by the theoretical framework, the conceptual model, the nature of the facts under study, and the facilities and resources available. In this chapter Presthus' conceptual model again will be restated briefly, and the relationship of the hypotheses to his model will be discussed. Following this discourse, key concepts will be defined and discussed, and operational specifications of these concepts also will be described. Finally, the empirical methods which will be employed in translating these concepts into research will be dealt with.

In Chapter III the sampling procedures and the background of the sample will be outlined, and in Chapter IV the actual findings will be presented. In Chapter V the findings will be interpreted with reference to Presthus' theoretical formulation and the goals of the investigation.

#### The Conceptual Model

The indifferent, according to Presthus, is blocked from mobility within the organization by both organizational and societal

barriers. Organizational impediments include the worker's limited share in the organization, his limited power, the impersonality and process-determined nature of his work, and the high degree of education necessary for advancement. Societal hinderances include social class and education, both of which operate through the process of socialization to equip the individual with the tools and the desire to rise within the organization. As a result of these impediments, then, the indifferent separates his work from his "personal life" and transfers his interests to off-work hours. He views his work as a tool for buying satisfactions outside of work, and he sees any organizational commitments as an encroachment upon his pleasurable off-duty time. He views union participation as such a commitment. The indifferent may satisfy his claims for mobility by transferring them to his children. Presthus also points out that the indifferent may be among the most satisfied of organization men.

#### Relation of the Hypotheses to the Conceptual Model

In order to investigate the indifferent pattern of accommodation, one of the first tasks, it seems, must be to identify the indifferent. Presthus emphasizes that "the separation of work from 'personal' life underlies the indifferent's perception of the bureaucratic situation."<sup>1</sup> And he also states that "the indifferent separates his work

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<sup>1</sup>op. cit., Presthus, p. 220.

from his 'personal' experiences, and work is often repressed as something unpleasant. The pay check is what counts."<sup>2</sup> The individual may be seen here as taking a position which sets his interests apart from those of the organization. The individual, then, works toward private goals rather than toward organizational goals. This orientation is similar to Parsons' and Shils' notion of self-orientation and collectivity-orientation. Self-orientation is defined as "a need disposition on the part of the individual to permit himself to pursue a given goal or interest of his own... without regard to its bearing one way or another on the interests of a collectivity of which he is a member." Collectivity-orientation is defined as "a need disposition on the part of the actor to be guided by the obligation to take directly into account, in a given situation, values which he shares with the other members of the collectivity in question."<sup>2</sup> Collectivity is defined as a social system having collective goals, shared goals, and being of a single system of interaction with boundaries defined by incumbency in the roles constituting the system.<sup>3</sup> Thus, individuals conforming to the indifferent pattern of accommodation may be seen as self-oriented toward the organization, while, in

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<sup>1</sup>op. cit., Presthus, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>op. cit., Parsons and Shils, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>loc. cit., p. 192.

contrast, the upwardly mobile would be seen as collectivity-oriented toward the organization.

### Skill

The next task, it seems, is to examine some of the factors which are associated with the self-oriented individual. Presthus states that the indifferent is blocked from mobility within the organization by both organizational and societal barriers. Under the organizational impediments he includes (1) limited power in decision-making, and (2) the size and impersonality of large organization and their accompanying process-determined work. Individuals with a higher degree of skill, it would seem, would be more likely to overcome these hinderances. Thus, a low degree of skill would be likely to be associated with the self-oriented individual.

### Seniority

Presthus, in part, suggests that the indifferent pattern of accommodation is likely to be found among older workers with more seniority, or at least, among persons who have been within the system for some time.<sup>1</sup>

This accommodation may occur in two stages: alienation and indifference. The alienated are those who come into the organization with great expectations.

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<sup>1</sup>loc. cit., p. 209.

They are determined to climb. But when bureaucratic and personal limitations blunt their hopes, they become alienated. Over a period of time, it seems this reaction works itself into indifference.

Although Presthus also makes it clear that the individual may enter the organization with the indifferent pattern of accommodation as an initial orientation,<sup>1</sup> learned perhaps through blocked mobility in school or other work organization, overall he tends to stress time spent in the particular organization as producing indifference. Thus, it would be likely that the indifferent would be found among workers with higher seniority. This notion is supported by the findings of Gladys L. Palmer which suggest that as workers grow older they begin emphasizing the economic aspects of their jobs as opposed to their expressive aspects.<sup>2</sup>

### Education

Presthus includes three other factors under organizational barriers: limited ownership, a shift of attention from work to recreation and leisure, and increased educational demands. Determining the impact of the first two factors--limited ownership and a shift of attention to recreation and leisure--would be infeasible in this investigation. To study the first, the researcher should ideally have

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<sup>1</sup>ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Gladys L. Palmer, "Attitudes Toward Work in an Industrial Community," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 63, 1957, pp. 17-26.



samples of workers from factories which encourage stock purchases among their workers as well as from factories which do not. To study the second, the researcher would need to draw his samples from locales in which the cultural drift has moved away from the Protestant Ethic as well as from locales in which this Ethic persists.

The third factor, education, is readily measurable, and it is especially important because it also is one of the societal barriers to upward mobility. Thus, education plays a doubly important role. Under societal hinderances to mobility, Presthus includes education and social class, both of which operate through the process of socialization to equip the individual with the desire and tools for upward mobility in the organization. Presthus points out, however, that education is becoming increasingly more important. Social class, the other factor, would be a less important variable for research, because it is probably safe to assume that most blue collar workers come from families of the same social class. Otherwise, one would have to assume that a great deal of downward mobility had occurred, and this is unlikely. Education, then, has been selected rather than social class both because it plays an important role as both an organizational and a societal impediment to mobility and because of the homogeneity of social class background of the sample. Thus, one would expect to find a low degree of education associated with a self-oriented individual.

### Union Involvement

Another important variable is union involvement. Presthus suggests that involvement in the organization is avoided by the self-oriented worker because it is seen as an infringement upon the worker's "personal life." Therefore, it would be likely that the worker who is self-oriented toward his work and toward his union would be likely to exhibit a low degree of involvement in his union.

### Satisfaction

Still another important variable is satisfaction. Presthus states that the individual who adopts the indifferent pattern of accommodation often is the most satisfied of organization men. Thus, it would seem that the self-oriented individual would be likely to exhibit a relatively high degree of satisfaction toward both his work organization and his union.

### The Hypotheses

Summarizing the above discussion, then, these hypotheses have been suggested by Presthus' conceptual model and will be subjected to research:

(1) Workers holding low-skilled jobs are more likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their work than workers holding high-skilled jobs.

(2) Workers with a higher degree of seniority are more likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their work than workers with a

lower degree of seniority.

(3) Workers with a lower degree of formal education are more likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their work than workers with a higher degree of formal education.

(4) Workers who exhibit a self-orientation toward their work are more likely to exhibit a higher degree of satisfaction than workers who exhibit a collectivity-orientation.

(5) Workers who exhibit a self-orientation toward their work are more likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their union than those who are collectivity-oriented toward their work.

(6) Workers who hold low-skilled jobs are more likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their union than workers who hold high-skilled jobs.

(7) Workers who have a higher degree of seniority are more likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their union than workers who have a lower degree of seniority.

(8) Workers with a lower degree of formal education are more likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their union than workers who have a higher degree of formal education.

(9) Workers who exhibit a self-orientation toward their union are more likely to exhibit a higher degree of satisfaction with their union than workers who exhibit a collectivity-orientation toward their union.

(10) Workers who exhibit a self-orientation toward their union

are more likely to exhibit a lower degree of union involvement than workers who are collectivity-oriented toward their union.

### Operational Specifications of Key Concepts

#### Self-orientation-collectivity-orientation

This concept will be indicated by the individual's response to open-ended questions. The worker will be asked what he thinks is the main purpose of his work and his union. If his reply is oriented to private goals such as "making a living" or "keeping my wages high," he will be placed in a nominal category entitled "self-oriented." If the worker's reply is oriented to group goals, however, such as "helping the company make money," or "protecting workers," then the worker will be seen as collectivity-oriented.

#### Skill

This variable will be indicated by a job ranking found in the union contract. Jobs will be ranked according to the skill and other factors that are involved in carrying them out.

#### Seniority

This variable will be indicated by the worker's response to the question, "How long have you worked for the company?" The number of years reported by the respondent will be used to measure seniority.

### Education

This variable will be indicated by the worker's response to the question, "How far did you go in school? " It will be measured by the number of the last grade in school that the respondent completed.

### Union involvement

This variable will focus upon behavioral involvement. It will include an expenditure of time on union affairs. It will include service as an officer or in some other official capacity (e. g. , steward) and/or greater than average attendance at union meetings.

### Satisfaction

This variable will be measured by an instrument adapted from the Morse indices of employee satisfaction. It will include intrinsic job satisfaction and financial satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

Satisfaction in regard to the union also will be included, and it will be indicated by the response to the question, "In general are you satisfied with the overall job your union does? "

These key variables, then, will be employed in subjecting Presthus' formulation of the indifferent pattern of accommodation to

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<sup>1</sup>Nancy C. Morse, "Satisfactions in the White Collar Job," (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, 1953), as included in Delbert C. Miller, Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement (New York: David McKay Company, Inc. , 1964), p. 181-84.

empirical investigation. A more detailed development of the measures of these variables will be presented in Chapter IV. The subsequent discussion will deal with the methods which will be employed in this study.

### Source of Data

The data were gathered in a small plant in Kalamazoo, Michigan which produces mainly fans and blowers. It was selected because it is an established, stable plant with a large enough work force to fit Presthus' definition of a "large organization." It has the added advantage of being a one union shop with all blue-collars belonging to the United Steelworkers of America. The background of the plant, the city, and the union, as well as the sample itself, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter III. This discussion also will include a description of the sampling procedures.

### Gathering the data

It was decided after interviews with union officials that the very nature of the research case suggested the method of gathering data. The use of a self-selected, self-administered questionnaire left in the shop for workers to fill out was abandoned, because it was felt that only individuals with intense feelings would respond to the questionnaire. The indifferent, the individual who would be expected to avoid an expenditure of time, probably would not take the time to

fill out a questionnaire. Also, true feelings might not be revealed within the shop environment without a great amount of preparation. Likewise, a self-administered mailed questionnaire was ruled out. Finally, it was decided that a structured interview would be most likely to elicit a reliable and adequate response,<sup>1</sup> because it would help to limit mis-statements or misunderstandings of the questions, which might not be the case in a self-administered questionnaire distributed to blue collar workers with limited degrees of education.

The next chapter will deal directly with the sample and the sampling procedures which were employed in this investigation. General information about the sample including the background characteristics of respondents will be presented along with a short description of the city of Kalamazoo, the United Steelworkers of America, and the factory and union local from which the sample was drawn.

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<sup>1</sup>Items for the schedule were extracted from questions used in other studies found in the literature. Aside from the previously mentioned Morse Index, these investigations may be found in Arnold M. Rose, Union Solidarity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1952), pp. 197-205, and Hajalmar Rosen and R. A. Hudson Rosen, The Union Member Speaks (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), pp. 124-137.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SAMPLE AND THE SAMPLING PROCEDURES

In this chapter the discussion will be divided into two sections, the sample and the sampling procedures. In the first section the discussion will deal with the background of the sample, and it will include information on the locale, the union, the plant, and the sample itself.

In the second section, the actual sampling methods which were employed, and their effect upon the nature of the sample will be discussed.

#### The Sample

##### Background of the city

The site of this investigation, Kalamazoo, Michigan, lies half-way between Detroit and Chicago in the southwest corner of Michigan. Kalamazoo is the county seat of Kalamazoo County which has a population of 169,712. The city has a population of 82,089 making it the sixth largest city in the state.<sup>1</sup> The degree of educational attainment in the county is exceptionally high, as evidenced by the county's

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<sup>1</sup> Michigan Statistical Abstract, Bureau of Business and Economic Research Graduate School of Business Administration, Michigan State University, 1962, fourth ed., p. 6.



ranking fourth out of Michigan's 83 counties in its median school years completed by persons 25 years of age or over (11.7).<sup>1</sup> This fact largely is due to the county's three colleges all of which are located in Kalamazoo. By most measures, Kalamazoo County may be described as prosperous. For example, in terms of median income for families it ranked sixth in the state at \$6,526.<sup>2</sup> Its per capita buying income was ranked second in the state at \$2,131.<sup>3</sup> Kalamazoo's affluence has not occurred overnight, but it has been part of a historical development. In 1956 Kalamazoo was described as:<sup>4</sup>

...a highly diversified community. Its economy is equally dependent upon manufacturing and non-manufacturing pursuits. Fifty-seven per cent of its manufacturing employees are in non-durable goods and 43 per cent in durable goods... As a result of this balance Kalamazoo has the lowest unemployment rate in the state.

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<sup>1</sup>loc. cit., pp. 30-31.

<sup>2</sup>loc. cit., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>loc. cit., p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Samuel J. Simmons and Roscoe B. Ballard, "A Study of Employment, Training, and Placement Patterns in the Kalamazoo Area," A report to the Employment Advisory Council by the Michigan Fair Employment Practices Commission, 1956, p. 53.

The city's success has been attributed to many fortuitous factors including its location between Detroit and Chicago, the stability of the community's economy, a diversification of industry, a record of good labor-management relations, and national growth in general. These factors produced a desirable combination which have attracted many new businesses and largely have accounted for the area's prosperity.<sup>1</sup>

### The labor market

Kalamazoo County's labor market has been described as "including all of the county, eight townships on the eastern side of Van Buren County (an adjacent county), and ten townships on the eastern and southern portion of Allegan County (another adjacent county). Since there are no other major industrial centers drawing upon this area, it is felt that local employers are assured a constant labor supply."<sup>2</sup> It is safe to assume that since this report in 1956, the size of the labor market has increased due to an expansion of industry coupled with a greater use of automobiles.

The labor force in the Kalamazoo area is not highly organized, but labor and management relations have been amicable, for the most

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<sup>1</sup> Willis F. Dunbar, Kalamazoo and How It Grew (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1959), pp. 207-08.

<sup>2</sup>op. cit., Simons and Ballard, p. 30.

part. Aside from the building and printing trades, the blue collar workers are not substantially unionized. Several unions represent paper industry employees, but "the majority of the firms using a significant percentage of skilled workers tend to be unorganized."<sup>1</sup> Labor relations also appear generally to be tranquil. In a period from 1949 to 1956, there was a total of 11 months in which strikes occurred with an average of 423 workers involved representing .8 average per cent of the labor force involved.<sup>2</sup>

#### The union

The union selected for this investigation was the United Steelworkers of America. One of the main reasons for the selection of this union was because of the large number of industrial workers that it represents in this area, 3,000. It was felt that a union with such large representation would allow for a wider range of choices for selecting a sample. Also, because a subdistrict headquarters is located in Kalamazoo, it was felt that cooperation in conducting the investigation would be easier to procure.

The United Steelworkers of America traces its roots back to the United Sons of Vulcan which was organized in Pittsburgh in 1860.

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<sup>1</sup>loc. cit., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

The union covered puddlers, heaters, and some other department workers. Its formation led to the organization of other similar groups in the steel industry.<sup>1</sup> Later, the Sons of Vulcan evolved into the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers. In 1909 Amalgamated suffered a severe setback during a period of violent strikes and was limited to a few small independent steel mills. In June, 1936, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee was formed with the encouragement and support of John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers. The Steel Workers Committee was set up to represent the numerous local groups in the industry. By November the Committee claimed as many as 82,000 members, and national officers began signing collective agreements as early as 1937, but the first constitutional convention was not held until 1942.<sup>2</sup>

The United Steelworkers continued to grow in numbers and demonstrated a great deal of strength. For example, in 1960, despite a slackened tempo of organization in all industry due to many factors including saturation, a passivity to the union movement among

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<sup>1</sup>Vincent D. Sweeney, The United Steelworkers of America, United Steelworkers of America publication, 1956, pp. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup>Lloyd Ulman, The Government of the Steelworkers Union (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962), pp. 3-5.

certain white collar groups, local prejudices and distrust such as in the South and in some rural areas, the Steelworkers conspicuously added substantial members to their rolls.<sup>1</sup> This period of general union decline which began in 1956, ended in 1962 when union membership in the labor force rose from 22.0 per cent in 1961 to 22.2 per cent in 1962. In 1964 the Steelworkers emerged as the third largest union in the United States behind the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the United Automobile Workers of America in that order.<sup>2</sup> Today the Steelworkers claim 1,250,000 members.

#### The local

The local which was selected for this investigation was organized in 1944. It includes about 228 members. It is organized in a union shop which means that membership is a condition of employment after hiring. Thus, all blue collar workers belong to the union. Its labor-management relations could be described as tranquil. Only two strikes have occurred since the local was organized, one in 1956 which lasted eight-and-a-half weeks, and one which occurred in 1948 which was part of a national steel strike.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>U. S. Department of Labor, The American Worker's Fact Book, 1960, pp. 275-76.

<sup>2</sup>Facts on File, Vol. XXIV, No. 1230, May 21-27, 1964, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Gail Phillips, representative, United Steelworkers of America, July 6, 1965.

### The plant

The factory selected for this study is a relatively small, stable industrial firm. It dates back to 1875 and was a leading producer of windmills in the 1880's. It converted to its present line of fans and blowers in 1912, and by 1925 the firm had sales offices and engineering offices in 17 cities with an annual output valued at \$1,000,000 and some 300 employees. In 1958 it moved to its present site.<sup>1</sup> The firm is noted for its stability and has not had a work stoppage due to layoffs since 1947, although the work week was shortened in 1964 during a slack period. The plant has two shifts.<sup>2</sup>

### The sample

Compared with the community, the factory's labor force has a relatively high proportion of persons with Dutch ancestry. This is reflected in the sample which consists of 43.5 per cent Dutch-Americans as compared with about 20 per cent Dutch-Americans in the local population.<sup>3</sup>

### Summary

Kalamazoo, then, may be seen as a prosperous community, with a limited history of union organization, and relatively peaceful

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<sup>1</sup>op. cit., Dunbar, pp. 120-208.

<sup>2</sup>op. cit., Phillips interview.

<sup>3</sup>Donald H. Bouma, "Why Kalamazoo Voted No," W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, June, 1962, p. 14.

labor-management relations. The sample clearly reflects this general milieu.

One of the objectives of the selection of this sample has been to locate the indifferent worker. It would seem that this firm would be an ideal place to find the indifferent. It is old, established, stable, and small--yet large enough to have two shifts, which would fit Presthus definition of a "large organization," which is large enough to prevent face-to-face relations among most of its members.

### The Sampling Methods

#### Drawing the sample

The sample for this investigation was drawn from a list of the names of 228 members of the local. The names and addresses were on file at the district headquarters. The list was about a year old, and in order to check its accuracy the names and addresses were checked in a current phone book. A letter explaining the purpose of the interview was sent to all 70 of the names on the final list. The letter later proved to be a valuable asset because it was felt that it reduced suspicion, and it saved time in explaining the purpose of the interview to each interviewee. The letter may be found in the appendix. A table of random numbers<sup>1</sup> was employed in drawing the

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<sup>1</sup>Hubert M. Blalock, Social Statistics (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), p. 437.

sample to insure randomness and to allow for an enlargement of the sample size if this became necessary. From the final list of 70, two workers were deceased, two workers had quit, four refused to be interviewed, one had retired, ten had moved and could not be located, and twelve were not at home. The analysis is based on the completed interviews from 39 of the original 70 workers in the sample.

#### Number of respondents

Twelve persons were not home when the interviewer called. This probably is accounted for by the fact that most of the interviews were conducted in June and July, a time when many workers are on vacation. Those who were not at home when the interviewer called for the first time, were called on again. The investigation is probably slightly biased in favor of older workers who are likely to be more settled, since 10 workers had moved and could not be contacted. Even with this percentage of responses, however, it is probably safe to assume that the respondents were fairly representative of the local, and therefore, the blue collar workers in the factory.

Although the total number of respondents was rather small, 39, the response probably was greater than it would have been had a mailed questionnaire been sent out. It is improbable that a mailed



questionnaire would have yielded a 55.7 per cent return, especially in the context of this investigation.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings of the investigation will be presented, and they will be discussed briefly. The discussion will be divided into two sections. The first section will deal with the general descriptive background characteristics of the respondents which will be outlined and related to the general milieu of the study. The second section will present the actual findings, and a brief discussion will follow.

In Chapter V the conclusions will be presented. They will be followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study and a discussion of the implications for further research.

#### Characteristics of the Respondents

The 39 workers who responded to the interview are Steelworkers, and they are all employed at a small plant in Kalamazoo. They are all male and range in age from 26 to 74. The average age is 46.9, and 18 of the men, nearly half, are over 50 years of age. The mean educational attainment of the respondents was 9.3 years of school completed, which was slightly below that of the community,

9.5 years of school completed.<sup>1</sup> In terms of their background, 22 or 54.4 per cent of the men replied that they had spent most of their life in a city; 15 or 38.5 per cent of the men in a farm community or on a farm, and only 2 in a suburb. One worker was not married, and one worker was divorced. Not counting the unmarried worker, the average number of children per respondent was 2.3. Seventeen of the respondents or 43.5 per cent reported their ancestry as Dutch, while the local community is composed of about 20 per cent Dutch-Americans. Other nationalities reported include Irish, Welsh, and English, but there were no sizable groups of nationalities represented.

All of the 39 men belong to the United Steelworkers of America and some are second-generation union members. Nine of the men reported having at least one parent who was a member of a union. In addition, over half of the sample reported having one or more relatives in the union. The 20 men whose relatives belong to the union primarily are of Dutch ancestry which reflects the bias in favor of Dutch-Americans in the hiring practices of the plant.

The advanced age of the workers plus the relative stability of the plant account for the high seniority of the workers. The average

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<sup>1</sup>Computed from grouped data (op. cit., Michigan Statistical Abstracts, p. 30-31).

number of years was 19.7 with a range from 3 to 42 years. Twelve men or 30.8 per cent had worked for the company for 25 years or more.

### Summary

The sample in this investigation was designed to locate the individual who has adopted the indifferent pattern of accommodation. Therefore, the typical respondent has relatively high seniority, he has a ninth grade education, he is a relatively older worker, and he is a family man. In the subsequent paragraphs, the orientations of the workers towards their work and towards their union together with other key variables will be examined.

## The Findings

### Job orientation

As was mentioned previously, self-orientation and collectivity-orientation is determined on the basis of the individual's response to an open-ended question. The item dealing with the worker's orientation to his job was phrased: "What would you say is the most important purpose of your job?" If the respondent's answer was oriented toward private goals without consideration of the collectivity, it was placed in the self-oriented category. If his reply did not take into account private goals, or if it gave consideration to the

collectivity, the respondent's answer was placed in the collectivity-oriented category. The responses are summarized below:

TABLE 1

## Purposes of Work

		<u>Frequency</u>
<b>"Self-oriented"</b>		
1.	"make a living"	24
2.	"make money for myself, family"	5
3.	"security to family"	3
4.	"gives me a paycheck every week"	2
5.	"my duty to myself and my family"	<u>1</u>
Total		34
<b>"Collectivity-oriented"</b>		
1.	"better the quality of goods"	1
2.	"to do the best job you can"	1
3.	"keep things going right"	1
4.	"keep company making money"	1
5.	"help keep company profits up"	<u>1</u>
Total		5

Skill

The measure of the degree of skill was based on the local union's contract. The rankings in the contract are based on 12 factors including pre-employment training, post-employment training and experience, mental skill, manual skill, responsibility for material, responsibility for tools and equipment, responsibility for operations, responsibility for the safety of others, mental effort, physical effort, surroundings, and hazards. The categories from 20 to 15 were designated as "high skill," and those ranging from

14 to 6 were designated as "low skill." This division was made in order to separate the assemblers, maintenance men, press operators, and the others from the categories above. It was felt that the higher categories represented a qualitative difference from those below.

TABLE 2

## Type of Work

Ranking

	"High Skill"	Frequency
20	Tool and die maker . . . . .	(2)
19		
18		
17	Sheet Metal layout, Serviceman-tester . . . .	(2)
16	Flame cutter, Machinist . . . . .	(5)
"Low Skill"		
15	Power press operator, Steel fabricator, Maintenance man, Arc Welder, Assembler <sup>1</sup> . .	(9)
14	Assembler, Inspector. . . . .	(4)
13	Assembler. . . . .	(2)
12	Assembler. . . . .	(2)
11	Assembler, Painter. . . . .	(1)
10	Fork-lift operator, Assembler. . . . .	(3)
9	Assembler. . . . .	(2)
8	Assembler. . . . .	(4)
7	Assembler. . . . .	(3)
6	Crater-shipping. . . . .	(1)

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<sup>1</sup>The assemblers are found in categories 15 through 7 because they are graded in terms of their position in the assembly system, seniority, etc.

The relation between skill and orientation to work is summarized below:

TABLE 3

## Skill and the Job Orientation of the Workers

Job orientation	Skill			
	high		low	
	number	per cent	number	per cent
Self- oriented	7	77.8	27	90.0
Collectivity- oriented	2	22.2	3	10.0
Total	9	100.0	30	100.0

There is a greater proportion of workers among the low-skilled who exhibit a self-orientation toward their job than among the high-skilled. The percentages are, respectively, 90.0 per cent and 77.8 per cent, a difference of 12.2 per cent. While fewer than one quarter of either group expressed a collectivity-orientation, the proportion of high-skilled workers doing so was twice as large as the proportion of low-skilled.

Seniority

The variable of seniority was measured with a nominal designation of either "high" or "low" according to whether the number of

years worked at the plant by the individual was above or below the mean for the sample which was 19.7 years. The results are summarized below:

TABLE 4  
Seniority and the Job Orientation of the Workers

Job orientation	Seniority			
	number	high per cent	low number	per cent
Self- oriented	19	86.4	15	88.2
Collectivity- oriented	3	13.6	2	11.8
Total	22	100.0	17	100.0

A greater proportion of workers among those with high seniority exhibited a self-orientation toward their job than among those with low seniority. The percentages are 86.4 per cent and 88.2 per cent, respectively, a difference of 1.8 per cent. This percentage difference is not large enough to support the hypothesis.

However, it may be that the plant's large proportion of relatively older workers with high seniority does not provide an adequate test of the relationship between seniority and orientation to work. Very few of the workers in the sample had been employed at the plant for



less than ten years. Perhaps a sample from a plant with a larger number of new employees would yield more conclusive results.

### Education

The variable of education was measured with a nominal designation of either "high" or "low" according to whether the number of years of school completed by the individual was above or below the mean for the sample which was 9.3 years. The results are summarized below.

TABLE 5

#### Education and the Job Orientation of the Workers

Job orientation	Education			
	high		low	
	number	per cent	number	per cent
Self- oriented	11	68.8	23	100.0
Collectivity- oriented	5	31.2	0	00.0
Total	16	100.0	23	100.0

One hundred per cent of the workers with less education than the average expressed a self-orientation as compared with 68.8 per cent with above average education. The percentage difference is

31.2 per cent. All five of the workers who expressed a collectivity-orientation were among the more highly educated. This finding is consistent with Presthus' theoretical formulation and supports the hypothesis suggested by it.

### Satisfaction

The variable of satisfaction was measured with an index of employee satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> It included intrinsic job satisfaction and financial satisfaction. The former specifically deals with satisfaction with the actual content of the work, and the latter with satisfaction with the pay. The index was adapted for this investigation from a more extensive index. Each item was answered on a five-point scale ranging from strong satisfaction to strong dissatisfaction. Higher scores denote greater satisfaction. The index yielded a range from 11 to 19, although the possible range was from 4 to 20. The mean score for those who exhibited a self-orientation was 14.82, and the mean for those who exhibited a collectivity-orientation was 14.80. With a difference of .02, however, it is inconclusive whether the self-oriented worker is more likely to exhibit a greater degree of satisfaction than the collectivity-oriented worker.

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<sup>1</sup>op. cit., Miller, pp. 181-84

### Union orientation

As mentioned previously, the measure of orientation of the worker to the union will be indicated by the individual's response to open-ended questions. The item dealing with union orientation was phrased: "What would you say is the main purpose of the Union?" If in his response, the worker indicated a consideration of the collectivity, then his answer was placed in the collectivity-oriented category. If, on the other hand, his reply indicated no consideration of the collectivity, then his response was placed in the self-oriented category. The responses are summarized below:

TABLE 6

#### Purposes of the Union

		<u>Frequency</u>
<u>"Self-oriented"</u>		
1.	"get higher wages"	8
2.	"better working conditions"	4
3.	"job security"	2
4.	"stick up for individual"	1
5.	"take away favoritism"	1
6.	"keep wages equal with other companies"	1
7.	"someone to talk for you"	1
8.	"take care of grievances"	1
9.	"gain benefits"	1
10.	"hold control of wages"	<u>1</u>
Total		21

TABLE 6 (continued)

		<u>Frequency</u>
"Collectivity-oriented"		
1.	"protect workers"	8
2.	"benefit workers"	7
3.	"link to organized labor"	1
4.	"make better way of living for members"	1
5.	"solidarity"	<u>1</u>
Total		18

The relationship between job-orientation and union orientation is summarized below:

TABLE 7

## Job Orientation and Union Orientation

Union orientation	Job orientation			
	self-oriented number	per cent	collectivity-oriented number	per cent
Self-oriented	18	52.9	2	40.0
Collectivity-oriented	16	47.1	3	60.0
Total	34	100.0	5	100.0

The findings indicate that there is a relationship between the orientation the individual exhibits toward his job and the orientation that he exhibits toward his union. Workers who exhibit a self-orientation toward their job are more likely to exhibit a

self-orientation toward their union than workers who exhibit a collectivity-orientation toward their job. Thus, the individual who expresses a self-orientation toward his job is likely to express a self-orientation toward his union. The percentage difference of 12.9 should not be regarded as great, since the shifting of a single individual in the second column of the table would have reversed the findings.

#### Self-orientation toward the union

Now the discussion will focus on the 34 workers who exhibited a self-orientation toward their work. The variables of skill, seniority, and education will be related to a self-orientation and a collectivity-orientation, and the role of these variables will be examined. The findings are summarized in the tables below:

TABLE 8  
Skill and Union Orientation

Union orientation	Skill			
	high		low	
	number	per cent	number	per cent
Self- oriented	3	42.8	15	55.6
Collectivity- oriented	4	57.2	12	44.4
Total	7	100.0	27	100.0

TABLE 9  
Seniority and Union Orientation

Union orientation	Seniority			
	number	high per cent	low number	per cent
Self- oriented	8	42.1	10	66.7
Collectivity- oriented	11	57.9	5	33.3
Total	19	100.0	15	100.0

TABLE 10  
Education and Union Orientation

Union orientation	Education			
	number	high per cent	low number	per cent
Self- oriented	6	50.0	12	54.5
Collectivity- oriented	6	50.0	10	45.5
Total	12	100.0	22	100.0

Among the workers with low-skilled jobs, a higher proportion exhibited a self-orientation toward the union than among those with high-skilled jobs. The difference was 12.8 per cent.

Among the workers with low seniority a higher proportion exhibited a self-orientation toward their work than those with high seniority. The difference was 24.6 per cent. It was felt that this contradiction of the expected findings was a result of the large proportion of workers with high seniority in the plant, since a majority of the workers classified as having low seniority had been employed at the plant for more than ten years.

#### Satisfaction with the union and union involvement

Presthus states that the individual who has adopted the indifferent pattern of accommodation redirects his interests toward off-the-job satisfactions. This form of orientation is indicated by some of the reasons that individuals gave for missing union meetings. Most of the reasons given specified other activities the individual felt he had to engage in rather than attend meetings. Perhaps the most justifiable excuse is the second on the list, "have to work." In the local under investigation, meetings are held every second Saturday of the month in the morning. Workers on the day shift during the week sometimes must work during the meeting hour if they work on Saturday. One member estimated that it would cost him \$12.00 to attend a union meeting if he had to miss work.

However, this was not the reason most often given for missing meetings. Instead, the most frequent given was "other things to do."

A summary is given below:

TABLE 11

Reasons Given for Missing Meetings

		Frequency
1.	"other things to do"	12
2.	"have to work"	10
3.	"too tired"	5
4.	"things to do around home"	4
5.	"isn't useful to attend"	4
6.	"family duties"	3
7.	"don't know"	2
8.	"on vacation"	2
9.	"just excuses"	1
10.	"too far to drive"	1
11.	"bad meeting time"	1
12.	"just don't feel like going"	1
13.	"not interested"	1
14.	"must work part time"	1
15.	"sick"	1

Satisfaction The measure of satisfaction with the union was indicated by the individual's response to the question, "In general, are you satisfied with the overall job your union does?" Two categories were formed by collapsing the choices "definitely yes" and "yes" into "satisfied," and the choices "no" and "definitely not" into "dissatisfied." The results are summarized below:



TABLE 12  
Union Orientation and Satisfaction<sup>1</sup>

Satisfaction	Union orientation			
	self-oriented number	per cent	collectivity-oriented number	per cent
Satisfied	15	83.3	9	69.2
Dissatisfied	3	16.7	4	30.8
Total	18	100.0	13	100.0

A greater proportion of workers among those with a self-orientation toward their union expressed satisfaction with their union than workers with a collectivity-orientation toward their union. The difference was 14.1 per cent.

Union involvement. Union involvement was designated as either "high" or "low" according to whether the individual attended more or less meetings than the average and whether or not he had ever served as an officer. This indicator of involvement was designed primarily to encompass activities which require a time commitment on the part of the worker. The average number of meetings attended by members over the year was 2.2. The results are summarized below:

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<sup>1</sup>Three workers in the collectivity-oriented category gave "undecided" responses.

TABLE 13

## Union Orientation and Union Involvement

Union involvement	Union orientation			
	self-oriented number	per cent	collectivity-oriented number	per cent
High	7	38.9	10	62.5
Low	11	61.1	6	37.5
Total	18	100.0	16	100.0

Among the workers with a collectivity-orientation toward their union, a greater proportion exhibited a high degree of union involvement than those with a self-orientation toward their work. The difference was 23.6 per cent.

### Summary of findings

Kalamazoo, Michigan, a relatively prosperous community, with a rather limited history of union organization and labor-management relations which could be described as tranquil, provided the background for this investigation. The respondents, 39 workers, were selected from union files in the Sub-District Office of the United Steelworkers of America. The plant in the study was an old, established, stable firm which, like the community, had amicable labor-management relations. It was a union shop. The typical worker

had relatively high seniority. He has a ninth grade education, he is a relatively older worker, and he is a family man. The findings of this investigation of these workers may be summarized as follows:

(1) A greater proportion of workers with low-skilled jobs exhibited a self-orientation toward their work than workers with skilled jobs.

(2) There was no evident relationship between seniority and orientation to work.

(3) A greater proportion of workers with a lower degree of educational attainment exhibited a self-orientation toward their work than workers with a higher degree of education.

(4) There was no evident relationship between orientation to work and satisfaction with the job.

(5) Workers who exhibited a self-orientation toward their work were more likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their union than workers with a collectivity-orientation toward work. However, since there was a relatively small number of respondents with a collectivity-orientation toward their work, this should be considered a tenuous relationship.

(6) A greater proportion of workers with low-skilled jobs exhibited a self-orientation toward their union than workers with high-skilled jobs.

(7) A greater proportion of workers with a low degree of seniority exhibited a self-orientation toward their union than workers with a high degree of seniority.

(8) There was no evident relationship between education and orientation to the union.

(9) A greater proportion of workers with a self-orientation toward their union exhibited a higher degree of satisfaction with their union than workers with a collectivity orientation.

(10) A greater proportion of workers who exhibited a self-orientation toward their union also exhibited a lower degree of union involvement than workers who exhibited a collectivity-orientation.

Workers who are viewed as having adopted the indifferent pattern of accommodation, then, are those who are self-oriented toward their work. Workers who hold low-skilled jobs, and a low degree of formal education are likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their work. Those who are self-oriented toward their work tend to be self-oriented toward their union. Workers who hold low-skilled jobs, and have a relatively lower degree of seniority are likely to be self-oriented toward their union. Self-oriented union members are likely to exhibit a higher degree of satisfaction with their union than collectivity-oriented union members. The self-oriented unionist also is likely to exhibit a low degree of union

involvement, that is, they are likely to never have served as union officers, and they are likely to miss a high percentage of union meetings.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter a brief summary of the purpose, focus, and findings will be presented. Following this presentation, the possible contributions of this investigation will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the investigation and implications for further research.

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to conduct an exploratory investigation of one aspect of a three-fold theoretical classificatory schema proposed by Robert Presthus. This investigation focused on one of his three proposed patterns of accommodation to large organizations, the indifferent pattern of accommodation. To develop this focus one key element of Presthus' formulation of the indifferent was employed in the research. This crucial factor is the indifferent's separation of his work from his personal life. For purposes of this study, the worker who exhibits the indifferent pattern of behavior was specified as one who is self-oriented. This designation of "self-oriented" essentially is that described by Parsons and Shils, and it refers to

the actor considering an act primarily with respect to its personal significance. A "collectivity orientation," which is the alternate choice facing an individual, refers to the actor considering an act with respect to its significance for a collectivity. The orientation of the worker was determined on the basis of responses to open-ended questions asking for his view of the purpose of his work and his union.

This study investigated the relationship between the worker's orientation toward his job and his union orientation. Characteristics of workers which were related to a self-orientation toward work were skill and education. These same variables, and another, union involvement, also were related to the orientation of the worker toward the union. It was found that the orientation of the worker toward his work was related to his orientation toward his union. Skill and education were found to be related to both orientation toward work and orientation toward the union.

The findings on satisfaction and seniority in relation to the worker's orientation toward his job were found inconsistent with expectations. In relating seniority to job and union orientation, the findings were contradictory in that workers with low seniority were found likely to be self-oriented. In relating union orientation to satisfaction with the union, it was found that workers with a self-orientation were more likely to express satisfaction with their union

than workers with a collectivity-orientation. The worker who holds a low-skilled job, and has a low degree of education was found to be likely to have a self-orientation toward his work and his union. Self-oriented union members were found to be likely to exhibit a low degree of union involvement.

### Contributions

The findings indicate that Presthus' formulation of the indifferent pattern of accommodation does have merit in understanding the blue collar worker.

In this study, the investigation primarily focused on workers' orientations to one work-related organization, the union. By directing attention to this organization, it was hoped that the study would contribute to knowledge of union behavior as well as to clarify Presthus' formulation of the indifferent pattern of accommodation. In terms of contributing to knowledge of union behavior this investigation suggests several potentially fruitful areas worthy of more detailed analysis. Perhaps the most important area examined is that of the relationship between the worker's job and his union. The results of this investigation suggest that the worker's orientation toward his job is related to his orientation toward his union which,



in turn, is related to his union involvement.<sup>1</sup> This analysis differs in this respect from most investigations of involvement or participation which deal with structural characteristics of the union<sup>2</sup> or of the plant.<sup>3</sup>

Another possible contribution of this investigation is that it suggests a form of analysis which explains the role that an individual's

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<sup>1</sup>Possibly Presthus' formulation explains the reasons for smaller turnouts at union meetings of unions composed of low-skilled workers as opposed to unions composed of high-skilled workers. This phenomena is described in Thomas A. Mahoney, "An Investigation of Several Factors Associated with Attendance at Union Meetings." Unpublished master's thesis, Economics Department, University of Minnesota, 1951.

<sup>2</sup>Studies relating to this topic are numerous, but perhaps the most often cited are Bernard Barber, "Participation and Mass Apathy in Association," in Alvin W. Gouldner, Studies in Leadership (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), pp. 470-504; and Robert Michels, Political Parties (New York: Dover Press, 1959).

<sup>3</sup>Perhaps the most significant work on this topic is by Leonard Sayles and George Strauss, The Local Union: Its Place in the Industrial Plant (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953).

occupation plays in his participation in other social organization.<sup>1</sup>

### Limitations of the Study

This study, of course, has only investigated the indifferent pattern of accommodation, one of Presthus' three patterns of accommodation. And, at that, it has only investigated one element of the indifferent pattern, albeit a very important one. However, this focus on the indifferent was selected because it involves the largest number of workers, and it suggests important implications for our society such as participation and membership in political parties and interest in public affairs.

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<sup>1</sup>Numerous studies have demonstrated that occupation is related to organizational membership as well as participation. As early as 1946 Komarovsky (M. Komarovsky, "Voluntary Associations of Urban Dwellers," American Sociological Review, Vol. 11, pp. 686-98) found that 68 per cent of unskilled workers had no associational affiliations, except, perhaps, a church; 56 per cent of skilled workers had no associational affiliations; and only 2 per cent of professional workers had no affiliations. In 1958 Wright and Hyman (Charles L. Wright and Herbert Hyman, "Voluntary Association Memberships of American Adults: Evidence from National Sample Survey," American Sociological Review, Vol. 23, 1958, pp. 284-94) found that skilled workers were more likely to belong to organizations than unskilled workers. Membership was found to be related, among other things, to occupation. Membership also was found to be positively related to interests in public affairs. Other findings also seem to support this point such as: John M. Foskett, "Social Structure and Social Participation," American Sociological Review, Vol. 20, 1955, pp. 431-38.

An important influence which impinged upon this investigation of the indifferent worker, especially during the designing phase, was a reluctance of union officials to permit research to be conducted. The initial attempt at securing permission failed. The researcher contacted company officials before discussing the matter with union officials, and as a result, union officials refused to cooperate because they said they felt that the findings "might be used by management against them." Another union was contacted, and, eventually permission to initiate research was given and full cooperation was extended. In acknowledgement of their cooperation, the responses to the last item on the schedule: "What suggestions would you make to improve your union?" were given to union officials. However, the research was affected in that it required a great deal of time to find a union which was willing to permit research. And in attempting to maintain the confidence of union officials, the researcher was forced to limit communication with company officials.

The study also was limited in that the choice of the plant in the investigation was composed of older, stable workers with a high degree of seniority. Thus, the consequent lack of a wide range of individuals with differing degrees of seniority perhaps did not allow for an adequate test of the relationship between seniority and the orientations of the worker.

### Implications for Further Research

One very important problem for further investigation is suggested by the finding that high seniority is related to a collectivity-orientation rather than a self-orientation. It could be that those with a self-orientation leave the factory and the collectivity-oriented stay to gain high seniority, or that the self-oriented who stay, become collectivity-oriented. Perhaps an investigation should be conducted in a plant with less stability and more turnover. Thus, incoming workers could be studied over a period of time to see if this actually does occur.

Another suggestive finding of this investigation is that the majority of workers who exhibit a self-orientation toward their work are likely to exhibit a self-orientation toward their union. Although the "majority" in the investigation is rather small, nevertheless, it indicates that a relationship exists between the worker's job and his union orientation and union involvement. But because the margin of differences observed was small, further research should re-examine this relationship. In the present investigation, the prime focus was devoted to attitudinal orientations. Perhaps, in a more extensive study, the relationship between these attitudes and behavior could be examined in greater detail.

Another possible area for investigation is Presthus' notion of the indifferent's reaction to blocked mobility. Perhaps the individual

who is blocked from mobility within the organization satisfied his desires for mobility by attempting to rise within the union organization. Or it could be that the individual may attempt to satisfy his desires for mobility by attempting to rise within other organizations. And, while the indifferent may not actively participate in these other organizations, he may closely identify with them.<sup>1</sup>

These areas which have been discussed are important problems for research, not only to clarify Presthus' formulation of the indifferent because of the role it plays in understanding the behavior of the blue collar worker, but also because ours is an organizational society. And, as Presthus himself states: "contemporary organizations have a pervasive influence upon individuals and group behavior." It is hoped that this investigation will provide the stimulus for that research.

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<sup>1</sup>It was suggested (op. cit., Barbash, p. 200) that this situation exists among union members. Perhaps the same holds true for other organizations.

## APPENDIX

Sociology Department  
Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

May 28, 1965

Your ideas about your union, like the ideas of union members in shops all over the country, are very important--but they must be made known. Like you, many union members have important ideas and views about their unions, but most of them tell their ideas to their buddies while waiting in line to punch in, while munching a sandwich at lunch, or while walking out to their car after work. And often, nothing ever comes of it.

But you will have a chance to have your ideas and views heard--maybe even put into use. As a graduate assistant and a master's degree student at Western Michigan University I am studying the union movement. Asking union members about their ideas and views is part of my study. This study will be available to students all over the country in order to help them better understand union members. My findings also will be available to your union, and maybe they will be useful.

Along with other members of your union, you have been selected to take part in this study. An interviewer will stop by your home, and he'll ask a few, short questions about your ideas. Although your union is helping in the study, your ideas as an individual will not be known to them. No one at the shop will know how you personally answered. No one's name or identity will be shown in the findings. Your views will be studied as a group at Western Michigan University's Center for Sociological Research. A copy of the findings will be given to your local.

Within the next two weeks, the interviewer will ask you how you feel about your union. By answering his questions as best you can, you will add to the understanding of union members, but most of all you will make your feelings known.

Sincerely yours,

John E. Blissick  
Graduate Assistant

Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

UNION ATTITUDE SURVEY  
May, 1965

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Uncompleted Interview: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Respondent I. D. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule Number \_\_\_\_\_



## UNION ATTITUDE SURVEY

Instructions

Please place a check mark in back of the word which comes closest to the way the respondent feels. Print it as dark as you can. Make sure that the respondent clearly understands what you mean by your questions, and remind him that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

The most important thing is to record the respondent's answers the way he feels, so on the fill-in questions please try to use his own words.

\* \* \* \*

1. How long have you worked at your present company?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  2. Are you now, or have you ever been an officer in the union?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Are you now, or have you ever served in some official capacity such as steward or committeeman? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (If "Yes" please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  4. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
  5. How far did you go in school? (Circle the number of the last grade in school that respondent completed)
- |                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Grade and High School      | College     |
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 | 1 2 3 4 5 6 |
6. What is your job title? \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Just what do you do on your job? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  8. How long have you worked on this job? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Where did you spend most of your life?  
 In a farm community or on a farm \_\_\_\_\_  
 In a suburb \_\_\_\_\_  
 In a city \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If unclear, please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
10. Were either of your parents members of a union?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you have any relatives working at this firm?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
12. Where did your ancestors come from? (Try to find out name of country. If respondent gives two countries, try to find out what he considers himself to be.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you hold down any part-time jobs for which you get paid?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
14. If so, what kind of part-time work do you do?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
15. How far do you live from the plant? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (miles)
16. Are you married? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If so, number of children \_\_\_\_\_
17. If you had a son, would you try to talk him into working at the same job that you hold? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Undecided \_\_\_\_\_
18. If you had a son, would you be happy having him do the same thing you do? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Undecided \_\_\_\_\_
19. Does your job give you a chance to do the things you feel you do best? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Undecided \_\_\_\_\_
20. How well do you like the sort of work you are doing?  
 Strong like \_\_\_\_\_  
 Likes it \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dislikes it \_\_\_\_\_  
 Strong dislike \_\_\_\_\_  
 Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

21. How do you feel about your work, does it rate as an important job with you?

Definitely yes \_\_\_\_\_

Yes. \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Definitely not \_\_\_\_\_

Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

22. How well satisfied are you with your salary?

Highly satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Highly dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

23. How satisfied are you with your chances of getting more pay?

Highly satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Highly dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

24. In general, are you satisfied with the overall job your union does?

Definitely yes \_\_\_\_\_

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Definitely not \_\_\_\_\_

Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

25. In general, are you satisfied with your plant as a place to work?

Definitely yes \_\_\_\_\_

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Definitely not \_\_\_\_\_

Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

26. In general, are you satisfied with your union's meetings?

Definitely yes \_\_\_\_\_

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Definitely not \_\_\_\_\_

Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

27. Do you believe that you need a union to buck the employer for you, or could you do as well by yourself?

Need a union \_\_\_\_\_

Could do almost as well myself \_\_\_\_\_

Could do just as well by myself \_\_\_\_\_

Could do better by myself \_\_\_\_\_

28. How often do you believe that it is important for you to go to union meetings?

Always \_\_\_\_\_

Usually \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_

Seldom \_\_\_\_\_

Never \_\_\_\_\_

Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

29. How many meetings did you attend during the last 12 months?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(number of meetings attended)

30. If you miss a meeting, what is the usual reason for it?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

31. What would you say is the main purpose of the union?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

32. What would you say are some of the other purposes of the union?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

33. What would you say is the most important purpose of your work?

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34. What would you say are other purposes of your work?

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35. What suggestions would you make to improve your union?

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(Use back for additional comments, suggestions)

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