

WORKERS  
AND DECISION MAKING  
ON PRODUCTION

Lawrence B. Cohen

**"Rules that can be applied without bias  
[F.M., president of Local 218**

## CONTENTS

### Foreword

1. Workers and decision making on production
2. A decision making meeting
3. The union meeting on overtime in the skein department
4. The meeting as decision making on production
5. The decision and production
6. Worker decision making: Why?
7. The structure of workers' decisions.
8. The development of worker decision making
9. The development of a new decision: to permit overtime
10. Changing a decision's structure
11. The code indicating
12. The workers' decision system
13. The decision making
14. Implications
15. Appendix

## FOREWORD

I started this book in the spring of 1949 and I finished the first draft in the spring of 1950. This draft consisted of the present Chapter 3 and some of the material of Chapters 4 and 5. The second draft, completed in the 1950's was an expansion of the first. This, the third draft, was an expansion of the second and the addition of Chapters 6-14.

The book fulfills a long-time personal ambition: to describe the local union I came to know, experience, see and observe. The description presented in this book differs markedly from those found in the literature of personnel and industrial relations, the labor movement and other fields covering organized labor. The differences begin with a conception of the local union, as expressed by FM, the president of local 2188. The goal of the local union was to establish "Rules which can be applied without bias."

I acknowledge with thanks the help of many people who have contributed to this work. I could not hope to mention all of them, nor even remember many of them. Some I must name for their contribution was long-standing. First and foremost are the two mentors, who have passed away. The first was Professor Zellig S. Harris, of the University of Pennsylvania. The second was Solomon Barkin, Director of Research at the Textile Workers Union of American and later a professor at the University of Massachusetts. My debt to these men can only be mentioned, not quantified. I must also thank my friend of 70 years, Professor Seymour Melman of Columbia University. His patient and persistent prodding brought this book to life. Finally, I must thank the officers of Local 2188 who accepted my probing. Not only do I thank them, I express my deepest admiration for their tremendous ability.

This book has benefited from my wide experience with local unions. This includes locals of the Textile Workers, Electrical Workers, Transport Workers, Building Service Workers and others located throughout the Eastern United States. Thus, while the data of this book are drawn from one local union at the Sanford Carpet Co. of Tompsonville, CT, the description applies to very many locals.

In conclusion, let me thank those who helped in the physical production of this book, especially, my wife, Naomi Cohen.

L.B.C.

## CHAPTER 1

### WORKERS AND DECISION MAKING ON PRODUCTION

Within the trade union, especially at the local level, there exists a practice which may be called worker decision making on production. This study undertakes to show that the practice exists, that workers' decisions are carried out in production, that their range expands, and that their decision system possesses a unique structure quite different from the employer's. The existence of this practice affects contemporary enterprise, the employer, the union and the function of decision making on production--and indeed, the flow of goods and services upon which the society depends.

Decision making on production takes place, in contemporary society, within a system of social organization called the employment relationship. Under the premises of this system, the employer is the decision maker. He or the managerial structure of modern enterprise--formulates the decisions which initiate, specify, integrate and fix the limits of productive operations. To the employer the workers are decision executors, carrying out through their occupational performance the content of his decisions. The purely functional aspects of decision making--formulating and executing decisions--are imbedded in the occupational and social structure of the employment relationship.

One of the ways workers have responded to the employment relationship is by forming unions. This has changed the relationship by introducing the procedure of collective bargaining and by demarcating wages, hours and other working conditions as the subjects over which the bargaining might take place. These changes do not encompass decision making on production, neither the process nor the subject matter. Even under conditions of collective bargaining, the employer remains the decision formulator. The role of the union does not include the performance of managerial functions.

And yet, despite the claims of law, custom; the parties themselves and students of industry and labor, the practice of worker decision making exists and flourishes. The workers' decision system is to be found within their independent occupational organizations, typically the trade union and especially at the local level. Unionized workers, on a continuing and systematic basis, formulate decisions which effectively determine activities and conditions of production. Their decision making takes place, not as something accidental or incidental, but as a necessary and inescapable part of determining and administering their terms and conditions of employment. It is an internal union function, occurring through the procedures by which workers determine their occupational activities and conditions. The demands made upon the employer, and the settlements of grievances and contract terms are a part of the outcome of worker decision making, translated into the language of collective bargaining.

The implications of this development are vast and far-reaching. Many will emerge during the ensuing exposition. It will perhaps prove of interest to suggest two implications which contribute important motivations to the present study.

First, worker decision making as an historical-social development cannot fail to create significant effects in the institutions in which it operates. Mention has already been made of the employment relationship, which embraces virtually every kind of work in contemporary society. At the very least, the prevailing system of decision making within the employment relationship is passing from the employer's unilateral system to a bilateral system, the extent of this passage being measured by the extension of collective bargaining. This signifies a change in the internal structure of industrial enterprise and in the roles of the employer and the productive workforce. New developments are already discernible in industry organization, reflecting the integration of workers' decision systems on inter-firm levels. Many of the changes taking place in industrial, social, community and political life are traceable to worker decision making on production. The potential range of effect of worker decision making may be gauged by examining a parallel historical development: the emergence of the employer-decision maker at the beginning of the modern industrial epoch, and the spread of his influence over the culture and values of the whole of society.

Second, worker decision making is creating a new kind of decision making on production. It may be described as non-coercive, non-alienated decision making. Its principle is: decisions are formulated by the people who execute them. This is not a principle which workers articulate, nor one which they consciously espouse. Rather, it is a principle inferred from the evidence of the actual transformations which they have already wrought in decision structure. It is not an easy principle to apply. Since it does not fit the employer's established system of production decisions, the workers must create their own. This is a Herculean task of social invention and organization which will be explained in due course. Attention is drawn here to the principle itself, for it supplies a solution to a problem which has baffled the critics and philosophers of capitalist society since its beginnings: how to create a non-alienated production system.

To put this subject of worker decision making in proper perspective, several additional observations must be made. First, the assertion that worker decision making exists and is expanding does not mean that workers alone decide all of production. Manifestly that is not the case; the employer is still a decision maker, and he holds most if not all of the major decisions governing production. The relative share of decision making by employer and workers is purely a local matter, depending upon developments in each place of employment<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> The workers' system contains a powerful internal force propelling it forward over an increasingly wide range of decisions. Its expansion depends upon the employer's response, which may be resistance, compliance, evasion and escape or, perhaps most interestingly, circumvention. The last is accomplished by eliminating the actual worker decision making entity, usually through technological change. Indeed, a very impressive case can be made for the notion that the motivating force for technological change is the effort to circumvent worker decision making on production.

Second, the workers' decision system should not be regarded as identical with a local union, even though it operates through many of its rules, procedures and organizational apparatus<sup>2</sup>. The trade union is the most hospitable medium in which workers can practice and extend their decision making. In turn, their system is a powerful force within a union which, if allowed full expression, can govern its activities and development. The relationship of a union to its internal worker decision system is a local matter, depending upon the control exercised by the decision system over the union's operations; or alternately upon the control exercised by the union's apparatus over the workers.

Finally, worker decision making on production is not another scheme of labor-management cooperation, nor of joint employer-worker consultation, nor a program for implicating workers in real or fancied participation in managerial decision making. It is not a political movement, overt or clandestine, to unseat the employer or to expropriate the owners of industry. Without external instigation, without plan or blueprint, without benefit of ideology, but by methods which enjoy widespread public approval, workers have created an autonomous decision system of whose character and implications they are themselves probably unaware.

## **DECISION MAKING ON PRODUCTION**

The central concept in this study is decision making on production.<sup>3</sup>(1) It serves both as a function being observed, and as a category for the collection and analysis of data. Moreover, two distinct systems, the employer's and the worker's, will come under examination. It is therefore important to set forth at the outset just what is understood by the term, how it will be used in later chapters, and what its significance is in this investigation. This section will define decision making on production as a function in the production system, as an occupational function, and as a social relationship.

### **A Production Function**

An enterprise is designed, operated and controlled by the decisions which specify its activities, conditions, equipment, materials and all other components and arrangements of its producing processes. These decisions include top policy, which

---

<sup>2</sup> A union may engage in other kinds of decision making, aimed at other domains than production; and its production decisions may not be made by its worker-members. Furthermore, workers may be organized but not formally unionized, and yet also practice decision making on production.

<sup>3</sup> This is a rather clumsy term, but there is no acceptable substitute any more graceful. It will be used throughout the study in this form and in some slight variations, such as making production decisions, production decision making and deciding production. Even greater awkwardness will be encountered in signifying the actor, the decision maker on production. The crux of the terminological embarrassment will be seen in the preposition "on". It is intended to connect the action, decision making, with the domain to which it applies, production. The substitute words which give greater clarity to the term are: concerning, about, governing, with respect to, and possibly others. While clearer, they seem to be worse, stylistically, than simply the preposition, "on".

determines whether or not production shall occur at all, and if so, how much of what kinds. They include all the intermediate decisions which translate top policy into component specifications. They include the ultimate beyond which there are no others, and which are manifested by the physical performances in production. Together, these cumulative, hierarchical structures of decisions specify and predetermine the totality of production. The observable effects of the decisions consist of the activities and events which occur in the physical domain of production.

Decision making on production is the function which produces and implements these specifications. It is not a state-able duty assigned in abstract to people or positions in the enterprise. Rather, it is a function contained in the tasks and responsibilities of occupations. Decision making occurs and may be observed by the effects it brings about in the operations of the enterprise.

### **An Occupational Function**

As a function, decision making consists of two distinguishable parts. One part is the formulation and issuance of the decisions. This is the problem-solving action which formulates objectives, determining the available means for achieving them, and chooses among the evident alternatives of activities and conditions. This part brings to bare all the technical, scientific and engineering knowledge, and by applying the criteria of the formulator, reaches the conclusions which issue as decisions on producing activities.

The second part consists of the receiving and executing of the decisions. It occurs at the end of the decision sequence--there are no further decisions to be made because the final one is translated into productive act, observable in some aspect of output activity. As defined here, decision receiving and executing are carried out only by the final person in the chain of decision. This differentiates decision receiving and executing from the role played by persons and occupations higher up in the chain of decision making. They too receive decisions from higher levels and must act accordingly. But their act is also formulating, for their work consists in further specifying the activities and conditions which will ultimately find expression in production.

Both these parts are essential to the decision function, and each requires the occurrence of the other. Neither alone could bring about any production.

Within the employment relationship, these functions are customarily assigned in the following manner. (2) The employer is the formulator and issuer of decisions, but without any receiving and executing responsibilities. In modern industry, this assignment embraces the whole managerial hierarchy, from the chief executive to the lowest rank in the management chain of command. Below the very top level, all the occupations receive the decisions issued to them by their superiors in rank, but their occupational function is to continue the process of breaking down and refining the higher level decisions until they reach the end of the chain, where the decisions, reduced to their final operating specifications, are executed by concrete productive acts. All who participate in this process of cumulatively formulating the decisions to be transmitted to the workforce for



receipt and final execution are part of the decision making apparatus of the employer occupation.

The workers are the decision receivers and executors. Within the formal understanding of industrial relationships, the workers have no decision formulating functions. However, some elements of decision formulating by workers have always and necessarily been present in the employment relationship. (3) These arise from two circumstances.

First, decision receiving implies some response to the directives of the employer. Such responses may in fact be a rejection or a modification of the employer's decision. These are ordinarily acceptable if they derive from the individual's biological, physiological, or psychological properties or from his economic interests. Variability in size, endurance, skill, capacity and other human dimensions give rise to variations in response to decisions. Also, the employment system is premised on the right of the individual to enter and depart from employment and to contract for his services on mutually acceptable terms. These elements of decision making, though changing in scope and specificity, have always been available to employed workers.

Second, the worker is expected, indeed required, to make decisions where they are included in his occupational tasks. The meaning of skill as a job requirement is that the worker must exercise an expert judgment; that is, make decisions over job duties. Under conditions of modern industry, people are employed for work precisely where their judgment and decisions are less costly than those which can be made by mechanical or electronic equipment. In many jobs, the element of judgment by the worker cannot as yet be replaced (at least, economically). Within these areas of occupational performance, the worker continues to make decisions.

While these elements of decision making may exist, they do not affect the definition of the function. They concern only the terminal decisions governing production--the ones which bring the decision making process to a conclusion--and they are made by the decision executors, as essential parts of their productive tasks. The definition given above stands: the employer formulates but does not execute decisions; the workers receive and execute decisions. Around this functional axis, the employment relationship will be seen to operate.

### **Decision Making on a Social Relationship**

To isolate further the decision making process, a very important distinction must be made between two kinds of observable activities related to production. The first consists of people directly manipulating the material-physical components of production and thereby creating the physical and spatial transformations which immediately yield the flow of product. This relationship between people and the artifacts comprise the producing activities. The second consists of people dealing with other people, as a result of which the producing activities take place. This occupational relationship among the participants in production embraces the decision making process.

The decision making function is observable as an act of relationship between the formulators and receivers in respect to the productive activities. For the function to occur, decisions must be formulated and executed. If a decision is formulated but not executed, the function as a whole has not operated. The ultimate observable evidence of the occurrence of decision making is the execution of the decision in production. The act of production may then be traced back to its receipt and formulation as a decision, and the function as a whole can be reconstructed. When the function itself is to be investigated, the occurrence of the entire process is essential if the effective decision system is to be discovered.

While decision making on production is the occupational connection between formulating and receiving functions, it is primarily a social relationship among the participants in these functions. The nature of the relations between formulators and receivers is one of order-giving and order-receiving<sup>4</sup>. Production decisions are directives which must be executed if production is to occur. Within the business system, the social relations among the participants are one of direction and acceptance, or ordering and submission, in respect to the producing activities.

Herbert A. Simon formulates the relationship in very much the same way. (4) "Authority" may be defined as the power to make decisions which guide the actions of another. It is a relationship between two individuals, one 'superior', and the other 'subordinate'. The superior frames and transmits decisions with the expectation that they will be accepted by the subordinate. The subordinate expects such decisions, and his conduct is determined by them.

"The relationship of authority can be defined, therefore, in purely objective and behavioristic terms. It involves behaviors on the part of both superior and subordinate. When, and only when, these behaviors occur does a relation of authority exist between the two persons involved. When the behaviors do not occur there is no authority, whatever may be the 'paper' theory of organization.

"The behavior pattern of the superior involves a command--an imperative statement concerning the choice of a behavior alternative by the other--and an expectation that the command will be accepted by the other as a criterion of choice.

The behavior pattern of the subordinate is governed by a single indeterminate decision, or criterion for decision, to 'follow that behavior alternative which is selected for me by the superior. That is, he holds his own critical faculties for choosing between alternatives and uses the formal criterion of the receipt of a command or signal as his basis for choice.

---

<sup>4</sup> This definition of the decision relationship ought not to be characterized as a system of power. The term power is not definable or measurable and whenever it is used it has to be retranslated into other magnitudes which are said to be dimensions of power. Decision making on production defines a relationship among the issues and receivers of decisions in terms of specific actions and responses within a clearly established domain of activity. Its occurrence can be explicitly established by reference to observable events. There is nothing undefined or approximate in the relationship, and its occurrence or non-occurrence need not be encumbered by attributing the possession or lack of power to any of the participants.

## **Workers and Decision Making on Production**

Decision making on production will emerge from this study as a process which inheres in workers' occupational self-organization. It occurs in the most rudimentary forms of joint actions undertaken by non-union workers. It underlies the form and activities of unions at the plant level, and determines the operation of interfirm and inter-industry consolidations of unions. It is the vehicle and expression of the socialized occupational activities of workers which are manifest throughout the range of their performance in employment. In sum, worker decision making on production is a model, derived from empirical evidence, of the organized occupational activities of workers in the employment relationship.

External evidence of the workers' decision system is provided by the growth and expansion of unionization. Collective bargaining agreements, the rules and regulations promulgated by organized workers and unceasing flow of demands and grievances, particularly at shop level, are products of worker decision making. These developments are known to have impinged upon the function of the employer.(5) Their pertinence to decision on production, especially to the workers' exercise of this function, remains to be demonstrated.

Decision making on production as the consequence of self organization of workers has heretofore been overlooked. The role of the employer as the essential decision maker has so deeply permeated contemporary thinking about the organization of production that the conception of alternative seems unreal. (6) As a corollary, the union is conceived, with respect to decision making on production, to be a passive, responsive agency, concerned primarily with the division of the product and with ameliorating the impact of the decision making employer upon the workers. These conceptions of the employer and the union frame the assumptions of much of the contemporary study of workers, unions and industrial relations. They give rise to a description of phenomena in industry in a context of problems created for the decision making employer: the formal conduct of unions, the rituals of collective bargaining, the protocol of employer-worker relations and the acceptable posture of workers in response to the employer.

These preconceptions about the functions of the employer and the union must be discarded if the organized activities of workers are to be explored in their entirety, as the expression of an integrated system of social organization. The workers' organized activities indeed comprise a total system. They originate in the social and occupational relations among workers, rather than in the formal organization performances of unions. They yield a systematic set of effects which are decision making on production, rather than harassment of the employer. Presently observable characteristics of industrial workers as well as their directions of development are obscured by the attempt to reconcile their organized activities to these restraining assumptions about the roles of employer and union in the production system.

The formation of unions identifies the workers as an occupational group sufficiently homogeneous to join in coordinated activity within the production system. Whether or not their activities constitute decision making on production raises a question as to the broadest implications of their organizational efforts. The conditions which their activities must satisfy, if they are decision making on production, may be specified from the foregoing analysis of the decision making function.

First, they must produce decisions which effectively determine those aspects of production to which they apply. This means that the workers' activities must be shown to result in decisions which observably shape the activities and conditions of productive operations. Not all such operations need be determined by their decisions for a decision system to be present. Such systems universally evolve and extend themselves to an increasing range of decision making; hence total effectiveness is not a criterion of any system. The essential condition is that the activities yield effective decisions which are carried out in production.

Second, the decisions must emanate from processes which have the evident characteristics of a decision system. These include continuity, systematic and responsible handling of production issues, independent criteria and methods of decisions, and the special property of decision systems, an internal mechanism which continuously extends its range of decision.

Third, if both the proceeding conditions are met, they must ultimately be shown to modify the allocation of decision functions of the employment system in such form as to constitute a significant change in decision making on production. This means that decision formulating and issuing must be added to the receiving and executing functions which the workers have always possessed.

## **THE CONTENT OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study is to demonstrate that worker decision making on production exists, and to describe its structure, development, operations and extent within the enterprise. The findings to be developed are confirmed in many local unions and in a variety of manufacturing industries located in different sections of the country. The analysis however will be limited to illustrative material drawn from Local 2188, Textile Workers Union of America, CIO, the bargaining representative at the Bigelow Sanford Carpet Company, Thompsonville, Conn. Descriptions of the company and local union are given in Appendices to this chapter.

There are compelling considerations for restricting the analysis to the data of one exemplary situation, rather than using selected materials from a larger number. First, in order to establish the characteristics of worker decision making on production it is necessary to analyze the organization within which it occurs. This can be done better by a coherent treatment of a full decision system rather than by an eclectic presentation of parts of several. Second, the amount of detailed material necessary to establish significant findings increases as the subject penetrates into the inner workings of the

system. Desirable economies of explanatory overhead are achieved by the cumulative material of a single situation. Because of this restriction on the source of data, it will be necessary to establish their representativeness. The generality and limits of the findings will be taken up in the final chapter, after all the data have been presented. It will become evident as the demonstration that the generalizations reached in this examination are not restricted by the particular characteristics of the union and company whose materials are used as illustrations.

The first part of the study, consisting of Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5, undertakes to show that worker decision making on production exists. The evidence includes a verbatim report of an actual case of worker decision making, together with other essential supplementary material. This evidence will also show other things about the workers' practices: their competence as decision makers on production, their methods of decision making, and why their decisions necessarily govern production.

Chapters 6 through 13 present the inner structure of the workers' decision system and how it evolves. Probing for the reason why workers establish their system, a solution is found in their unique decision structure. This structure yields effects for them which could be obtained in no other way – effects which arise from the properties of the structure rather than from the material gains achieved by making their own decisions. Immediately related to the non-coercive structure is the way it is developed. This will lead to the internal processes arising out of the occupational relations among workers which guide--in fact, compel them to eliminate the alienation present in decision making. In this part of the study, the evidence consists of collective bargaining agreements, practices, and records of historic events in the life of the local union.

The final part of the study, Chapters 14, investigates the place of worker decision making in the production system of the enterprise. The evidence consists of the total body of terms and conditions of employment reached through collective bargaining, including both the substantive and procedural parts. The findings are achieved by isolating the impact of the terms of employment upon the workers' occupational activities and conditions.

The last chapter takes up the issue of the generality of the findings, a matter which must be deferred until the evidence used in the study has been entirely presented. It also summarizes the main conclusions about worker decision making on production and considers its implications.

## NOTES

- (1) There is a substantial literature on the subject of decision making. A valuable list of relevant publications is contained in *Decision Making, An Annotated Bibliography*, by Paul with Fred S. Silander (Ithaca, N.Y.: Graduate School of Business and Public Administration, and the Supplement,
- (2) Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior* York: The Macmillan Company, p. 2; Robert Tannenbaum, "The Manager Concept: A Rational Synthesis, *The Journal of Business*, 22, No. 4 (October 1949) p. ; Chester I. The Functions of the (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938) pp .
- (3) Herbert A. Simon, p. 12.
- (4) Herbert A. Simon, pp. 125-6.
- (5) For this, the literature on union impact on managerial prerogatives is relevant. See, for example, Neil Chamberlain, *The Union Challenge to Management Control* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1948), Sumner H . Slichter, James H . Healy and E . Robert Livernash, *The Impact of Collective Bargaining on Management* (Washington, D.C: The Brookings Institution, 1960), Margaret K. Chandler, *Management Rights and Union Interests* (New York, McGraw-Hill, Inc. , 1964) Milton Derber, W. Ellison Chalmers, and Ross Stagner, "Collective Bargaining and Management Function, An Empirical Study, *The Journal of Business of the University of Chicago*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, April. 1958, pp. 107-119.
- (6) CF., for example, the preceding citations from Simon and Tannenbaum.

## Chapter 2

### A Decision Making Meeting

The event was a request for overtime work and the way the local union handled it. The centerpiece of the event was a meeting of local union officials at which the issue was discussed and prepared for solution. The episode as such was certainly not planned, nor was the meeting staged. The occurrences to be recounted took place within an established procedure of the local union, and were considered routine. The unique and unplanned aspect of the episode, the viewpoint of the participants, was the recording which was made of the meeting. A transcription of this recording is presented in Chapter 3. It is one of the principal bodies of data produced by; this study and subjected to analysis here. Surrounding the meeting are the events which preceded it, the final disposition of the issue, the union structure within which the episode took place, and the whole background of union experience, relations with the employer, terms of employment and other related aspects of the union's evolution which contribute to the rise and resolution of the particular issue.

The transcription of this meeting provides evidence that worker decision making on production exists. An analysis of the meeting and its surrounding circumstances will be given in Chapters 4 and 5. Using this case as illustrative, it will show that worker decision making on production actually takes place, how it operates, and that it makes production decisions which are carried out effectively in the plant. The generality of this individual case will be considered later in the study.

On Tuesday morning, June 28, 1949, at eleven o'clock five officials of Local Union 2188, Textile Workers Union of America, CIO, had a meeting in their union hall in Thompsonville, Connecticut. These officials were: the president, vice-president and secretary of the local union and chairman and sub chairman of the union's dye house department.

All of the five were workers, holding regular jobs in the plant. The president, FM, was a Jacquard weaver, one of the most highly skilled production jobs. He had been an active and militant trade unionist for many years. His union experience in this plant antedated World War I. He had already served several as president.

GR, the vice-president, was a spinning mule fixer, one of the top skilled jobs in the spinning department. His union experience coincided with the union history in the plant. He had previously been chairman of the union's time study committee and chairman of the union's Yarn Construction Department.

JD, the secretary, was a worker in the shipping department. Prior to being elected secretary, he had been chairman of the Service Department (a subdivision of the plant and union including shipping, receiving, maintenance, and other related activities).

These three represented the local union.

The dye house had two representatives. The chairman of the dye house, BL, was a relative newcomer to the plant. He had worked in the New York area before settling in Thompsonville several years earlier. He had been hired to work in the dye house, where he was the youngest of the five. His union experience was principally in his present position.

Four of the five men worked on the first shift. They had taken leave of their jobs and had come to the union hall, just across the street from the plant to attend this meeting. As officers they would be reimbursed by the local union for any work time lost while conducting union business, such as this meeting. He attended the meeting on his own time, without pay for the time spent outside his regular working hours.

This meeting and its surrounding circumstances were an ordinary event in the life of the union. They were unique only in a few particulars—of time, specific matters, and to some extent, in procedure. Otherwise they are totally commonplace in the on going local union process, and would no doubt have been forgotten even by the participants if not for this study. It is precisely their routine, ordinary character which endows them with importance here. They are an excerpt life, and hence an example of what a local union actually does in its day to day operation.

### **A local Union Routine**

On the day before the meeting, Monday, BL (Chairman of the Dye House) and several of his fellow committeemen met with L, their overseer, to discuss a complaint, one not related to this study. When their meeting ended, the overseer was called to the office of the assistant plant manager, S. Upon his return from S's office, the overseer called BL back to speak to him. At the meeting the following day BL reported what L told him: I just left S. We've got up to six full days' work with overtime, for the time they lost in there. Unless you do so, your Jacquard and other parts of the mill are going to suffer. We have ninety thousand pounds of yarn downstairs...in the store bin...Unless we catch up on these ninety thousand pounds of yarn that's downstairs, it's going to affect the Jacquard in the department."

Thus the company notified the union that overtime work was needed in the Dye House and it requested the union's approval. The exact needs of the company emerged only during the meeting. The overtime was not sought from the entire skein dye department, only from one occupation, the dryer tenders. As the text will reveal, EH, the vice-president, made this clear. The day shift--he wants them to work nine hours a day;..." the period of the overtime for the day shift dryer tenders was to extend only for eight days--for the four remaining days of the present week and the four working days of the next one. (July 4 was a holiday)

Why did the overseer call back the department chairman to tell him of the need for overtime? In order to set in motion established procedure for obtaining overtime



work. This procedure, at the time of the meeting, required the employer to obtain the union's approval of overtime work. If the union approved, the employer was then permitted to request--not order--individual workers to accept overtime work.

To the question, "Why does the employer have to request union approval?", the local president explained: "Because it's always been a practice around here. The union has always said, 'Anything over forty hours is considered overtime and will not be worked unless it's agreed to by the union'." The company conforms to this situation, but reluctantly. The union president stated: "The company has gone on for [attacked—ed.] that in at least two or three previous negotiations. They have attempted to get us to agree that when they need overtime, they will go to the individuals and tell them, "Work overtime', rather than...(negotiate separately for each overtime need).

The vice-president summed up the existing procedure: "We never did agree with them on that basis. We always said, 'First you got to consult the union. And if agreement is reached, then you can work the overtime'... once it's agreed, whether it's for any period of time, for one day or one hour, or any period, it's agreed. We even have written agreements on that basis--a short overtime, hours, it's more or less verbal. But if it's for longer duration, we have a written agreement on that."

More explicitly, the president defined the character of such agreement in these terms. Even when we've agreed, we've said, 'This group will work, not this individual.' They've tried to get us to agree to eliminate that, or agree with them that that's that."

## **The Overtime Procedure**

The five local union officials who assembled in the union hall and expressed themselves in the language transcribed in the next chapter were carrying out functions assigned to them by the local union. Why they came, what they were supposed to do, the way they were to act together, and even their identities as participants in the meeting were prescribed for them. This particular overtime problem was handled in five steps.

### **1. Notification**

To start the procedure, the company had to notify the union that overtime work was desired. In practice, this meant that a company supervisor requested overtime approval from the union chairman of the department in which it was to be worked.

Some arresting aspects of the union's role are revealed in the way the first step was carried out in the present case.

In order to comply with the procedure it was necessary for the company to communicate with BL at his home, during his time away from work. Since the issue arose on the first shift, the company also notified the sub chairman, EH, but the official communication took place with BL. The company thus treated BL as a decision maker, very much as they would deal with a managerial employee. They got in touch with him

away from the plant, out of his regular hours and they assigned him a task for which they would not pay him--just as they would a foreman. If BL had been needed for his regular job in the dye house, he would have been called to the plant, been checked in and paid for his time. The union officials' role in the evolving decision structure of the enterprise differs from their role as production employees.

Another aspect is brought to light by a fleeting by-play in the meeting itself. The question under discussion was the precise nature of the company's request. This colloquy occurred between EH, the sub chairman, and GR, the local vice-president.

“EH: Both shifts, is it? Is that what he said? No.. .

GR: That's what S told me.

EH: S told you that?

GR: I happened to be talking to him about something else and that's what he said.”

When GR revealed that he had independent information, he was immediately challenged by EH. GR's answer states that his conversation with S was not concerned with this problem--presumably with a matter perfectly proper for GR to discuss with him--and that the introduction of the problem and the data was on S's initiative, for which GR could not be held responsible. This is not an exaggeration of the significance of the exchange between EH and GR. There is tremendous respect for and adherence to proper channels within the union. To overstep one's line of authority in either an upward or downward direction is a serious organizational error, and is guarded against by all officials from the highest to lowest. Despite the fact that GR knew of the problem, he made no move to deal with it, either out-side or within the meeting, until it had been brought to him in conformity with established procedure. The proper recipient of the request in this case was the chairman, or sub chairman in his absence. The company knows these lines of responsibility and respected them. Any deviation by the company was apparently of no use.

## **2. The Meeting**

This overtime case was the first one to arise under a revised union procedure. Prior to this time, the departmental chairmen were authorized to make the decisions about overtime<sup>5</sup>.

The chairman's obligation to meet with the officers was a new rule of the local union. The local, at its last meeting, passed a resolution that requests for overtime were henceforth to be decided by the officers and chairmen of the affected departments acting together. This change in procedure is mentioned by BL in the meeting. He again quotes his conversation with the overseer.

“As far as your overtime is concerned, Bud, there's a new ruling there [in the union—ed.]. The officers sit down with the chairman. I don't make no more decisions.”

---

<sup>5</sup> Chapter 7 has a description of the earlier procedure.

Meetings of officers and chairmen are very common in the local union in reference to many other kinds of issues. The established procedure provides that a chairman notify the (union) office secretary that he wishes to meet with the officers. The secretary then makes all the arrangements, usually phoning the officers who are working in the plant, and setting up a definite meeting time. The chairman in this case had called the office early on Tuesday, and the meeting was set for eleven o'clock.

The meeting took place on time around a table in the union hall. It appeared to be a very informal discussion, although each participant gave close attention to the subject at hand. From time to time other union members and local officials passed through the room but they did not interfere with the discussion even though to an outsider, it may have looked like an ordinary conversation. This absence of interference did not occur through any action of the participants--they frequently nodded greetings to the passersby. But those entering the room recognized the officers and the departmental representatives, and seemingly understood that a meeting was in progress.

The meeting continued for about 25 minutes. At its conclusion, the men dispersed. The officers went into the business office, the dye house men left the union hall. It was by then nearing noon, the regular lunch hour of the plant.

### **3. The Conference with the Company**

The upshot of the meeting was a decision to meet with the company. This was not a prescribed step in the procedure. The participants elected to meet with the company apparently to secure some additional information, especially on the future possibilities in the department. It was not intended as a bargaining session, inasmuch as no demands were developed during the meeting.

### **4. The Caucus**

The meeting with the company developed the information that the Axminster and tapestry weave departments were going to be affected by the shortage. The chairmen of these departments were called into a private caucus with the officers and dye house chairman.

### **5. The Decision**

The final decision was reached during the caucus. The main lines of argument had been laid down during the recorded meeting, and a subsequent interview with GR and JD disclosed that a decision had been reached--to permit the overtime.

## **THE BACKGROUND OF THE MEETING**

The men at the meeting discussed the overtime issue against an elaborate background of jobs, processes, plant and industry and of past and present problems. It

will prove helpful, for a reading both of the text as well as the ensuing analysis, to explain the principal elements of the background.

### **The Dye House**

The immediate problem before the meeting concerned the skein dye department, one of the processes of the dye house. The major function within the skein dye department is the dyeing of skeins of yarn. Two smaller processes, permaset and package dyeing, are also housed within this department, but they were not involved in the overtime issue of the meeting.

The skein dyeing operations and the duties of the several occupations are as follows:

1. The service men receive the trucks of skeined yarn which are brought to the department by outside workers.
2. The service men, previously informed as to the proper batches and lot sizes for dyeing, truck the skeins to the appropriate dye kettles. They load the kettles with the prescribed amount and type of skeins.
3. The service men fill the kettles with water of specified temperature.
4. The kettleman brings the dyestuffs, already mixed, to the kettle and puts them into it.
5. When the skeins are dyed (having been in the pigmented liquid for the appropriate time) the service men unload the kettles and truck the skeins to the extractor.
6. The dryer operator removes the skeins from trucks, strings them on poles and places the poles into the dryer. After the skeins are dried, the operator unloads the dryer and disposes of the dried skeins.

These are the processes and jobs which are concerned in the overtime problem of the meeting. As the text will develop, the job which is particularly of interest is the dryer operator. The 90,000 pounds of yarn about which the overseer spoke to BL had been dyed and extracted, and represented a backlog of work waiting to be put into the dryers.

### **Issues in the Skein Dye Department**

The overtime problem was one of a series of recent and current issues within the department. These issues were the temperature of the drying operation, known as the "heat condition;" a recent forced layoff originating in this temperature situation and designated as the "heat layoff;" a similar overtime request by the employer several weeks earlier; and the deferred negotiations for a general wage increase.

### **The "Heat Condition"**

A serious working condition problem is created in the department by the presence of the drying operation. Despite the fact that the dryers are insulated, they give off a

tremendous amount of heat. Since they are in the same room as the rest of the process, the heat from the dryers raises the general temperature of the surrounding area.

During the hot summer days the temperature around the dryers rises to 110<sup>o</sup> - 120<sup>o</sup>, varying in this range in accordance with the outside temperature. The dryer operators are most immediately affected since they must work directly with the dryers. But also the other workers who work in the department who work close to the dryers feel its extreme heat. To a lesser degree the physical discomfort is experienced by all workers in the department. In addition, the working conditions in the room are generally unpleasant. The room temperature is high because of the steam processes, and there is excessive moisture and dampness. The men customarily work here stripped to the waist, and in summer, they work only in shorts and shoes.

The workers in the department sought with increasing insistence to have a cooling or ventilating apparatus installed in the department. The employer made some minor adjustments, but did not remedy the condition to the men's satisfaction.

### **The "Heat Layoff"**

During one of the early weeks in June, 1949, Thompsonville experienced some very hot weather. This made the conditions in the skein dye department worse than usual. The dryer operators (utilizing an established practice in the plant) requested and received permission of their overseer to leave work on account of the excessive heat.

The company then informed the union that the other workers in the department were to be laid off. There was considerable disagreement between the company and the union as to the propriety of this general layoff, but in the end it remained in effect. The union contended that this general layoff was unnecessary, and was only utilized to bring pressure on the dryer tenders restrain them from leaving work. The employer held that without the dryers operating, it was not possible to continue the dyeing of yarn; to do so would only result in an accumulation of wet, undried skeins. As the text of the meeting will reveal, the company's position was considered partly sound; but the workers regarded it as a punitive measure against the department since some of the operations were unaffected by the dryers' leaving their jobs.

As the vice-president of the local later described the situation, "You see, they had a problem in there of the dryers going home on account of the heat. And they sent the rest of the department home. The rest of the department wanted to work during that day. Instead, they were sent home and worked shorter hours. And they were mighty disturbed over that situation. That's what brought it on. That's why the feeling there. Why should we give them overtime if that's the feeling they're going to give us?"

Nevertheless, the attitude prevailed in the department that the company had unnecessarily laid off the entire group of workers.

## **The Previous Overtime Issues**

The department had been operating for some time with a curtailed work force. The customary two-shift operations had been cut to one, and a number of regular workers were laid off.

Several weeks prior to the present incident, the company had requested the union to work overtime in this department. The company stated that the necessity for additional output was temporary, and would require only a limited number of extra man-hours of work which the present work force could give by working overtime. The temporary nature of the extra need was emphasized by the company as the governing consideration in their request for overtime.

After making its own inquiry and discussing the problem with the company, the union decided against overtime work and in favor of the recall of the laid-off workers.

This decision compelled the company to recall two of the laid-off workers, and to put them to work on the second shift. At the time of the present issue, several weeks after the previous incident—these two men were still at work. Instead of their working a very short period and again being laid off (as the company's reported temporary need would have indicated) they were, at the time of the present incident, still on the job. From this the union concluded that the company's position in the former case was either unsound or deliberately misleading. This experience and the lessons which the union derived from is in full evidence in the meeting.

## **The General Wage Increase**

The collective bargaining contract between the employer and the union expired on May 31, 1949. Prior to its expiration, the parties engaged in negotiations, the union seeking a general wage increase and pensions. These negotiations were conducted for the first time on a multicompany basis. No agreement was reached on the issues, and the contract was extended with the proviso that the wage question might be reopened in three months.

The carpet local unions involved in these negotiations agreed to prevent any further accumulation of inventories by their respective employers, so that if a strike ensued as a result of unsuccessful bargaining after the three months, the companies would not be in a favorable position with respect to the market.

The Thompsonville local implemented this agreement by a rule against overtime during the interim period. The president of the local expressed the situation in these words.

"We're looking forward to--at least with some hope, in the next two or three months--renegotiating a wage increase. And if we, at this time, or since our last agreement, agree to work overtime, we're just saying to the company 'Go ahead! Build

yourselves an inventory!' And three months from now we can look forward to sitting down with them and they'll say 'no!' And we'll be in another position if we don't agree; because we know damned well that will not be the opportune time to push the company into an increase. Because of this going through negotiations, we know that one of the serious drawbacks to us in the industry---not getting a raise at this time--was not because the company couldn't afford to give it, but because the company was in the driver's seat because of a big inventory."

To implement this rule, decisions on specific requests for overtime were henceforth to be made by the officers of the local and the chairman of the department from which overtime was requested. Previously, the chairman alone made the decision. This was not the only basis for the new rule, but the wage problem served as the immediate internal issue which made possible its passage.

### **SUMMARY**

The foregoing explanations of the history and background of the events should provide a sufficient basis for a reading of the transcription. At appropriate places in the text, further explanatory footnotes are offered.

The meeting was informal, without a chairman or any invoked rules of order. Nevertheless, the discussion pressed very insistently upon the subjects under consideration. Questions were raised, information was provided, lines of inquiry were projected, viewpoints were offered, and positions were formulated throughout the meeting. The discussion tended to evolve in phases associated with each individual participant and his particular line of interest. Each would take up the subject, press his questions and points, and then withdraw from the center of the discussion while someone else took over. Several of the participants reentered the discussion. There are therefore inevitable irregularities in the flow of analysis as recorded in the transcription.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE UNION MEETING ON OVERTIME IN THE SKEIN DYE DEPARTMENT: A TRANSCRIPTION

The text presented in this chapter is a verbatim transcription of a meeting which took place in the union hall of Local #2188, Textile Workers Union of America, CIO, at Thompsonville, Conn. The conference occurred on Tuesday, June 28, 1949 at approximately 11:00 A.M. and lasted 23 minutes.

This text is taken from a recording which was made of the meeting. The transcription is a faithful and as complete as possible a representation of the discussion as could be obtained from the recording<sup>6</sup>

Participants in the meeting are identified as follows:

- FM: President of Local #2188
- GR: Vice President of Local #2188
- JD: Secretary of Local #2188
- BL: Chairman of the Dye House
- EH: Sub-Chairman of the Dye House

---

<sup>6</sup> This fidelity in the transcription means that every word in this conference which could possibly be identified in the recording has been set down. Unfortunately much non-verbal material is lost in transcribing the living meeting into a written text. The vigor of the expression, the assertiveness of the speakers, the pace of the meeting, the humor, the irony and sarcasm, the extra-verbal interplay of personalities and relative positions, the significance of unfinished expressions fully understood in the spoken context disappear when the recording is committed to writing.

As a result many of the significant features and shadings of the relations of these men to each other, to the union, to the workers they represent, and to the various managerial employees to whom they refer are observed or are altogether undetectable in the written text. Extreme caution must be observed in relying upon the text alone to illuminate the meanings expressed by the participants.

The explanatory notes will provide some improvement in this unavoidable situation. The analysis which follows the meeting had the benefit of both presence at the conference and the continuing availability of the recording.



The following symbols are employed in the transcription:

X: inaudible speech

XX VOICES XX: inaudible speech of several persons speaking  
simultaneously

---: speech interrupted; also, before a speech, indicates a  
resumption.

...: indicates a hesitancy by the speaker

\*\*\*: deletion at the request of the participants

(The meeting opens with BL, Chairman of the Dye House, quoting L-, his overseer.

BL: --- X “Let’s sit down together and get an agreement.”<sup>1</sup> An agreement is essential,  
the  
way I look at it.

FM: Is it?

BL: The way he give it to me yesterday afternoon, he needs it bad.<sup>2</sup> He called me in  
the  
office again, and I said, “What the hell do you ant now?” He only said, “Here, sit  
down.

Very urgent.” He said, “I just left S--.”<sup>4</sup> and he said, “We’ve got to make up at  
least

six full days work with overtime, for the time they lost in there.”<sup>5</sup> And he said,  
“Unless  
you do so,” he said,

- 
1. The Overseer desires an agreement covering the overtime problem and the issue of the men leaving work on account of excessive heat. BL is interested in an agreement to secure proper ventilation in the department. He is also concerned with settling the overtime problem, since each time the issue is raised, it precipitates a union problem: whether to allow overtime to the employed workers or call back the laid off men.
  2. BL first heard of the problem during the preceding afternoon while at work. BL is on the second shift.
  3. The officers and BL had had a conference with the department officials during the preceding afternoon on another matter.
  4. S--: Assistant Plant manager of the Thompsonville plant.
  5. The "time lost" refers to the layoffs which accompanied the dryers' walking out during the preceding hot days.

"your Jacquard and other parts of the mill are going to suffer."<sup>6</sup> he said, "I'm not . . . " He said, "This is no bull, this time, here, it's all fact."<sup>7</sup> He said that every piece of carpet that Jacquard is making now is sold. And he said, "We have ninety thousand pounds of yarn downstairs . . . X in the store bin X"

FM: Every piece of carpet the Jacquard is making is sold?

BL: Every piece of carpet the Jacquard is making is sold.

FM: He's \* \* \*<sup>8</sup>

BL: Well . . . Look . . . Now . . . Let me . . . I'm only quoting what he told me.

FM: I'm just X as we go along. That guy is just \* \* \* .

- 
6. The skein dye department processes yarn which is used by the weaving departments. Since a portion of the essential raw materials of carpets must go through this department, a lag in production here will be immediately felt in the succeeding processes.
  7. This refers to the previous overtime case. See Chapter IX.
  8. FM is a weaver in the Jacquard department. The writer later questioned FM as to the basis for his disbelief. He replied that he had been informed by the company

in another connection that the market position of Jacquard carpet was not as reported by BL. And further, "Because we've got warehouses full of stuff that isn't moving. There are only certain types of carpet they're making now that are really selling. The other stuff is in warehouses." A further basis for his close interest at this time was the union's and his especially, as president of the Local - - concern with the company's inventory position. See the discussion in Chapter VIII on the wage reopening problem.

BL: Maybe in this here Glentwist<sup>9</sup> that he's mentioned . . . He said, "Unless we catch up on this ninety-thousand pound of yarn that's downstairs,"<sup>10</sup> "it's going to affect the Jacquard in the department." And he said it will have its affect on - -

FM: To what degree?

BL: Well, he says they'll have to close it down for a couple of days.<sup>11</sup> I said to him, "Look. Before, too<sup>12</sup> . . . I don't want to get implicated in this here. I told you once before there'd be no overtime." "Well," he said, "Would you expect . . .," he said, "or the Union expect," he said, "as we talked it over with S--," he said, "just two weeks be-- . . . Now we're going to have vacation," he said, "for three weeks."<sup>13</sup> Would you expect," he said, "that we should go over there<sup>14</sup> and call maybe two or three men, or maybe four men, to come back,"<sup>15</sup> he said, "for four or five days, or maybe six days," he said, "and then knowingly they're going to get the three

9. Glentwist is the company's name for one of the constructions of yarn involved in this problem. The other yarn is Allegro.
10. This is the operating problem: 90,000 pounds of damp yarn were piled downstairs waiting to be dried.
11. The Jacquard department will have to shut down for a couple of days.
12. Reference here is to the previous overtime problem. See chapter IX.
13. This occurred on Tuesday, June 28, 1949. Four working days remained in this week. Since the following Monday would be July 4<sup>th</sup>, the next week also had only four working days. Beginning Monday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, the plant was to be closed for three weeks, reopening on August 1<sup>st</sup>. The first week would be a general layoff; the remaining two weeks were the scheduled annual vacation.
14. To the personnel office.
15. i.e., recall to work the men laid off.

weeks vacation?" he said, "taken, maybe," he said, "out of Social Security,<sup>16</sup> or something else, to start them up," he said, "and that's the end of it? But," he said, "under these here conditions," he said, "if you want proof, I want a meeting immediately with the officers, yourself, Mr. S--, and myself ---"

FM: He's got to prove it to me.

BL: ---" and," he said, "we'll sit across the table and let Mr. S—throw the facts out to the

Union officers the same as he threw them out ---"

FM: I don't want facts.<sup>17</sup> I want him to show me these looms that<sup>18</sup> he's running it and where this yarn is ---

BL: He said he wants a meeting with the Union and S—and himself. And he said that S—will show them facts in black and white, that the overtime is a must.

FM: Why all of a sudden overtime?<sup>19</sup>

---

16. He means Unemployment Compensation. The amount that a laid-off worker earns during an unemployed week is deducted from his Unemployment Compensation for that week. Thus, a man who receives \$27 per week when completely unemployed, and earns, say \$9 per day when recalled to the plant; if he works three days during a particular week he is no better off than if he had not worked at all—except insofar as he has the \$27 left which he may later draw as Unemployment Compensation if he is subsequently unemployed. There is an annual maximum number of 26 weeks of compensation in Connecticut.
17. “Facts” in this context refers to the company’s data and argumentation as contrasted with the operating and plant data listed here and subsequent by FM as essential to a formulation of the problem.
18. that: on which.
19. The officers and BL had met with L—the previous day and nothing was mentioned of overtime. See note 68.

BL: When he left us yesterday afternoon . . . when we went on that complaint, that was where

he went.<sup>20</sup> He says that S-- called him immediately, and S—said the department’s got to get back.<sup>21</sup>

(Voices: FM and GR discuss another matter)

What did he tell you<sup>22</sup> this morning, I believe your problem you told me was the same

thing. Is that it?

EH: Yes.

BL: Now I didn't even know what he wanted me for. They got me up at the garage . .  
. my

wife said that he called the house.<sup>23</sup> What did he say to you<sup>24</sup> this morning?

EH: He said that they were pretty distressed...They've got to have this stuff off the  
floor<sup>25</sup>...X They've got stuff there for five days no.

FM: How did it come to get there?

EH: Well, that's been backing up.

FM: From where?

- 
20. He refers to the previous meeting of L—and the officers. See note 3.
  21. The department must catch up on its production schedule by processing the 90,000 pound backlog.
  22. you: EH, sub-chairman of the department, who works on the first shift.
  23. BL, the department chairman, works on the second shift. The company official called him at his home to present the overtime problem, since BL would not be at the plant until 2:00 P.M. It is evident here that BL did not actually know the details of the company's request, since he had had no direct contact with the company since his conversation with L—the day before. See note 2.
  24. you: EH. BL here asks EH just what the company wanted, since the request was given during the morning to EH.
  25. This is the reported basis for the company's request for overtime.

EH: Backing up from the time off we took, and everything else.

FM: Well, why the Hell didn't he let you work?<sup>27</sup>

EH: Well, he should have let us work, sure.

FM: What does he want from us?

BL: He said about the ninety thousand pounds of yarn downstairs that's got to come  
up. That's what he claims. I said, "Wait a minute, brother. It ain't as easy as all

that. We'll sit down across the table, if that's what you want. But first you're going to show facts. Because I'm not going to make no decision on it. I want to see facts."

FM: What'd you say about three or four days?

BL: He said that it would probably be from now until the end of vacation.<sup>28</sup>

FM: well, you're talking about . . . He said something about people coming back - - -<sup>29</sup>

BL: Bringing people back, maybe three or four men to work - - -

FM: When? When bring them back?

BL: If we're going to refuse,<sup>30</sup> he's going to try and get them in next week. And what the Hell's the benefit of taking in at the end of the week? And then knowingly that they're going to get a three-week layoff<sup>31</sup>. Who the Hell's he going to get?

---

26. He refers here to the occasions on which the dryers left the plant, and to the accompanying layoff of the other workers in the department. See Chapter IX.

27. This again refers to the layoff which followed the dryers' leaving work.

28. This is the period of time for which the overtime was desired. Actually, it meant until July 8, since the plant would be closed thereafter until August 1.

29. I.e., recalling some of the laid off workers.

30. To permit the overtime.

31. One of the inexplicit factors in BL's statement is that if the company recalls laid off workers, they are required to return or lose their employment status with the company. Hence, the recall must be sufficiently attractive to the men so that they are not placed in a position to jeopardize their standing with the company. See note 16.

FM: You mean bringing in extra help?

BL: Yes, it is sort of ridiculous even to go by<sup>32</sup> that there. Because you know damn well right that if you was out on Social Security, knowing that you're going to break it up and you're going to have three weeks' vacation immediately after one week<sup>34</sup> . . . and he<sup>35</sup> claims that that would be about all. But if it extends after

vacation time, that then he would have to make arrangements to bring other people in. But for the time being he's got to have the work. If not, it's going to affect...what he told me, and I'll repeat it again...it's going to affect the Jacquard Department.

FM: Well, suppose he brought in people. What would happen?

BL: If he brought in people, then they'd work. But if it wasn't so close to vacation time...well that's the policy. But, as he<sup>36</sup> says, "If you're going to call them in now, how many are you going to get to come in?"

FM: I don't know.

---

32. to go by: to consider.

33. Social Security: receiving Unemployment Compensation. See Note 16.

34. Under these conditions, a laid off worker would not care to return to work.

35. he: the overseer.

36. he: the overseer.

EH: They won't lose anything by coming in.

FM: What can they lose by coming in, Bill

EH: They won't lose a thing.



FM: Supposing they come in and they work this week and next week. They don't disturb their waiting period on Social Security.<sup>37</sup>

BL: Well. And that's just the story he handed me, and that's X.

GR: Well, could they...How many people would they have to bring in? Would they be on the second shift?

BL: It would have to be the second shift.

FM: So how many people could he use?

GR: Could they do it on the second shift?

EH: Probably they could do it on the second shift, sure.

GR: Yes, but I mean they want either the group on days or the groups on nights to work one hour apiece nights. I mean an hour apiece overtime.

BL: He wants to work them nine hours a day. From now until vacation.<sup>38</sup>

---

37. Before a worker can draw Unemployment Compensation he must have been unemployed for a specified period, the "waiting period." If a layoff is broken by short periods of work, this does not affect the waiting period. Waiting period time is cumulative during this year.

38. BL did not actually know the details of the company's request. His report here is not accurate. As he states later, he displayed to his overseer a disinterest in the details, partly because of anger over the results of their previous meeting, partly because the decision regarding overtime was no longer his to make. The burden of his report to the officers was that the company desired a meeting with the officers and chairmen, who are the union's responsible decision-makers on overtime. As they subsequently ascertained in the meeting with the company, they wanted only six dryer operators to work overtime: four on the first shift and two on the second shift.

EH: The day shift, he wants them to work nine hours a day ---

GR: And the night shift ---

EH: -- without bringing in anybody.

GR: That's right. And the night shift ---

EH: And the night shift is to come in and all work eight hours,

GR: Nine hours. Both shifts.

EH: Both shifts, is it? Is that what he said? No . . .

GR: That's what S-- told me.

EH: S-- told you that?

GR: I happened to be talking to him about something else and that's what he told me.

BL: The night shifts works nine hours?

GR: Both shifts.

BL: He's only got two men, of course, on the night shift. He'd have to work them nine hours if he's going to work the day shift nine hours.<sup>39</sup>

FM: What's he want done, and how many men could he bring in and put to work?

BL: That is the question that would have to be settled.

GR: I mean, the point is, you're going to have certain machines running. These people working with these machines are working eight hours. Is it possible to bring in other men? Would they interfere with each other? Or what?

BL: Positively. If he brought in other men and put them on the first shift...

---

39. This, because the department would require additional drying capacity; and because of the workers' insistence on sharing overtime.

GR: Where would he work? Where would he work?

BL: He would have to start another second shift for maybe a week.

EH: He couldn't bring nobody in on the first shift. They'd interfere with each other.

FM: Well, he could do the work on the second shift.

GR: Could he do it on the second shift? You haven't got the amount of people on the second shift as you have on the third shift?

BL: No. No third shift.

GR: I mean the second... You haven't got as many people on the second shift as you have on the first shift?

BL: We got about forty men on the first shift.

GR: How many you got on the second shift.

BL: We got two on the second shift.

EH: That's all.

GR: Two men? That's all working

BL: For a long time I refused overtime that I give all the men --- X

GR: Don't you<sup>40</sup> work the second shift? Is here only two people working?

BL: That's raw stock.<sup>41</sup> We're talking about skein dye. We're not talking about ---

GR: Oh! Skein dye.

FM: So how many people could he use in there on the second shift for what he wants?

---

40. you: BL

41. Raw stock and skein dye are two processes in the dye house.

BL: That is the question. The answer would have to be settled by him and S-- I didn't even ask him. All that he asked<sup>42</sup> about the overtime. And when he said about

the problem there of bringing them in for three, four days, and by the time they make the phone calls here and there, in the office, it would take them three or four days in order to contact the people. And by the time they get down here, time they go through the doctor's,<sup>43</sup> and everything else, he said it would be almost foolish. So I said to him, "As far as your overtime is concerned, Bud, there's a new ruling over there"<sup>44</sup> The officers sit down with the chairman. I don't make no more decisions."

GR: Well, its only eighteen hours work. I don't know ---

FM: Next week is Fourth of July. This could extend after vacation.

BL: If it extends after vacation, it ceases ---<sup>45</sup>

FM: Any time he says "If," Bill, there's a possibility that it's going to extend.

BL: Well, if it does, then he knows it's got to go back to ---

GR: Well. Let's put it this way. You work each shift nine hours.

BL: Right.

GR: The rest of the week there will be only eight hours more work.

BL: This week here, add four each next week.

GR: There will be only eight hours for both shifts.

---

42. Insert: was.

43. A medical examination is required of returning employees.

44. In the Union.

45. The practice is making overtime agreements in this plant is to specify the period of time during which the agreement is operative. BL indicates that an agreement, if made, would expire on July 8<sup>th</sup>

BL: Yes.

GR: Today's Tuesday. Next week is only a four-day week, another eight hours<sup>46</sup>. So it's sixteen hours' work. Well, does it pay to bring in somebody for sixteen hours?

FM: Do you mean to tell me in sixteen hours he's going to get sufficient yarn to keep what he says to these looms<sup>47</sup> on?

BL: If he used full capacity.

FM: How much can he produce in sixteen hours

BL: You'd be surprised.

FM: Look! Tell me! I'll be surprised!

BL: Sixteen hours. On the dryers there are now overtime,<sup>48</sup> and each dryer can give him approximately three thousand pounds -- right? -- more a day. X<sup>49</sup> be a week he's catching up three thousand. That would give him twelve thousand. Then next week again another twelve thousand. That's twenty-four thousand pound he's catching up only on the dryer.

FM: You do three thousand in two hours?

BL: In one hour. Three thousand in one hour.

GR: Then you got six thousand a day.

BL: That's right.

GR: For both shifts.

---

46. See note 19.

47. Insert: are.

48. BL is saying: if the dryers were to operate an additional hour (overtime) per shift, they would produce an additional three thousand pounds for each such hour.

49. X: each day in the week (assuming one overtime hour per day) he would catch up three thousand pounds.

BL: Well, that's right. No! No! Because at night they wouldn't . . . at night they'd give him probably about fifteen hundred pounds, because there's only one dryer working.

GR: Well, it would be four thousand five hundred, then.

EH: He'd<sup>50</sup> keep a man on. He'd keep P-- on the dryers, Bill.

BL: Well, then, all right. Then maybe it's three thousand and three thousand. That's six thousand pounds of drying a day that he could catch up.

FM: Well, would that all be the same kind of yarn that he's drying?

BL: Well, it's a ---

GR: Did he tell you it was on the Allegro and Glentwist?

BL: He didn't say nothing.

GR: Well. That's what S-- told me.<sup>51</sup>

BL: Well, then that . . . He said that he had a meeting with S-- yesterday. And that's just what I'm quoting to you because I didn't want to go into it. I was so hot about that meeting we had - - -

GR: He didn't mention Jacquard. Axminster and Tap.<sup>52</sup>

BL: He mentioned Jacquard to me.<sup>53</sup>

---

50. He: the overseer.

51. GR had already heard of the problem.

52. Jacquard, Axminster, and Tap (Tapestry) are the three weave departments in the plant. They represent three types of looms and styles of carpet.

53. GR here establishes that the weave departments affected by the yarn shortage are Axminster and Tapestry. It is evident that BL had been informed that the department which would suffer by the shortage is the Jacquard weave. GR and BL received their information from different sources; the former from the assistant plant manager, the latter from the overseer of the dye house. This

discrepancy is significant, since it suggested to the union officials a special bit of persuasion. FM, the president of the local, is a Jacquard weaver.

GR: Who did?

BL: T-- L-- . So there's a conflicting story here. But he said to me, the Jacquard is going to be affected by it. And he even said that every bit of carpet that's being made in the Jacquard Department is so ...

FM: He's \* \* \*

BL: Well, I didn't dream it. That's exactly what he told me.

FM: I'm not saying you did, Bill. I said he's \* \* \*

BL: Well, then, that's the story.

FM: Christ sake. The warehouse is full of Jacquard carpet they ain't selling.

BL: Maybe it's the new pattern.

FM: Well, he says everything they're weaving.

BL: That's right.

GR: Well, he's talking about these two grades, Bill. And I don't know what's - - -

(VOICES) Do you weave Glentwist in the Jacquard, Frank?

FM: They may use it in Serenade<sup>54</sup> . . . that hard twist.

GR: That's Glentwist. Whether it's in the Jacquard and the Tap and the Axminster Allegro. Those are your two jobs, two yarns.

BL: They've got plenty of Allegro coming ---

EH: X and it's where they're making their money. That's the way he<sup>55</sup> told me. He says,

“We can make a dollar on the Glentwist.” And that's primarily Tap ... Tapestry.

---

54. Serenade is the name of one of the styles of Jacquard carpet being woven.

55. he: T-- L-- , the overseer.

BL: Maybe he got it wrong. Maybe he meant the Tap when he said the --- X

FM: The Jacquard uses Glentwist but not X

BL: He also said he's got to get rid of the ninety-thousand pounds of yarn he's got downstairs. It's got to come up.

FM: I don't know . . . I don't know how the Hell much yarn he could produce to keep looms going in sixteen hours.

BL: You could produce a Hell of a lot. You'd be surprised. A Hell of a lot.

FM: If they're that close, Bill, there's no sense in working sixteen hours. There's enough work there to build up a backlog, if they're that close.

BL: The backlog couldn't be built up, not with that other ninety-thousand. He's going to get rid of that other ninety-thousand downstairs. He'd have to take that up and put it in the dyeing<sup>56</sup> operation X

FM: Well, let him put it in inventory. They'll be weaving Glentwist all over the mill.

BL: Take it up in inventory?

FM: Let them make an inventory of Glentwist yarn.

BL: They made an inventory now of that white yarn, for Christ's sake, that they say the mill is getting full; that every night I keep bringing the guys over: "Just look at this here!" Down in the cellar, for Christ's sake, I never seen so much yarn in all my life of stuff yet to be dyed. They don't even pile it no more. It's in bins. It's cheaper.



FM: What's that got to do with Glentwist?

BL: It's all got to do with process. They're not going to leave that - - -

---

56. dyeing should be: drying.

FM: Can they make Glentwist out of that?

BL: Glentwist, and this here Allegro.

FM: I'm telling you. Let them build an inventory of Glentwist.

BL: Well, how the Hell's he going to build it? Unless we give him the overtime?

FM: By putting on a shift.

BL: You can't from now until the ---<sup>57</sup>

FM: I'm not talking from now to then. I'm saying continuously. Are they going to quit

weaving Glentwist two week from now?

BL: I don't know. Most likely no ---

X

FM: Or are they gong to work from hand to mouth:

BL: That's probably the way they're working from hand to mouth.

FM: Well, we don't like it from hand to mouth.

BL: When an emergency emerges, that's what they just bring up, that's all.

JD: So they consider it an emergency, by their own fault.

BL: Well, then that's the emergency he told me. So I said to him, "Just hold on.

Tomorrow morning I'll contact the officers and --- "

FM: It sound kind of \* \* to me.

BL: He was pretty sincere about when he said ---

GR: It's only sixteen hours for both shifts.. (and that takes care of the situation X

---

57. Until the layoff and vacation.

BL: --- "Please arrange a meeting immediately with Mr. S-- ... with the officers, Mr. S--, myself, and yourself. And we've got to sit down because he says, "we can produce facts across the table." And every time you bring him to facts ... well, he was a little skeptical... just like last time. "The Hell with you. No overtime and that's it."<sup>58</sup> That's when we force him to bring in the two men. And the two men has been working since.

EH: Well, these guys ... nobody's drying. That's another thing, too. And that stuff is backing up all the time every day.

GR: How many people have you got laid off in the dye house?

BL: Maybe about six, seven.

GR: You say if you brought them in they wouldn't be able to do the work?

BL: Well, if you brought in four men at night, four more men at night, it still wouldn't give him his quota.

GR: Why couldn't he bring the six of them?

BL: I know at least two, three of them that got steady jobs. And they wouldn't come back. There's one left there, the one that left with Blondie, he's working for his brother-in-law in dry-cleaning business. Blondie is working X in Springfield.

Who the Hell else X ? Oh! X, he's working in the shipping room. Lyons is working in Merit's. That's four of the six that I know of who's got jobs. So who the Hell we going to get? We going to get another X people that don't even know anything at all about the jobs? By the time you stick them on and broke them in --

-

---

58. BL quotes himself as having said this to T-- L--, the overseer.

FM: What is there to learn about it?

BL: There's plenty to learn about it ... outside of twist yarn extractor. You couldn't very well

take them and put them on ... right away – put them on ... what the Hell do they call it,

again? ... the package dye. Or take them and put them on the dryers, or take them and

put them dipping, or on Permaset at night.

X

EH: In the first place, Frank and Gene, there can be no dyeing on the kettles of Allegro yarn at night. That was never done before and will not be done this time. So all

that was done at

night was Permasets and dryers, and extracting, too. They had to extract their yarns to get them into the dryers. So that's the three jobs to be done at night. No dyeing at all on Allegro or any of the white yarns. The all-Glentwist, Permaset, and drying of yarn in Permaset.

BL: We forced them to bring in the last two at night. He got ... with the foreman he got two at night shift, and that's all ...

FM: He's a personal foreman. They've got to pay him anyway.

BL: What the Hell! They had to pay him for one man anyway. So what the Hell's the difference?

#### XX VOICES XX

BL: What the Hell. He's got one ... a foreman to himself.

EH: Sure.

BL: B-- F-- is his forema. That's all. Period. One worker and one foreman.

GR: I believe if there's only sixteen hours work. The way it's mentioned if that's the true story, there's no sense of bringing in there two, three men for sixteen hours' work.

BL: I'm giving you what he gave me.

GR: After vacation, if the thing picks up where you got to ... because if it don't clear up, then ... you should expect to put other men on the job. But, if it's only sixteen hours ---

EH: Supposing the men don't want to work overtime? There's another questions there.

GR: That's up to the ---

EH: They're not at all happy with the way things have been going. There's no good union-labor relations in there.

FM: Well, he can have trouble.

EH: Yeah, sure ...

XX VOICES XX

GR: Let's see. When we asked him to work, they sent them home.<sup>59</sup> Could this work have been done within those hours when they sent them...?

BL: Not on the dryers.

GR: The dryers have got to be going, is that it?

BL: Yeah, let's not kid ourselves there.

EH: We're dyeing more than we're drying, Gene.

GR: Well, let's get the story!

JD: He's dyeing more than he can dry.

GR: At that time it wouldn't have made no difference. You couldn't work anyway. Is that it?

---

59. This refers to the previous heat incident. The officers had met with the department supervision in an unsuccessful effort to prevent a layoff of the entire group..

BL: There is certain people in there, say maybe four or five, that they could actually work

without the dryers working. His<sup>60</sup> job in particular. Then it has no effect...He's got his own dryers. He's got his own extractors. He's got his own machines. It's an altogether different unit entirely. He's got his own foreman for himself. And what the foreman does.....

GR: He's got a position!

EH: Yeah, sure.

BL: He's an important man over there! A one man gang and everything else. One foreman over one man.

XX VOICES XX

BL: --- He's<sup>61</sup> got to go down to the office to see the XX

FM: What the Hell's wrong with that? The company's got to pay the foreman anyway.

What

are you trying to take away jobs from the foremen?

BL: Did you see the list? They didn't even classify him as a foreman on the list...Dyer,

junior grade.

FM: You don't want to go around taking away jobs from people.

BL: The one reason why they made him was the GI Bill of Rights ran out on him. So now the

company felt sympathetic towards him, I think and they made up about the ninety-five

dollars.

FM: The thing I can't understand, Bill, is how they're running as close as they're running on

this type of yarn.

---

60. His: EH's job.

61. He: the foreman.

BL: It's all over the mill, Frank, not only there. All over the mill.

FM: Well, it's no good.

BL: What the Hell are we going to do? They're just going to say, "That's as much yarn as we want!" And what can you say to them? And there's nothing in God's world we can do about it, outside of walking out for a week and let's let it accumulate there again. That's about all.

FM: Is that bad?

BL: That's good! I don't give a damn if you start it now!

XX VOICES XX

FM: You go into the Jacquard and tell them if the dye house don't work they're going to have to loaf a couple or three days. I'm sure you're going to find more people happy than unhappy.

BL: And they'll find me right along with them. I'll be the jolliest one of the lot. In fact, I'll ---X

FM: I still can't understand why the Hell they should be running as close as they're running on yarn, Bill.

BL: Well, that's just the ---

FM: Where did this yarn go to that they supposedly had in inventory?

BL: In production.

FM: And you haven't been making any of that yarn?

BL: Don't forget. The mill has been using it.

FM: Yeah. But they've been making it right along.

EH: Check the Axminster. Check your setters and your winders. Half of them have been laid out. And your pickers have been ... no they haven't

BL: Well, there you are. That means you're on short time.

FM: Well, you've had a cut-back in weaving.

EH: A cut-back in weaving. I don't know where the Hell ...

FM: Well, what the Hell. If you're cutting back in weaving, that means you are using less yarn.

BL: Ever since they set up the big looms<sup>62</sup> as what they have now.

FM: They got a Hell of a lot less big looms on now than they did five months ago.

GR: Well, what is your feeling, Bill, on this? Well, what are you saying then, that we should sit down with them?

BL: I'd like to see the proof across the table. Because I'm afraid that if we say all right to this here, he's going to pull a phony. And it may be that he wants to build up the thing, build up something there in advance. Then when we come back again, that if a heat wave happens to hit us, the first thing he's going to say, "Well, go home, then!" But if we can keep him on this base here, and if ever we want a cure, a heat reedy in the place, we got the weapon now. We got the club over his head and he knows we're going to swing it on him again. But by giving him this here overtime, we give him a free rein. I'm afraid that he's going to hold the club and he's going to beat our brains out.

GR: Bill, I don't think that's the attitude.

BL: I don't know. I know him better than either of you.

---

62. S"small" refers to narrow and "big" refers to wide looms. This implication here is that the big looms consume more yarn than the small looms.

GR: They either need it or they don't need it, so it only proves ---

BL: Well, if that's your feeling ---



GR: Actually, it's the yarn that they need for the weave shops to keep them going. It's not a question of overproducing. It's a question of keeping the other departments running. Either that you people work overtime, or we decide that you people work... I mean that you people in the department, without hiring any people back...calling these people back Or you people work overtime. I do think you ought to decide.

FM: He's got to convince me that he hasn't got that type of yarn around before I'll agree to it.

GR: Well, that's what S-- told me. He says they haven't got ... they're really close up on those yarns, especially Allegro and Glentwist.

BL: I believe they are going to make new colors. That's my personal opinion and he tried to tell me that they're going to try and produce colors ---

FM: Well. Let's find out what their thinking is, and what grades of yarn. We ought to be able to check, roughly, just about how much of that yarn they got laying around in Finish63. That shouldn't be hard.

BL: How about trying to arrange a meeting with him, say, about one o'clock?

FM: Can't we find out through Colored yarn, how much of that stuff they got kicking around, roughly?

BL: Probably take you a couple of hours.

JD: We could get the figures. S-- will be able to get the figures.

BL: S-- !

---

63. Finish: Finished Yarn Stores..

EH: Well, that's where he is right now.

FM: We can get them right now from our own people within the Colored Yarn

EH: We can do that, too.

FM: Find out what type of yarn he wants and let's check to see what amount of that yarn they got laying around. Let's find out how many looms they got using it. How much they're using for days ---

EH: And how many weavers are going to be laid off.

FM: --- I think that's a lot of \*\* for my dough.

BL: Yeah, I got the same feeling.

FM: It doesn't seem to me that somebody like that would run that close.

GR: Well, why would they want to run them overtime, Frank?

FM: I don't know, Gene, I don't know.

GR: It's really ... the hours amounting here is very little, that they're asking for.

FM: If it's so little, it shouldn't concern us.

GR: I mean it's little ... the hours ... as far as we're concerned. But it means a lot of production going through. It isn't a case of producing it. It's a case of getting it out to the weave shops.

JD: Gene, going along your same lines there, on why they want the overtime. Why the Hell did they want the Shipping Department to work? And I kept telling you two officers – myself being an officer – where the Hell are the orders? They'd go in there and work four hours and they'd be sitting looking at one another, on the overtime.

EH: Maybe this is another case of the same instance. I don't know.

FM: Well, what would they gain by that?

GR: There's nothing wrong with it.

JD: No! There's nothing wrong with it.

GR: There's nothing wrong with getting paid for overtime doing nothing.

XX VOICES XX

JD: --- Why is the company trying to pull something here to ---

BL: XX VOICES XX

FM: Well, the point is here, Bill, we can jabber here all day and we still aren't going to get any further than what we're getting. I think that what we ought to do is get the information that they've got, the type of yarn they want, the type that the feel they have on hand, the amount of looms involved, whether or not this was likely to become a continuous thing after vacation. Because they're sure as Hell going to weave Glentwist after vacation as well as now.

EH: Absolutely.

FM: They're not marking off any looms. They're putting more on.

JD: That's one of the best sellers.

BL: Supposing we got a list ---

FM: If we do, we'd have them check it.

GR: Where did you say S-- was?

EH: They're down J--'s<sup>64</sup> office.

GR: L-- is there, too?

EH: L-- told me ... he says, "Call me out of the meeting!"

64. J-- : Plant Superintendent..

GR: Well, supposing we call S-- up and meet him now on this.

FM: But it is S-- that wants to meet us?

BL: Yes, sir! S-- , T-- L-- . He said that if there's any facts you want, he said, "Mr. S-- said he hopes the officers will only sit down with him and meet him."

FM: When is this?

BL: Any time. And he<sup>65</sup> was bothering him<sup>66</sup> this morning. As soon as my wife called me up at the garage – I went up for gas – I said, "Well, I don't even have to call Higgins."

XX

Yeah. My wife called me. What the Hell do you think, T-- L-- ?

GR: Shall we call the meeting that they<sup>67</sup> want to sit down with us on this?

FM: If they want to sit down, tell them we're available.

GR: X as you said, we could talk here all day X

BL: Still, I like to see facts across the table. I like my boss.

EH: I know you do.

FM I don't like him that well.

BL: You don't know him like I know him.

XX

BL: You guys are prejudiced against T—L-- . That's the trouble.

FM: Not me.

---

65. he: T-- L-- , the overseer

66. him: EH

67. they: the company representatives.

EH: You know what today should have been, Bill? A good, hot, muggy day and we'd have gotten an answer like that. Here it is, it's sixty degrees out, and we're jibber-jabbering. If it was like yesterday, they'd have got their answer the minute he said something.

BL: `XX

EH: Yesterday morning I asked him for two fans. And they had the new engineers down, you know, looking around. And I never heard no more about it. So I just dropped a hint when I left there. I saw R--, see and I said, "Hey! did you hear anything about the two fans I requested?" He said, "No!" He said, "I'm going to get myself in a jam if I don't return the fans he gave us."

\*\* \* \*\*

EH: I'll say truthfully here that he is behind on his Glentwist. X X Because, Frank, it's obvious. If we forced them to bring in those two men to run the Permaset at night, another eight hours a day, and they're running four or five batches at night plus what they do in the daytime. The dayshift dryers can't get it done.

FM: Well, how is it all of a sudden they find out they need yarn? Do you mean to say that this condition doesn't extend itself back, or is it only last week? Is Glentwist yarn being consumed?

EH: Well, sure, it's being consumed.

FM: X they got better checks than that on it.

---

68. A most unusual circumstance occurred the previous day. Between 3 and 7 P.M. the temperature dropped more than 30 degrees and remained low during the day of this meeting.

EH: Well, what did they let us go home for? We lost a day and a half to get three lousy little fans.<sup>69</sup>

\*\* \* \*\*

GR: He's got a superintendent's meeting now.

FM: Very important.

GR: He wanted to make it two o'clock.

FM: Very important. Their business comes first. Did I hear you say that they wanted to sit down with us as soon as possible, any time?

BL: He just told me to call him out of the meeting. He said to call him out of the meeting unless it's very urgent.

EH: Did you talk to S-- !

GR: Yeah.

EH: And what did he say, one fifteen?

GR: Yeah. I wanted the meeting now, if he's available, I told him.

EH: Where's the meeting going to be held? Down in S-- 's office?

GR: I guess so.

EH: That's down alongside of J-- 's.

GR: Yeah.

FM: He's a big sheel.

BL: I know he's a big sheel. He's almost as big as T-- L-- . He thinks he is

FM: He's bigger than L-- .

---

69. After the incident in which they left work, three fans were installed.

BL: He's bigger than L-- , all right. Another guy that comes around checking up at eight, nine o'clock at night to see if you're smoking.

### THE OUTCOME

That same afternoon the five union officials met with the assistant plant manager, the Superintendent of the dye house and several foremen. During the latter part of their conference the union chairmen of the other weave departments were present. After a discussion lasting almost two hours, the union agreed to the overtime.

The company wanted overtime work from four dryer tenders on the first shift and two on the second shift. A large amount of wet Allegro and Glentwist yarn had accumulated. Both the Axminster and Tapestry weave departments needed these yarns, and were being threatened with curtailed operations because of the shortage.

JD later reported the conclusion of the issue as follows:

"We left the room that we were meeting with Mr. S-- and went to another room. The officers and chairman of that department caucused where there was people affected already due to the slackness of the yarn. And we felt that if they didn't get it, more looms would be stopped."

Asked about the decision, GR replied, "It was warranted. The overtime had to go on so as to have the weavers get their yarn so they wouldn't stop their looms.

## <sup>7</sup>CHAPTER 4

### THE MEETING AS DECISION MAKING ON PRODUCTION

It will now be shown that this event was an instance of worker decision making on production. As the analysis unfolds, it will become apparent that it could not possibly be a unique event in operation of the local union. To the contrary, the procedure, the rules, the experience of the men, and many other things testify to its routine and matter-of-fact character.

The case to be presented is built upon two principal inferences from the evidence of the meeting. The first one is that the local union officials handled the issue as a production problem requiring a production decision. That is, they talked as decision makers on production: they formulated production alternatives, and their solution was a solution to a production problem. In particular, they employed a rational method in analyzing and solving their problem--which method was relevant to making production decisions. These things will be set forth in the present chapter.

The second inference is that the local union officials made an effective production decision, one which would be executed in the productive operations of the plant. (This will be developed in Chapter 5). With respect to this particular production problem, their decision making was no less effective than the employer's. In advancing these claims, it will be possible to show some of the unique characteristics of worker decision making, especially as it differs from the employer's.

### THEY TALKED AS DECISION MAKERS

The assumption must be made that the participants at the meeting meant the things they said. That is to say, that they spoke realistically with respect to the roles they

---

<sup>7</sup> For reasons unique to their system, the participants rarely employ the customary language of decision making on production. Their perception of production conditions, of the artifacts and ways of work is entirely different from that which exists in the prevailing business and industrial culture. To them, the production system is a network of social relations: of workers, occupational tasks performed by workers, terms and conditions of employment sustained by workers, relations among workers in respect to working conditions, and the like. They articulate the production system largely as a complex interrelation of the workforce and its activities in producing output.

For example instead of saying that there were not enough machines available to be able to employ extra people on the first shift, EH says, "They'd interfere with each other." Instead of asking, "What is the productive capacity of the drying operation in sixteen hours?" FM asked, "How much can he produce in sixteen hours?" Instead of saying that the level of operations in dyeing exceeded that in drying, JD said, "He's dyeing more than he can dry." Instead of saying impersonally, "weaving had been curtailed," FM says, "Well, you've had a cutback in weaving."

This mode of expression reflects neither ignorance of the subject of production nor any lack of sophistication about the factory. The things they had to say which pertained to productive arrangements made sense in terms of the technical and integrative functions of the plant. The language they employed is an evidence of their special way of seeing the productive processes.



held and that they were not play acting nor indulging themselves in fantasies of grandiose authority in the plant and union. This assumption still leaves ample margin for genuine errors, misconception or faulty judgments. It is not a difficult assumption to make because: the men actually held the positions they spoke from, they had the power to make the decisions they made, and what they decided was actually put into effect. This assumption makes it possible to treat the text of the meeting as a body of observed data and to take seriously the content of the deliberations.

Using the text as a source, it will now be possible to show: that the men were competent decision makers on production; that they formulated and analyzed the overtime issue as a production problem; and that they possessed a workable method of reaching a relevant decision. Since these claims will be extracted from the meeting, the conclusion will be reached at the end of the analysis that the participants talked as decision makers.

### **THE PARTICIPANTS AS DECISION MAKERS ON PRODUCTION**

One of the most impressive revelations afforded by the transcription is the extent of the participants' knowledge of methods of integrating production, and of the application of these methods to their problem.

This knowledge begins with the components of the production process – the product, materials, unit operations, equipment, processes and the like. It involves, as a kind of second order, a knowledge of these components in the physical flow of materials into product. Most complex of all, they reveal a knowledge of how to integrate and plan production: the process of arranging the interconnections so as to produce predetermined results.

The component elements of the production processes are referred to throughout the meeting. They spoke of the various kinds of carpets woven, the patterns, the colors and the various kinds of yarn included in the types of carpet. They dealt with the yarns used in production, and spoke of their names, their colors, their kinds and their grades. They referred regularly to the various production processes, including yarn production, weaving, and dyeing. They disclosed knowledge of the principal production equipment such as the dryers, dyeing units, extractors, package dyeing units, permaset machines, and the several kinds of looms. They evidenced knowledge of other parts of the plant such as the yarn stores, and technical services.

They spoke continuously of the interrelations of these components: of yarn construction to skein dyeing, and of skein dyeing to weaving, and of weaving to distribution. They dealt with the products of each process and their utilization by subsequent processes. Their knowledge of the connection of workers and jobs to the processes was fully evident throughout the meeting.

Over and above these structural interrelationships, they gave ample evidence of comprehension of other factors composing the variables in the connection of element to

element. They dealt with rates of output of equipment and processes and with rates of consumption of materials in process, and relationship of the magnitude of such inventories of materials in process, with rates of consumption of materials. They discussed inventories of materials in process, and the relationship of the magnitude of such inventories to production rates and schedules. They spoke of the relationship of output rates to work force, and to the balance of rates between sequential processes . Their knowledge of integration included the formulation of independent investigations of production conditions to establish factual bases for their decisions.

The foregoing are some of the topics of which a clear understanding was presupposed in the deliberations of the meeting. But beyond these, the men dealt with the integration of production: the planning, scheduling and coordinating of production activities; the determination of the operation of the components and their interrelations so as to yield results which they set as objectives.

Concerned centrally with the level of output of yarn, they worked with integrative problems surrounding the determination of appropriate level, and the means whereby such levels could be achieved. The determination of level involved considerations of balance along the preceding and succeeding processes, and the inventory levels of processed yarns. Factors governing the balance were levels of operation, materials consumption, and distribution schedules. On the unit operations and processes, they spoke knowingly of determining rates of output by size of work and of shift operations and they considered some of the problems created at the job by raising output schedules.

This is the kind of knowledge which decision makers on production must have. The meeting shows that the participants used their knowledge in ways wholly relevant to decision making. Obviously, the meeting does not reveal all that they know of the subject, nor does all the knowledge pertinent to their particular problem actually become spoken during the course of discussion. It is enough however to draw the conclusion that the men had the kind of knowledge which was required to make a production decision.

## **THE METHOD OF DECISION MAKING**

To make production decisions a method is needed.

The integration of a production system requires that a vast complex of material and technical components be selected and arranged, if the final product is to flow in the desired quality and quantity. Since there are always alternatives, both as to kind and limit, in the arrangements of production -- alternatives provided by available means, scientific and engineering knowledge, and the like -- the decision making function must calculate these alternatives and select from among them the one which satisfies the requirements of the decision makers.

The method of decision making on production is the process by which alternatives are formulated and final choices of action are made. It is, in a restricted sense, a problem

solving process, exhibiting many of the features of a calculus of inputs and outputs in relation to the production alternatives under consideration. The decision making method is therefore a logical, rational system which brings to bear the criteria of the decision maker upon the determination of production arrangements.

A method of making production decisions may be found in, and extracted from, the overtime meeting. For purposes of exposition, this method will be presented in two steps. In the first, the participants' method of analysis will be described. This will show the analytical framework by which they handled the overtime problem. The second step will derive a theory of the method by which they reached a decision. Together, the two seek to demonstrate that the men of the meeting possessed and used a relevant method of making production decisions.

### **Their Analytical Framework**

To the employer, the union and the participants, the objective of the meeting was to return a decision on whether or not overtime might be worked. Starting with a very ordinary term of employment--overtime--they quickly identified their problem as one of production policy--the proper level of output in the department. This led them directly to investigate possible ways of changing output levels within the capability of their decision making powers.

The analysis disclosed by the meeting can be organized according to these two topics: the level of output and the methods of achieving them. Tables 1 and 2 present the participants' analyses of these two sub-problems.

Table 1 analyzes the alternative levels of drying which were considered in the meeting, together with the issues which the participants expressed about each level. They conceived of five different levels of drying which might be introduced into the department. These five levels were either explicitly stated or else implied in their consideration of resulting issues. That they were mentioned or implied in the meeting does not mean that they were considered desirable or undesirable, practical or impractical, real alternatives or contradictory ones, or within the means of the union to implement them or not. The deliberation itself enabled the participants to make such evaluations. These were the conceived alternatives to which the participants expressed some degree of access, and around which they made their analyses.

These five levels are listed in the first column of Table 1. They (and the evidence of their occurrence in the meeting) are as follows:

- 1) to maintain the present accumulation and backlog of wet yarn--that is, no change in the prevailing level and a continuation of the existing shortage (the consequence of refusing overtime under the existing circumstances of the laid off workers and the forthcoming holidays);
- 2) to maintain a shortage, but a gradually diminishing one (by refusing overtime and influencing the employer to curtail the preceding and succeeding departments--abetted by informing the workers that a shortage of work might take place);
- 3) to institute an immediate though moderate increase in yarn production (by agreeing to

the overtime); 4) to institute a moderate though delayed increase in yarn production (by refusing overtime and insisting on the recall of laid off workers); and 5) to provide for a large though delayed increase in the level of drying operations (through recall and the hiring of new workers).

The second column of Table 1 lists the aggregates of workers (or occupations) whom the participants identified as being directly affected, either favorably or adversely, by the indicated levels of output.

The third column states the effects which the participants said that the identified workers would sustain, if the indicated level of drying were introduced. It contains the effects which result directly from the production level--and not from the method by which the particular level would be achieved.

Production Situation	Largest Unit of Workers Affected	Expressed Effect
Accumulated Wet Yarn	Dryers	Heat Relief
	Weavers, dyers, Yarn Construction Dept.	Possible layoff
Yarn Shortage	Dryers	Heat relief
	Weavers, dyers, yarn Construction Dept.	Partial Layoff
Moderate Increase in Yarn Production a) Delayed	Dryers	Weekend bargaining strength for heat relief
	Weavers Plant Two Plants	Some possible temporary layoffs  Uncertainty and possible irregularity of employment  Weakened bargaining strength for wage increase
b) Immediate	Dryers	Weakened bargaining strength

	Weavers Plant Two Plants	for heat relief Avert layoff Uncertainty and possible irregularity of employment. Violation of overtime rule. Weakened bargaining strength for wage increase
Largest Increase in Yarn Production: Delayed	Dryers Weavers Plant Two Plants	Weakened bargaining strength for heat relief Partial temporary layoff Reduce uncertainty and possible irregularity of employment Weakened bargaining strength for wage increase

Table 2 summarizes the effects of the various methods of increasing man-hours of work upon production and upon the workers. The first column lists the methods. These were overtime, recall and new hiring. Recall is divided into two parts, one involving a small number of workers, the other a larger group. This division arises from the recurring suggestion of the meeting that an inventory be built, which would have necessitated a larger number of workers than those required to meet the immediate problem. (One method advanced at the meeting is not included in the list. This was the suggestion that other workers walk out and wait until yarn accumulated)

The second column identifies the specific yarn levels which each method would create.

The third and fourth columns list the effects and the defined unit of workers upon whom each effect would have an impact. These effects refer to the impact of the method, not of the resulting yarn situation, upon the stated worker aggregates . These tables summarize the overtime issue as the participants saw it: the principal problems, their categories of analysis, and the specific details of each category. The tables are considered to be accurate and efficient reflections of the content of the discussion. It cannot be argued that the tables "prove" that the men were making a production decision. They merely show that the things they talked about at the meeting can be arranged, wholly and efficiently, according to the two tables, and that these tables contain a relevant analysis of two production problems. Using these tables it is possible to select any compatible combination of level and method and have a reasonable expectation that it would work out in reality, if it were put into effect. The method of

analysis, in this sense, is applicable to formulating and analyzing a production problem. The method of choosing among the available alternatives remains to be shown.

Table 2 The Effects of Various Methods of Increasing Man-hours Upon Yarn Production and Upon Workers			
Method	Effect Upon Yarn Production	Effect of Method Upon Workers Unit Effect	
Overtime	Moderate Increase, Immediate	Individual laid off: dryers Dryer Tenders	No recall  Unwilling to work overtime
Recall, small amount	Moderate increase, delayed	Individual working dryers: 1 <sup>st</sup> shift  2 <sup>nd</sup> shift  Individual laid off dryers	Possible interference  -----  Recall with possible a) employment b) termination c) loss of income
Recall, large amount	Large increase delayed		Same as for Recall, small amount
New Hiring	Increase, much delayed		

### How the Decision Was Made

There is no explicit statement in the meeting nor in later interviews which tells how the men made their decision--by what method, on what criteria, or for what goal. But there is ample evidence by which to construct their method, even though it is not explicit. The evidence exists within the meeting, in the later interviews, in the ways the local union operates and--in the actual decision. These furnish the basis for the explanation--or theory--that they made their decision by means of a code. The explanation together with the code employed in the overtime case will now be presented.

The analysis of the overtime issue, as depicted on Tables 1 and 2, produced certain crucial information for the men. It showed, for each alternative level of production and for each available alternative method, each unit of workers who would be affected--adversely or favor-ably--and the nature of the effects. Combining the information of the two tables, the worker units and the effects may be summarized as follows:

Worker	Effect
1. Individual dryer, laid off	a. Recall b. Loss of income c. Termination
2. Dryer tenders	a. Heat relief b. Job interference c. Opposition to overtime work
3. Multiple departments	a. Maintain employment
4. Plant	a. Stabilize employment b. Overtime principle
5. Two Plants	a. Wage increase

The text of the meeting tells how the participants evaluated each of these effect-groups. They concluded during the meeting that five of the effect-groups could be excluded from the decision problem confronting the participants. These were laid off workers-loss of income (1.b.), laid off workers-termination (1.c.), dryer tenders-job interference (2.a.) and dryer tenders-heat relief (2.b.) and dryer tenders-opposition to working over-time (2.c.). The danger that the recalled workers might sustain a loss in income was shown to be without factual basis, since recall would not jeopardize their standing in respect to unemployment compensation. The danger of automatic termination applied only to the recalled workers who might, because of the recall, have to sustain a loss of income because they had other jobs. Since they were employed, the prospect of termination represented a choice which each recalled worker would have to make individually. Job interference would occur only if the recalled workers were put to work on the first shift. The discussion indicated that the recalled workers would be placed on the second shift, where job interference would not take place. And even if they came on the first shift, the regular workers had recourse to other measures to secure relief from interference in the performance.

By far the most critical of the five effect-groups were those arising from the dryer tenders' objection to overtime (2.a. and 2.c.). This was a serious factor throughout the case, and continued to be one after the issue was decided. The officers were able to eliminate both these effect-groups by establishing that even if the decision went against dye house, the workers there were entirely able to make an effective independent decision. GR points this out in the discussion to BL. "Either you people work overtime, or we decide that you people work. . . I mean that you people in the department, without hiring any people back. . .calling these people back. Or you people work the overtime. I do think you ought to decide."

The ultimate decision as to whether the dryers would work overtime was in their own hands, even if the officers decided to permit the work. Consequently, the officers did not decide the heat relief issue; they shifted it back to the dryer tenders themselves.

FR later assured BL that an independent decision by the dryer tenders would not create an adverse reaction to them. "You go into the Jacquard and tell them if the dye house don't work they're going to have to loaf a couple or three days. I'm sure you're going to find more people happy than unhappy."

With the elimination of these five effect-groups, the participants narrowed the issues down to those for which they must acknowledge official responsibility. Within the three areas of responsibility they were then able to eliminate two other effect-groups. These were the plant-overtime principle (4. b.) and two plants-wage increase (5. a.): GR stated the position in respect to overtime work: "It's not a question of overproducing." This meant that the approval of overtime work did not in principle violate the local's rule about not allowing the building of inventories of finished carpet. As a consequence, it was deemed not to affect the program of seeking a wage increase. Since both of these effect-groups were not affected by the specific issue of overtime, they were eliminated.

Three effect-groups now remain. Of the three, one necessarily becomes subsumed under one of the others. Plant-stabilize employment (4. a.) could be achieved only through recall of laid-off workers (1.a.), and through possible new hiring. It therefore could only be a realistic possibility through the recall, and to a more significant extent through measures not considered in the meeting. The practical choice of a decision therefore boiled down to two final possibilities: multiple departments-maintain employment (3.a) or individual dryers, laid-off-recall (1. a.).

The choice was between saving the employment of the workers currently employed in the multiple departments or restoring the laid off workers to their jobs. The choice was not between overtime and recall. Overtime had been disposed of as a limiting consideration when the heat relief, job interference, wage increase and overtime work effects were discarded. The overtime issue actually appears in this case in two quite different senses, as a method and as an effect. As a method, it was clearly permitted by precedent, unless it violated some rule or imposed an effect which must be avoided. As an effect, it was represented by the rule of the local prohibiting overtime as an instrument for building inventories. Since these considerations had already been set aside, overtime itself did not enter as an issue in the final decision. It was merely a method which could be selected, if the decision required it. The ultimate choice was between providing continued employment to the multiple departments and re-employ the laid off workers. The decision was to save the existing jobs of the multiple departments.

The Decision Making Code

There are two grounds for the assertion that the overtime decision was based upon a code, rather than upon any computational process applied to economic gains and losses. The first is internal evidence that a code was operative throughout the meeting. The second consists of other data about the workings of the local union. By examining this evidence, the presence as well as the content of the code can be derived.

The internal evidence is composed of the considerations advanced by the participants in their analysis of the effect-groups, as presented above. It will be recalled



that each of the effect-groups--up to the last two--was discarded by specific conclusions respecting its relevance and validity. The considerations applicable to each are presented in the following tabulation (For brevity, they are identified by the effect alone.)

Effect	Reason for Disposal
1. Loss of Income	The effect proved invalid.
2. Termination	This would occur only through a voluntary and permissive action of the particular individuals.
3. Heat Relief	The weakening of the dryer tenders' position would not automatically flow from the approval of overtime; the dryer tenders could refuse to accept the employer's request.
4. Job Interference	This effect was either invalid, or if it materialized it could be handled through the grievance procedure.
5. Stabilize employment	This effect lay outside the scope of the decision.
6. Overtime Rule	The case did not involve any violation.
7. Wage Increase	The relief of the yarn shortage would not adversely affect the wage campaign.

Three distinct types of reason are contained in this list, each with its own source and significance. The first consists of reasons which pertain to the factual foundation of the specific issue, and is represented by items 1 and 4 (in part). The effects which the indicated groups were thought to sustain proved, upon analysis, to be groundless. Having reached this conclusion, the groups in question were dropped from consideration; they were no longer claimants in the case.

The second type of reason, represented by items 2, 3, 4 (latter part) and 5, establishes that the issues embodied in the particular effect-groups were not before the participants for decision. No claim was made by the participants that the effects might not accrue to the indicated groups. Rather, they concluded that they were not responsible for the impact of any decision upon these groups. For this, several subordinate reasons are apparent. First, the supposed effect might occur following a decision, but it would have to be preceded by another decision which would be made by the effect-group itself, and this second decision would be the one which would bring down the effect upon their own heads. This applies to item 2, termination, and item 3, heat relief. Second, if the effect followed--in itself uncertain--the effect group had a procedure available for

mitigating it. This was true of the second part of item 4. Third, the issue involved in the decision was to cope with the effect group, and hence not properly before the decision makers. This characterizes item 5, stabilize employment.

These subordinate reasons reveal that other procedures were available to the effect-groups in these issues, and that the participants would have exceeded their own jurisdiction had they intervened. This does not mean that they could not have done a good turn to any of these groups. It does mean that in the complex intermingling of effects and groups, they could not deviate from the prescribed procedural rules in favor of any single group without improperly exceeding their jurisdiction. These reasons were therefore not necessarily, nor only, a means of relieving themselves of responsibility for the effects which their decision might create; they were limits constructed by a whole elaborate procedural system which identifies the entities who make decisions over particular kinds of issues.

The third class of reasons made up of items 6 and 7, are conclusions about the specific applicability of the effect to the immediate issue under consideration. In this group there were originally four items; these two and the remaining ones, maintain employment and recall. Items 6 and 7 were eliminated because they were not affected by the underlying possible actions in the case. Both these items were pressed upon the participants because of explicit written rules of the local union. They were eliminated because they were not violated by the available decisions.

All this constitutes internal evidence that they were guided by a code. Each reason that they used has its roots in an acceptance by the members of their system that is valid and may properly be used in respect to the specific problem to which the participants applied it. They were reasons which exist within the decision system itself--defining jurisdiction, evidence, and the evaluation of equities in particular circumstances. They were not reasons formulated ad hoc by the participants; they were tied in to the total decision process and to their acceptance by the members of the union. The method of analysis delineated in the first part of this chapter is an abstraction from this body of decision rules. It was this system of socially validated reasons which enabled the participants to sift out the issues in the case and to reach the final two effect-groups--and ultimately to choose between them.

The second basis for contending that a code is the means by which decisions--including this one--are made comes from the organizational and decision making processes within the local union. These processes are governed, both procedurally and substantively by an enormous body of rules and regulations. Some are enacted by the local union and its constituent sub-organizations as explicit rules governing themselves. These can be found in the various documents by which the local union is ruled. Others consist of the large volume of precedent decisions on particular cases which are rendered by all the decision making of the local union--the officers, appeals committee, and the local union as a whole.

Not only does the existence of this body of regulation give evidence of a code. Its use in the daily activity of the union shows that the code is employed in decision making. In this and in other cases, the officials are guided by the existing rules, and by the precedents that have been established by themselves and by higher bodies. Moreover, any workers involved in the overtime problem or in any other problem have the option of challenging a decision through the appeals process--a right which is exercised freely and frequently. In this appeals process, the relevant argumentation consists of the interpretation of equities in the light of existing rules and precedents. The code is thus a living instrument, utilized by officials and workers as the means of reaching decisions and of securing compliance with them.

### **The Code in the Overtime Case**

The term "code" is not used by the members or officials in the local union. They speak of rules, decisions and precedents. There is in fact no codified body of these instruments. Individual items are contained in the whole body of collective bargaining agreements, in the minute books of the local union, departments and occupations, and in the file of precedents established by prior decisions of the officers, the appeals committee and the local union as a whole. This does not mean they are scattered and unavailable. They are kept systematically in their appropriate files, and they are referred to constantly in the handling of problems.

From the material contained in the meeting and from the source materials in the minute books, agreements, and precedents, a fragment of the code which was applicable to the overtime case has been reconstructed. This reconstruction is purely a synthetic product. It is in no sense a complete statement of the code on the subjects with which it deals. Moreover, it is formulated in fairly general and abstract terms, whereas much of the code consists of specific items usually stated in terms of conditions to be guarded against. Within these limitations, the reconstructed product conforms to the rules which the union itself applies under the indicated circumstances.

This fragment of the code is presented herewith. The sources of the various items contained in it will be given in the section immediately following the text.

### **The Reconstructed Code**

1. Maintain in employment all workers currently on the payroll and at work.
2. Enlarge the employment of all workers currently employed until they each have 8 hours work per day and 40 hours per week.
3. When condition # 2 is met, recall laid off workers according to seniority.
4. Maintain the total worker group at stable, full employment of 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week.
5. Permit overtime when condition #3 is met, except:
  - a. if the available work is so little that:
    1. it would constitute a financial loss to laid off workers to return to work for a short period because:

- a. they could get less in earnings than they currently receive from unemployment compensation; or
- b. they would sacrifice temporary jobs outside in order to return to work at the plant;
- 2. because of 1) above, the laid off workers might be induced to terminate their employment status with the company.
- b. If such overtime is immediately necessary to avoid layoffs, as specified in condition #1 when,
  - 1. Such overtime is of limited duration and small amount; and
  - 2. the need is so serious that recall would not avert layoffs.
- c. If the overtime will increase inventories during the period of the wage dispute.

### **The Sources of the Code**

Item 1 is derived from a large number of cases and decisions embodying the approach of the local union to the problem of jobs and employment. It even finds expression in the meeting when FM jokingly remarks, in reference to a foreman who has little to do, "You don't want to go around taking away jobs from people."

Items 2 and 3 derive from the contract and from its application. The layoff clause specifies how workers shall be laid off, and the recall establishes the principle of seniority in recall. After workers with less than two years of seniority and 2000 active work hours are laid off, the remainder share the available work until the work week for them reduces to 24 (or 32 hours) per week. Alternatively, the permanent group may share the available work on a "week-about" basis, meaning that some number of workers stay away for one week out of a given cycle, thereby affording the entire group full weeks of work on a staggered basis. These methods of reducing the workforce are indicative of the force of item 1. With respect to items 2 and 3, the layoff and recall clauses have been interpreted to provide that recalls do not occur until those at work have been restored to 8 and 40 hours. This is true even where permanent workers have been laid off because the work week has fallen below the contractual minimum of 24 or 32. That is, for those permanent workers remaining, the work week must go back, not to the minimum, but to the full 8 and 40 before others are recalled.

Item 4 is derived primarily from the comments of FR.

Item 5 is derived from the discussion of the meeting.

Whether or not the language produced above constitutes the precise formula of existing rules is not entirely material. They express the sense of the accumulated body of regulations governing the conditions to which they apply. Under each of the main items, there are countless sub-items, applying to even more detailed circumstances. Each decision of the officers, or appeal decision of the appeals bodies, or rule of the union or

executive board or other decision-making body of the local union adds to this cumulative collection here termed the code.

## **Code**

### **The Code and the Final Decision**

From the terms of this fragment of the code, the final decision emerges automatically. Items 1 and 2, pertaining to the employment of persons currently employed, takes precedence, with the 8 and 40 hour rule, over item 3, the reinstatement of laid off workers. Item 3 is waived under the circumstances defined in item 5b. The decision to permit overtime was automatic, once a decision to save the jobs of the multiple departments was reached.

### **The Method of Decision Making Concluding Discussion**

The goal of this chapter was to describe the workers' method of decision making. Their decision making was identified as the net outcome of their organizational activities, observable in the form of demands on the employer, responses to the employer's demands upon them, or other independently initiated actions, Their decision making method was presumed to consist of the rational, intellectual processes which they utilized as the means by which they arrived at their final decisions.

### **The Method and Production**

To what extent is the method a practical, manipulable way to of making decisions on production?

No one can really say that it is or is not a practical method of decision-making under full conditions of responsibility, for the simple reason that its historical experience is limited to the prevailing employment relationship. It is equally true that a decision method does not have to be practical to operate, or that even the practical ones operate with any continuing high level of efficiency. The historic success of any decision system is predicated upon its usefulness to the decision-makers, and not to any material result which it accomplishes. Within the limits of its functioning thus far, it is of interest to appraise, insofar as possible, the potential practicality of the workers' decision method.

The evidence thus far at hand suggests that it is effective in the design and integration of productive activity. Its essential relevance to production flows from the occupations whose activities it regulates in great detail. From argument rather than evidence, it may be contended that the method is an inherently economic decision method. That is, it is non-wasteful of resources, and essentially conserving in its effects; and its application need not result in destroying the productive potential within which it operates. This for the reason that the workers, from whom it originates and whose

interests it serves, are more dependent upon the continuation and expansion of productive activity than any other occupations seeking to exercise decision-making over production.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE DECISION AND PRODUCTION

A second inference remains to be drawn from the overtime episode: that the workers made an effective production decision, one which would be carried out by the enterprise. The case rests upon the evidence of the meeting, the decision procedures of the plant and union, and the decision: to permit overtime. From this evidence, it will be argued that worker decision making is effective with respect to production, within the limited scope and under the special conditions in which it is practiced.

#### **Production as a Problem for Worker Decision Making**

The participants made a production decision because the issue confronting them was a production problem. They could have handled the overtime issue – the one which precipitated the meeting – in any number of other ways. Indeed, the prevailing theories about worker and union behavior would suggest many other methods of analysis, but not the one which the participants actually used. They might have examined the overtime issue from the view point of maximizing worker income, enhancing the power of the union officials, improving the survival potential of the union, bedeviling the employer, or by the use of other rationales. The impressive fact still stands: they handled the problem by the method described above, and in the course of their analysis they reached a production decision. They did this because they had to; they were confronted with a production problem whose roots were in the production arrangements, as most of their problems are.

By the rules of the employment system, the workers' situation is functionally related to the conditions which prevail in the productive processes. The range of effects, which the participants noted at each alternative level of yarn production, were effects which would flow from the indicated production conditions. Conversely, only by avoiding the causal conditions in production would the adverse effects be averted. Had they not perceived these relationships, they would nevertheless still prevail. The fact of interest is that the participants were fully aware of the relationship between their situation and the conditions of production.

When they departed from the frame of reference of the overtime issue—the one with which they were formally seized and which the employer had given them—they went to the fundamental conditions out of which the overtime problem arose. Any solution, which they might have reached without reference to the underlying production conditions, could only by chance have proved a fundamental solution to their problem.

Their statements show that they were fully cognizant of the connection between the condition of production and the situation of workers. They quickly determined that the root of the overtime request was the imbalance between the drying of yarn and the

preceding and succeeding processes. Every point in the discussion which carried them toward a final decision was concerned with treating this imbalance.

This does not mean that they imitated the employer's position in their decision making. On the contrary, they reasoned independently, from their own problems and criteria, and reached conclusions which satisfied their problems. They were not concerned at all with the employer except as an alternative decision maker, whom they must supersede or influence. The claim that workers are concerned with production must mean, in the light of this evidence, that they do not embrace the employer's production problems or solutions. It is abundantly clear from the meeting that workers are aware of the impact of production upon their situation, but that they evaluate this relationship from their own independent position.

Their analysis of production was not a permissive move on the part of the participant. Production was not just one topic which they happened to raise in the discussion. It was the causal circumstance out of which their situation was determined, and they knew it. Hence, they dealt with production because they were forced to—they were faced with a production problem.

Not only did they deal with production in rational and relevant terms. They reached a production decision. They might have evaluated their situation in terms of its relationship to production, yet not have come to any conclusion about the production arrangements. However, they did make a production decision, and this, too, they were compelled to do.

The causal relationship between production and the situation of workers exists, not for any physical or natural reasons, but because the rules of the employment relationship prescribe it. An imbalance might exist in yarn production without causing layoffs. The time was when workers were not worked on holidays and not paid for them. The rules were subsequently changed, and today they are paid even though they do not work. There are rules which define the causal relationships between production and the situation of workers.

The decision making position thus far achieved by the local union required them to take into account, not only the immediate and relatively minor questions of overtime premiums, allocation of work, and enforcement of the recall provisions, but the broader issues of levels of output and continuity of employment for the workforce as a whole. The development of the local union had reached the point that these officials were held responsible by their constituents for making decisions on the broadest kind of integration problems in the plant. They had to take into account the claims of all the various groups affected and the prior regulations on which their claims would be based. Accordingly, they treated the problem in this particular form because this was the prevailing scope of internal decision making on production.

In the overtime case, if the imbalance had been forced to continue—if overtime were refused—the consequences which would follow would be ordered by the employer.



He would make the decision to lay off the affected workers. The only way to avert such a decision was by an alternative one. The local union had passed the point in which it could passively respond to the actions of the employer. It had achieved a degree of decision making in the plant in which it could exercise a determining role upon the activities and conditions which affect its members. To fail to do so would mean that it abdicated its function to the employer. By virtue of its own existence, the workers' decision system was forced to make a decision which would govern the productive conditions affecting its members.

Production is accordingly a necessary area of decision making by workers. Firstly, it embraces the employment conditions which directly impinge upon workers. A rational analysis of workers' problems in employment must be related to prevailing and projected conditions in production. Secondly, unless the employer is to decide these conditions unilaterally—and, in consequence, the resulting impact upon workers—the workers' decision system must advance its own decisions concerning production and its integration.

The distinguishing characteristic of their treatment of this production problem is the use of non-monetary criteria for analysis and decision. Nevertheless, the categories which they employed enabled them to canvas the conditions of production, to formulate alternatives, and to decide their problem on the basis of a choice among the possible conditions of production. Their final choice, as well as the analysis employed in reaching it, were inextricably bound up with the production situation. They were engaged, in their own way, in making a production decision.

### **The Overtime Decision and Production**

Production has been shown to be a necessary, not a permissive element in the analysis of problems, and that the workers possess a high degree of individual competence in decision making on production. The claim that all this adds up to an existing practice of decision making on production rests upon the assumption that their analysis reflects their real capabilities and position in the plant—that they spoke and reasoned as they did, not because of individual gifts or attainments, nor because they chose to inflate their positions, nor because they merely wanted to drag in extraneous considerations, but rather because their situation within the union and the union's situation in the plant determined the kinds of considerations they would raise and be compelled to resolve as part of their decision. They were acting, in other words, not as free floating spirits but as creatures of an organization, reflecting its position and functions within the plant. Since the things they said about production were relevant to the issue and make sense in their analysis, it follows that they treated production as one of the areas about which they make decisions.

Decision making on production is something more, however, than merely reaching relevant and sensible solutions to problems. For such decision making to take place, it must regulate the events which occur in the area it seeks to decide. To conclude

that workers do make production decisions, their decisions must be shown to be effective in the plant itself.

The questions which bring this subject to a conclusion are therefore these: Are the production decisions made by workers actually instituted and executed in the plant? Can they initiate decisions and actions?

To determine whether workers are able to initiate decisions on production or to put their own decisions into effect, calls for a close examination as to what actually takes place, not what, in theory, is supposed to happen. The capabilities of the workers' decision system cannot be established by any abstract judgments stemming from the received traditions about managerial functions or from the employers' legal position. Nor can they be determined by reference to the claims and assertions about the formal roles of unions or management in the production system. The whole process of decision making on production is changing under the impact of the expanding workers' system. To define the real, as opposed to the presumed state of decision making on production—and more particularly, whether workers make effective production decisions—the processes which actually determine the real activities and conditions in the plant must be investigated.

The experience recorded in the overtime case provides some illumination of the problem. This experience, together with other known data about workers' organized activities, will serve to illustrate the relationship of workers to the determination of production.

### **Who Made the Overtime Decision?**

Once the overtime decision was put into effect, a whole chain of events was set in motion in the plant—truly the test of an implemented decision. Additional man hours were worked in drying, more yarn was produced, the yarn shortage was relieved, the accumulated wet yarn was gradually absorbed, the preceding and succeeding departments were able to maintain their of operation. Whose decision really set this chain of events in motion?

First, the dryer tenders themselves made the final decision whether or not to work overtime. They could not be ordered to do so—only requested by the employer. Second, the employer presented his request to the dryer tenders. Only the employer could actually make such a request. Third, the employer could not make this request without permission from the union—and only the meeting could furnish the permission. Fourth, the meeting could not furnish the permission unless the union was requested to grant it—and only the employer could make this request. Fifth, the employer could make this request on his own initiative.

Since this procedure grows out of a known historical development, it can be reformulated into a more summary statement. The steps which were taken by the individual dryer tenders, the meeting and the union all represent arrangements which

were instituted by the workers' decision system. The others are the employer's steps. It follows therefore that the employer was able to make decisions only up to the point of requesting permission for overtime from the union. Thereafter, the decisions were within the purview of the workers' system. (For reasons to be amplified later, the employer's request to the individual workers is not separable from his first request to the union.)

From this procedure, there are several statements which can be made about the decision which set in motion the chain of events in the plant. First, no single entity made the entire decision, neither the employer nor the union nor the meeting nor the individual dryer tender. Second, each of these made a decision which was essential to the ensuring chain of events. Thirdly, each could have stopped the events in the plant by a negative decision. Finally, the procedure, insofar as is evident, began with the employer who initiated the whole idea.

The origins of the decision on overtime—and the ensuing chain of events in the plant—were both with the employer and the workers' decision system. The employer made a part of the decision—that he required overtime and would take steps to have it instituted. The worker's made the remainder—that they would approve the overtime and would take steps to have it instituted. The workers' made the remainder—that they would approve the overtime and would permit the employer to approach the workers. Insofar as the plant was concerned, neither the employer nor the workers made the whole decision; but each made an essential part of it. Conversely, had either side not affirmatively decided upon overtime, it would not have occurred.

This of itself demonstrates that the workers were responsible, at least in part, for what took place in the plant. Their decision was consequently an effective one. When the actual events in the plant are traced back to their authorizing source, the route necessarily leads through the workers' system, where an unavoidable empowering decision is to be located. With respect to the relationship between the worker decision making and production, this experience shows that workers' production decisions are effective determinants of what happens in production.

But, it may be contended, the employer really initiated the decision on overtime. He figured out that overtime was needed, and presented the issue to the union. Moreover, only the employer could reach this conclusion—not the workers—since he is responsible for the efficient operation of the plant and must sustain the losses which might accrue from the failure to eliminate the yarn shortage. The process itself shows that the employer started the issue, and his relationship to the plant shows that he bore the responsibility for perceiving the problem and correcting it.

The meeting would dispose of these counterarguments. The employer is truly responsible for the efficient operation of the plant, but his responsibility flows to and from the stockholders. The workers have also assumed a responsibility for the plant. They too would sustain losses from the yarn shortage, first, through direct losses of employed working hours, and second, through the impact of these losses on the financial

position of the enterprise. What emerges from the meeting is the clarity with which the participants saw their own interests in the production conditions of the plant.

By virtue of their position in the plant, they too were initiators of a decision to increase man-hours of work. When the employer initiated his decision on overtime, he was responding to his picture of the plant, as defined by his responsibility for its operation. Similarly, when the workers received his request, they used it as the signal for an examination of the production situation, for which they too exhibited an independent responsibility. Their decision on overtime was not merely a duplicate of the employer's; it was reached after a canvas of all alternatives which they perceived, and was chosen because it best met their needs and fulfilled their responsibility for the integration of the plant.

Who made the decision on overtime? The best available answer is that both the employer and the union did. Each independently initiated the decision: that is, each through his own survey of conditions reached his own conclusion that overtime was needed. But with respect to putting the decision into effect, the workers' system had definitive say over its final implementation. Whatever decision was put into effect had to be made by the workers themselves.

### **Worker Decision Making: Veto or Initiative?**

The discussion just concluded says some things about the prevailing state of decision making on overtime which should be explored. The formulation implied in answering the question about who decided overtime holds that: 1) the employer's area of decision-making—on overtime—has receded and 2) that the decision making of the workers' system has extended to the point of permitting or refusing overtime work. It might appear, therefore, that what has happened is that the workers have acquired a veto power over the employer's decision. Does all this then amount merely to a veto power on the part of the workers? Or can they institute a decision on their own initiative and possibly contrary to the employer's own judgment.

The veto power thesis stems partly from perspective and partly from the nature of an enterprise. When the workers' role is surveyed from the viewpoint of management as the decision maker on production, it obviously appears that the workers have obtained a kind of obstructive, negative decision making—a right to say no to some of management's decisions. Veto power is the impact which might be ascribed to the workers actions when they are viewed from the perspective of managerial decision making. This thesis gets some seeming support from the ways in which an enterprise functions. The employer formally institutes all actions in an enterprise. Legally, he is responsible for what takes place in the plant which he administers. Moreover, even where a decision is initiated by the workers and is accepted by the employer, he assumes responsibility for its implementation in the enterprise. In this sense, all decisions on production are ascribable to the employer, even those which, through the workings of the so-called veto power, do not originate with him. The veto power thesis is consequently a product of a very formal view of the enterprise and the management's role in it.

The question as to whether workers have only a veto power or can really initiate decisions on production—even contrary to the employer’s judgment—can be answered only by looking at existing practices in industry.

Without intending to exhaust the list, three ways in which workers are able to introduce production decisions into the plant can be identified.

First, workers have been known to institute their own job rules unilaterally, such as restrictions on output. These are decision on the levels and limits of production. The employer too sets such limits. The reason restrictions of output by workers come to attention is because the limits which they set—and implement—are lower than the employer’s. Any plant will exhibit a plethora of rules and practices instituted by workers which govern their occupational performance. The differentiating characteristics of this kind of decision are that it is formulated and instituted on the workers’ own initiative, without agreement on the part of the employer.

Second, there are many areas within established collective bargaining practice in which workers can make their own decisions. The overtime issue is a case in point. Within the range of subjects embodied in written agreements or acknowledged plant practices, there are areas in which the employer’s unilateral decision making is terminated, and decision making by workers takes over.

Third, outside the area of unilateral action and decisions formally conceded by the employer to the workers, the worker’s system is able to press the employer to accept its decisions and to implement them in the plant. The ways in which this may be done can be developed from the overtime case.

There was in the overtime case a particular configuration of circumstances which made the workers’ decision the activating one in the plant. A request had been received from the employer to permit overtime. This could not have been a capricious request, nor merely a precaution against future possibilities, nor a petition for a kind of open-ended permission on the union’s part. To have asked for permission without intending to use it would have jeopardized future requests for overtime. Why? Because the union, once having granted its permission, would expect the overtime to be instituted, and would in fact require, for its own internal reasons, that the employer provide overtime work. In reaching its decision, the union projected many rearrangements within the union: distributions of gains and losses, allocation of duties and reliefs—in fact, all the affirmative elements of its own decision making which its members require it to perform. If thereafter the employer failed to put the decision into effect, the union might sustain internal reverberations from its own people. This alone would predispose the union not to act in the future without assurance as the employer’s implementation of the decision. In the overtime case, the union could proceed with confidence that the employer meant to implement the overtime if they decided in favor of it.

These particular circumstances point to the more general conditions surmounting the local union's decision making effectiveness, namely the extension of its range of decision making.

The ability to check-mate the employer's decision on overtime is clearly within the power of the union. But overtime is only one issue. The union has similar capabilities over other kinds of issues—indeed over the entire range of terms of employment where its agreement, acquiescence, approval, or participation are required. Over many of the final steps in the chain decision, the union can act as it did in the overtime case. Coupled with this is the union's capability of expanding its range of issues granted through collective bargaining rights and grievance machinery. To an increasing extent, the employer must reckon with the union, not only in particular issues, but in respect to the union's position over its entire range of decision making. Wherever unilateral decision making has passed out of the employer's hands, the union acquires an additional element of decision making which contributes to its effectiveness in any particular case.

A second source of the workers decision making capability emerges from the overtime case. The participants knew the existing situation in the plant, and the fact that the employer was being economically pressed to rectify it. Their analysis of the situation encompassed an inquiry into the forces which were moving the employer. The workers possess their own theory of organization and management and of employer economics, and they use this theory as a guide to their dealings with the employer. Consider, for instance EH's remark in the meeting. "We lost a day and a half to get three lousy little fans." Behind this remark there is a body of experience in respect to the behavior of the employer and how to get him to do things. Similarly in the overtime issue, the participants canvassed the employer's predicament. And having established his critical need for additional yarn, they were able to consider the many available alternatives which might be utilized.

This too points to a more general factor which supports the effectiveness of worker decision making. When they reach the limit of the formal decisions which they are empowered to make—for example, to permit overtime work—they are able to achieve the implementation of more comprehensive decisions by creating pressures upon the employer and compelling him to act in the ways they seek. They can exert such pressure both through exploiting the employer's immediate predicament, or by the use of their existing scope of organizational influence in the enterprise. An example is provided by the circumstances surrounding the overtime case. To pressure the employer to grant a wage increase, they were refusing to allow general overtime thereby preventing the accumulation of finished carpet. Through these general means, the impact of their decision making is to shape the employer's response, no less effective for working through the available channels of the enterprise. They can determine in many ways the initiative which the employer takes, given his monetary economic circumstances his position in respect to prevailing production problems, and his continuing need of viable relations with his workforce.

Three general ways in which workers put their own decisions into effect have been identified. They are: 1) unilateral actions by the workers directly on the job; 2) independent decision making within the framework of established agreements and practices—as exemplified by the overtime case; and 3) exploiting their organization position and the economic predicament of the employer as a means of compelling him to adopt their decisions and put them into effect in the enterprise. These ways afford the workers' system the capability of shaping activities and conditions within the productive processes of the plant.

The discussion of the meeting becomes more comprehensible in the light of these capabilities of the workers' system. The content of the meeting shows the face of a decision-making system, able to formulate and put into effect its production decisions. It is not merely an agency which can, if it chooses, veto decisions of the employer. Throughout the meeting, the participants pressed upon—and were even irked by—the limitations which they felt upon their capacity to put decisions into effect. But within these limitations, they formulated real alternatives to solve their production problems.

With respect to worker decisions making on production, the meeting and its surrounding circumstances disclose the process, the practice, the method of analysis, the effectiveness and the means of implementation. Worker occupational organization clearly engages in making production decisions in the full meaning of this process, although it is a different kind of decision making from the employer's. Moreover, its range of effectiveness is limited and its means of treating the production system, both within its own calculus of decisions and in its formulation of problems, are unique to itself. The meeting as data makes possible the initial finding of decision making on production. The special properties of the workers' system will be developed in later sections of this study.

## CHAPTER 6

### WORKER DECISION MAKING: WHY?

A distinctive picture of trade union organization emerges almost as a by-product from the preceding section of this study. That section sought to demonstrate the existence, within the workers' organization, of a process of decision making on production. It attacked this objective by presenting evidence of the decision making process in action. But more than an isolable decision making function appears from the demonstration. To describe this function the larger organization had to be brought into view. At least insofar as worker participation is concerned, the decision system embraces the local union.

#### **What is distinctive about this picture?**

First, it identifies the internal structure and operations of a union—as contrasted with its collective bargaining activities—as a substantial part of worker organization.

Through the overtime meeting, this largely neglected part of union organization becomes visible. It consists of a vast and elaborate system of internal arrangements and procedures. It operates through its own body of rules, criteria and systems of values. It enjoys far-reaching participation and allegiance by members to the routines and practices which emanate from it. Without the prior development of this internal structure, the overtime meeting could not have occurred. And still other parts of the structure, not evident from the overtime meeting, are demanded by the other decision making activities in which the workers engage.

Not only is this part of the union unexpectedly well developed. It receives the major share of organizational time, energy and resources. Moreover, the internal structure and operation are the principal beneficiaries of the social inventiveness of the workers. For this is where they participate in the activities of their organization.

From this discovery of the internal organization, the nature and significance of a union may be reformulated. As a bargaining agency, it appears to be an instrument of relations between workers and their employer. But when viewed internally, it emerges as a system of relations among workers. The internal structure and operations serve the purpose—as sharply illustrated in the overtime case—of deciding about arrangements within the workforce. The internal system furnishes the apparatus by which workers act in relation to each other. Their decisions are courses of occupational conduct enacted by workers. Their decisions reach the employer as demands only after the workers have resolved their internal differences. Collective bargaining is a derivative activity, imposed by the presence of the employer, upon the workers' independent system of internal decision making.



Second, the union emerges from the preceding sections as functionally integrated in the productive system of the enterprise. This too contrasts with the view that the union is a recognized bargaining agency over terms and conditions of employment. Its role is not confined to negotiations nor to relations exclusively with the employer. It performs a function which is separate from both the employer and collective bargaining. This function takes place in the plant itself, in decision making on production.

Finally, the unfolding picture of worker organization discloses the nature of its internal dynamic element. This consists of the continuous extension of its range of decision making. The effects of this dynamic process have been widely observed. They can be seen in the continuous elaboration of terms of employment and in the endless presentation of grievances. To define this process as the outcome of extending the range of decision making makes it specific and identifies its consequential elements.

Extension means that the process of organizing is continuous. It is not concluded with the formal establishment of the union. Each act of extension requires of workers the same kind of commitment about mutual determination of terms of employment as took place when they originally agreed to unionize. Organizing, in one sense, is a discrete act which terminates when the union is formed. The underlying process, however, goes on and it find expression in the enlargement of the area of worker decision making.

From the distinctive characteristics of worker organization, a broad problem is formulated. Why do workers organize their own system of decision making on production? This problem restates, in more specific terms, an old question about unions. Why do workers organize? The prevailing theories of trade unionism scarcely account for the kind of organization which possesses the characteristics described above. A new theory is required to explain why workers organize and extend an internal system of social relations which make decisions governing production.

### **The Problem or Inquiry**

Part III will advance a theory of worker organization by developing an explanation of the origin and extension of worker decision making on production. This explanation will be based upon two fundamental questions which are posed by worker decision making. These are: what kind of a decision structure do the workers establish? And, by what process is this structure established and extended? The answers to these questions will identify the distinctive characteristics of their decision system and will describe the social mechanism which brings it into being. Together, they will provide a theory in answer to the original problem: why worker decision making on production?

These two problems of inquiry grow out of analysis of the fundamental question raised previously. They convert the question as to why the phenomenon occurs into problems of how it comes about. To ask why, is to search for the collection of subjective motives and individual improvisations which give rise to worker decision making. Even if such information were reliably available, it would scarcely satisfy the requirements of the problem. What is needed is precisely the opposite: the social process which operates impersonally among workers and out of which their decision system takes form.

Some workers fail to understand the question because decision making on production does not correspond to any categories of thought or action in which they engage. Through their union activities, they pursue improved terms and conditions of employment. Their perception of these terms and conditions of employment is confined to the effects which they confer upon themselves as workers. Their derivative effects upon activities and conditions of production lie outside the immediate frame of reference within which they operate. The impact of terms of employment upon production is delivered through their effects upon the occupational activities and conditions which the workers seek to regulate. These effects are no less real or systematic for not being explicitly considered by the workers. Actually, they enter into consideration, however indirectly, as the text of the overtime meeting discloses. The failure to comprehend the question is no indication that workers do not engage in decision making on production. Rather, it indicates that process itself originates and extends without their necessary awareness that it is even taking place.

Other workers understand the question but deny that they engage in decision making on production. Partly, their denial is a matter of self-protection. They do not want the employer or the outside world to attribute to their organized activities any impermissible objectives. But there is a more fundamental reason. Decision making on production is associated by workers with the functions of the employer. To engage in decision making on production means, in the language and categories of the workers, to act in the role of the employer. The phrase and the function convey to them exactly the opposite of what they seek through unionization—relief from the employer's decisions. To concede that they practice decision making on production is tantamount to a betrayal of the union's function.

Not only do these responses vitiate a direct inquiry among workers. They reveal in advance that the kinds of information gleaned from such a procedure will prove unhelpful. For neither the subjective, motivational materials nor the customary rationales of union activity can have any bearing upon the problem at hand. Worker decision making on production occurs on an entirely different plane from the one in which the workers themselves operate.

This is by no means an unusual circumstance in human activity. It is probably the universal experience. People carry out the routines of a social institution without being aware of the determinants of their actions nor of their consequences, especially when these actions and consequences fall outside the orbit of the individual. In quite the same sense, workers organize and pursue improved terms and conditions of employment. Their social consequences—decision making on production—may be similarly obscured from their direct perception.

All this points to the nature of the required inquiry. It must concern itself with the objective evidence of worker decision making. It must base itself upon practices and their material consequences, not upon peoples' stated reasons for them. A theory of

worker decision making need only account for such evidence, not for the explanations offered even by the participants in the process.

Instead of asking directly, why workers engage in decision making on production, a different kind of question has to be raised. The line of reasoning leading to the formulation of this new question runs as follows: since workers establish their own decision making on production, it must provide them with something which they could not obtain otherwise. It is insufficient to state that they thereby obtain more of the same kind of thing—wages, hours and improved working conditions—which the employers' decisions give them. For this would not necessarily require them to establish their own system of decision making on production. The function itself is the novelty, not the material advantages which are presumed to flow from it.

From these observations, a critical inference is drawn. The workers' decision system has inherent characteristics which differentiate it from other systems, and which provide for them the effects which they could not obtain from other decision systems. What then are these characteristics and where may they be sought?

The answer takes the form of a hypothesis. The differentiating characteristics of the workers' system reside in the interior structure of their decisions. This structure consists of the subjects of decisions and the way in which they are made. These are the central, functional parts of the system. If indeed the decision structure is unique, it will identify the one feature of decision making which organized workers can obtain only by establishing of their own system.

The resulting problem of inquiry, the first of the two, is accordingly formulated in these terms. What kind of decision structure do the workers produce?

Since the ensuing investigation—to be reported in the next chapter—yielded an acceptable solution, a second line of inquiry arose. How does this unique decision structure come into being? Again, the problem cannot be solved by directly asking workers, for the same reason already stated. However, some usable historical evidence was obtained by interrogating the people who actively contributed to the development of the workers' system. The ultimate objective, in pursuing this second problem, is to derive the impersonal social process arising among employed workers which impel them to establish and extend their decision system. The theory which will emerge from the subsequent discussion is derived from an analysis of empirical materials.

The two problems of inquiry serve as the general framework of the analysis. Others, of a more detailed character, will be raised as the empirical materials are examined. A model of worker occupational organization and its mode and directions of development will be offered as the ultimate conclusions.

## The Data

The empirical evidence for the solution of these problems consists primarily of the workers' decision structure. This will be supplemented, where necessary, with other materials about the structure and workings of the organization. To present the workers' total decision structure, however, would prove a mountainous undertaking. Nor would it be necessary for the immediate objectives of this inquiry. Once again, therefore, a part will be excerpted from the whole and a minute analysis will be conducted on a representative series of decisions.

The particular bit of structure to be subjected to analysis is the system of decisions governing overtime. Quite apart from the fact that these decisions are as representative as any others for present purposes, there are several valuable reasons for utilizing them. A fair amount of background material has already been presented on the overtime issue, thereby sparing the discussion much additional explanation. The meeting now stands as an example of the application of this structure, making unnecessary any additional evidence as to how it works in practice. Their significance as production decisions has already been established by the meeting. Finally, there are some unresolved questions from the meeting which can only be handled by an analysis of the decision structure. These questions are: why did the meeting occur altogether? Why did the employer submit the issue to the unions and why did the union decide it? Further, since the participants in this meeting were not the workers immediately involved in the problem—they were officials who were not governed by their decision—what makes this an example of worker decision making? Or what makes it any different from the employer's? These are pertinent questions to be raised against the meeting, but to answer them will require a closer scrutiny of the decision structure under which it occurred. These considerations dictated the choice of the overtime topic as the appropriate one for the general problems defined above.

The presentation will be divided among the succeeding seven chapters. Chapter 7 will deal with the first problem of inquiry: the characteristics of the workers' decision structure. Chapters 8 through 13 will take up the second problem, the process by which the structure is developed.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE STRUCTURE OF WORKERS' DECISIONS

The research on which this book is based proceeded from several fundamental premises which will be stated and explained, but not defended at this time. First, if indeed worker control or worker decision making has any functional or historical validity, or any prospect of coming into being in the future, there should be some evidence that it is already taking place, even if in rudimentary form. It is not to be expected that a change in organization of production as drastic as a transformation in decision structure could spring full blown on the morrow of a change in governmental control, however revolutionary it claims to be.

Second, if some such development is in process, it should be a workers' innovation, deriving from the occupational circumstances of the workers themselves rather than be an ideological graft upon workers, industry, or management. In other words, it should differ from management and managerial decision making as much as the workers' role in production differs from management's, and it should evolve by its own inner dynamic, meeting the special needs of workers within the decision system of production.

Third, if evidence of worker decision making exists, it should be found within the most characteristic and widespread worker institution to have developed in modern industry, the local trade union. These premises gave direction to an inquiry into worker decision making, partial results of which are reported here.

The specific problem raised is: What kind of decision structure do workers create? This problem itself is preceded by others which cannot be handled here: Do workers make production decisions? How do their decisions relate to collective bargaining over terms and conditions of employment? By what methods do they make decisions? To all of these and others, empirical answers are already in hand.

The point is reached in the analysis when the question can no longer be avoided: What impels workers to engage in decision making? In the search for an acceptable answer, a crucial constraint was imposed. The answer must reveal what it is the workers obtain by their own decision making which they could not obtain in any other way. A satisfying answer is found within the very structure of workers decisions—the executor of the decision is also its formulator. Only this arrangement terminates the condition, in respect to a particular decision, which is often described as the alienation of workers. It will be argued that workers engage in decision making in order to eliminate their alienation.

Once this is demonstrated a series of new questions arises, among them: How does such a decision structure develop? How far can it extend? To these too there are answers, some partial, some fairly complete, but they fall outside the scope of this article

and hopefully will be presented elsewhere and more fully. The problem now being raised addresses perhaps the crucial element within the entire scope of workers' decision making, the inner structure of their decisions.

### **The Data**

The decisions to be subjected to examination pertain to overtime work, concerning which the plant under study has both a collection of written agreements and established practices scattered among various formal documents, such as the contract and side agreements, and underwritten but regularly observed practices. The former, negotiated in collective bargaining, specify the employment conditions which shall prevail whenever overtime work is sought. The language, the explicit content, indeed the subject itself, are all typically the terms and conditions of employment as related to overtime. The pertinence of overtime to production arises through its influence on hours of work and other derivative issues, some of which will emerge in the ensuing analysis.

The decision structure governing overtime consists of the steps which must be followed in order to reach the final act of overtime work. These include the decision procedures of the employer and extend to the ultimate act of an individual workman performing his occupation at overtime. Collective bargaining agreements and established practices enter structure somewhere along the way, at the point where the terms and conditions of overtime involve union decision. The internal union operations contribute unilateral routines on the union side. Since the present quest is for the structure of workers' decisions, the area of examination may be restricted to the union and bilateral procedures which pertain to overtime.

The first step, therefore, is to assemble the agreements and practices. They are presented in full in the Appendix. The original language of the relevant clauses affords the briefest possible statement of the situation and a basis of comparison with arrangements in other plants.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Agreements As Decisions**

The agreements under consideration spell out the conditions and procedures by which overtime was obtained in 1949. In their drafted form, they are organized according to scheme which is convenient in collective bargaining. Their content may, however, be rearranged to highlight the ways in which they apply to the practice of overtime. This rearrangement will be briefly presented by summarizing the agreements in respect to the definition of overtime, the conditions governing this performance, and the procedures through which it is obtained. From this, the inherent decision structure will emerge.

#### **Definition**

Overtime work is all work performed in excess of eight hours in any one day or forty hours in any one week; on the sixth or seventh days of a regular scheduled work

week irrespective of the accumulated hours worked within the week; and on Good Friday. Two kinds of overtime are differentiated in respect to the time of occurrence and pay provisions. A seventh consecutive day of work is considered a class of overtime work apart from all the rest.

### **Conditions Governing Overtime Work**

The agreement spell out many regulations which apply to overtime work whenever it is put into effect.

Section 7(c) suggest that overtime work is based upon meeting production schedules. While the clause does not explicitly establish that such a basis is a prerequisite, it does provide that in giving advance notification to the union, the requirements for overtime derive from production schedules. This basis is evidently operative since it appears much more clearly in the Yarn Construction Department agreement. A first condition for overtime work, then, it must be based upon the needs of a production schedule.

The second class of regulations relates to pay provisions for overtime work. These are explicitly defined in the contract as time and one-half and double time for clearly specified overtime periods. Section 4 prohibits the paying of double overtime.

The Yarn Construction and Spinning side agreements contribute another governing regulation: the setting of a time limit within which overtime may be worked. This is probably implicit in the general practice of the plant, but it emerges explicitly in these two written agreements.

The Yarn Construction Department added yet a new condition, not generally applied elsewhere in the plant. It provides that during the period of overtime work there should be a guaranteed work week for all workers in the department. This guarantee lapses with the termination of the overtime agreement.

As evidenced by the agreements, regulations governing the working of overtime concern the basis for extending the regular work period, the pay provisions, the time limit for the overtime period, and a guaranteed work week.

### **The Procedures**

The agreements also prescribe a routine by which the overtime work is to be obtained. There are actually three main steps to the procedure, each of which has its own detailed regulation.

The first step begins with the company's notifications to the union. Stipulated in Section 7(e), it is carried out by informing or requesting the departmental chairman that overtime work be provided in his department. With this notification goes the additional information concerning the amount which is desired, the duration, the occupations

involved, and the like. On occasion, a more formal conference might occur, in which further information, if needed, would be considered. After receiving the request, the departmental chairman then activates the union procedures for purposes of reaching a decision. Prior to mid-1949 he was empowered in most departments to make the decision himself. Whatever the routine, the first step is concluded by formally informing the employer as to whether or not the requested overtime is permitted.

Only when the union agrees to the overtime is the employer able to proceed to the second step, the essence of which is contained in the contract and side agreement clauses which deal with the allocation of overtime work. The contract lays down the principle that such work must be distributed equally among the employees of an occupational group, such equalization to be accomplished within quarterly periods. Section 7(b) imposes upon the individual employee the responsibility of fulfilling his individual commitment to work overtime as part of the application of the equalization principle.

Four of the side agreements also deal with equalization. The Axminster and Jacquard agreements specify that equalization for the indicated workers shall be reckoned within the individual shifts, rather than grouping the workers of other shifts into a single unit for equalization. The Machinists' agreement separates out the machinists assigned permanently to the weaving departments and stipulates that they shall equalize their overtime within the departments to which they are assigned. The burden of the Reinspection side agreement, onerous as it sounds, is the method of equalization to be applied to that occupational group.

Equalization is a principle governing the receipt of overtime benefits. But what does it signify as a procedural step in obtaining overtime work? It provides a rule which governs the selection of people to perform the work. Having received permission to obtain overtime, the next step is to name the workers. The employer is directed, by the equalization rule, to select according to this principle. In point of fact, there are additional unwritten rules governing even this one. Many occupations utilize the seniority principle for guiding the sequence of selection, even with the overall requirement for equalization.

The final step, of crucial importance to the entire procedure, is obscurely hidden within the contract. Section 7(b) contains this language: “. . . the employees who agree to work such overtime when requested. . . .” Step three begins with the employer's request to the individual worker that he accept the overtime work. It is concluded with the worker's reply, which may be acceptance or refusal of the offer. Such work is voluntary to the individual worker, which is made even more explicit in the Yarn Construction and Spinning side agreements.

### **The Overtime Decisions**

Decisions are contained in each of the three categories of agreements just summarized: in the definition, applicable conditions, and procedures. They are not the same kind of decisions, however. Those contained in the first two provide a framework



of basic regulations and apply to overtime whenever it is put into effect. The third, the procedures, contains the decisions which bring about the actual occurrence of overtime work. Overtime, irrespective of its surrounding conditions, can only be worked when these procedures are completed. Within them, there are three component decisions which make up the worker's structure.

The first will be called the decision to permit overtime. It was made in 1949 at the departmental level of the union, generally by the chairman. Responding to the employer's request for overtime work, this was the first in the union's sequence of decisions. The second will be called the decision to allocate overtime. If the union permitted the work, a problem then arose as to who should be given the overtime. This decision is embodied in the equalization principle. It appears that the decision is actually made by the employer, not by the workers or union, but in actuality the employer follows the rule which was formulated and instituted by action of the workers. The third will be called to work overtime. It is known to the employer and the workers as the "right to refuse." Since it really includes the right to accept as well as to refuse, the common usage does not accurately identify its force as a decision, but it is a choice as to whether the worker will or will not work when requested.

These three decisions comprise the internal decision structure governing overtime. Having isolated and identified them, the foundation is now laid for the next problem. What difference does this structure make in the process of deciding about overtime work?

### **The Workers' Decision Structure And Its Significance**

Any production decision can be shown to possess three component elements: (1) the action which it decides; (2) the executor of the action; and (3) the formulator of the decision. A decision is a directive which specifies activities or conditions which are to be carried out, thereby determining what must take place in production. This directive is carried out by the people who receive the decision and execute it. It must be issued by some initiating entity, the formulator. The action embodied in the decision specifies the events which are to occur and the domain to which they apply. The operative of functional elements of a decision are formulations and execution, and the ensuing analysis of the workers' decision structure will be made with reference to these elements. They will suffice to isolate the critical properties of the decision system.

#### **To Work Overtime**

The decision to work overtime is known to the employer and workers as the right to refuse. They might not recognize it by the title given to it here, yet it describes exactly the action which the decision brings about. When this choice is made, only one of two possible events ensues. A worker will either perform overtime work or not.. The decision itself determines which it will be.

The recipient-executor of this decision can only be the individual worker. Overtime work as an action can be performed only by individuals, each acting for

himself. Even where many workers accept overtime, each one is an individual recipient and executor. This is a terminal decision, the last in the chain which finally yields the production effects. As such, it can only be executed by discrete units of decision receiving and executing.

In the workers' decision structure, the formulator of this decision is also the individual worker. In prevailing language, he has the right to refuse or accept. No one—neither the employer, nor the union, nor any official, nor any aggregate—can direct his choice. He is the only entity who formulates the decision to work overtime.

### **To Allocate Overtime**

The decision to allocate overtime triggers the naming of the person or persons to whom the work shall be offered. It is accomplished by a rule—equalization, sometimes with seniority as an additional guide. The equalization and seniority rules emphasize the method of selection, but the procedural act to which they pertain in the decision sequence is the act itself of naming or selecting.

The recipient of this decision is not, as might at first appear, the one or more individuals who are named to perform the work. The recipient is composed of all individuals equally available for the work who are both named and not named in the selection process. The recipient is an aggregate, not an individual. The identity of this aggregate is established both by occupational and organizational considerations. It general, an aggregate of equally available individuals is restricted to those who are capable of performing the work, that is, those who know the occupational routines. The workers, through their own organizational processes, have decided that the limit of this aggregate is properly to be set at those actually employed on the occupation. Since all workers are members of some occupation, the boundary does not operate to exclude anyone from the naming process. In this decision system, therefore, the recipient aggregate consists of the occupation.

Who then is the formulator of the decision? On the workers' side, the formulator is a rule—equalization—which is one part of a code. The whole rule embodies many parts, of which equalization and seniority are the most apparent ones. But the identity of occupations and occupational groups is also part of the rule, because the equalization must occur within these boundaries. The identification of occupation and occupational groups for overtime and other purposes was also developed by the workers' system (subject, of course, to agreement with the employer). To locate the actual formulator of the decision to allocate, it is not necessary to trace the process back to the inception of the relevant rules. When the system states that overtime shall be allocated within occupations, it reflects the conclusion that the occupations are the recipients. This implies also that the occupations were the ultimate formulators of the rule. The special rules of allocation drawn up by several occupations, as shown in the Appendix, further corroborate the view that the formulator of the decision to allocate is the occupation.

## To Permit Overtime

The action prescribed by the decision to permit overtime is permission or prohibition of overtime work. Its formulator is the departmental level of the union, sometimes the department as a voting unit and sometimes its chairman acting under its direction. But who is the internal recipient and executor of the *to permit*?

The executor of the *to permit* as identified by the union itself, is the departmental unit of the organization. When the employer requests overtime, he calls upon the workers' decision system to determine whether the particular occupation will receive additional man-hours of work. To the system, the problem is whether this occupation, or other equally available claimants, will receive these newly offered man-hours. By its own rules, the system identifies the claimants and the priorities of their claims. These include, among others, workers who are partially or wholly laid off. The lowest organizational unit within which this allocation takes place, under the existing rules of the union, is the individual department. From among the total number of workers—the members of the whole department—the decision *to permit* decides whether the hours of work will go to the particular occupation as overtime or, by denying the overtime, make the work available to others in the department. The action embodied in this decision applies internally to the department as a whole. It is accordingly, the recipient of the decision *to permit* under the rules which were obtained in early 1949.

## The Common Structural Feature

These three decisions exhibit one common structural characteristic: For each individual decision, the formulator and executor are the same entity. The following table summarizes the interior structures of these decisions. For purposes of comparison, the formulator prior to the decision being acquired by the workers' system is also shown.

Decision	Recipient-executor	Formulator	
		Before worker Decision making	After worker Decision making
To work overtime	Individual worker	Employer	Individual worker
To allocate over time	Occupation	Employer	Occupation via a rule
To permit overtime	Department		Department or Departmental Chairman

The common structural feature is disclosed by the second and fourth columns of the table, which show slight differences in the identification of the formulators and executors of the individual decisions. This was done in order to indicate, in addition to their identities, the different ways in which the formulators carry out their functions. *To*

*work* is formulated directly by its executors; *to allocate* takes place through a rule which originates with its executors; while *to permit* may be performed by the full aggregate or its agent. These differences relate to the operation of the structure, not to its form. The structure itself discloses the one property which attaches monotonically to each decision: The formulator is the same entity as the recipient executor.

One further observation must be made to sharpen the statement of this structural characteristic. The table shows that the formulator of the first two decisions, before they entered the workers' system, was the employer. When the change was made, the decisions were not assigned merely to the union or to any entity within the workforce other than to the executors. It would be insufficient to describe this structure as transferring a decision from the employer to the workers. It was a more particular kind of change, whereby the formulating function was assigned to each decision's executor.

### **The Workers' Decision Structure**

The overtime decisions serve a useful purpose. By analyzing their interior structure, a single common feature emerges. Their formulators and executors proved to be the same entity. This property applies to these three decisions, but since only they were examined, is this structure confined to them? Or is it a characteristic of the other decisions of the workers' system?

This fundamental structural property can be found, in varying degrees and states of development, among all the decisions incorporated into the workers' system. To locate it, it is necessary to analyze them in the same way as the overtime decisions were analyzed. The underlying decisions must be extracted from agreements and practices, and then the formulators and executors must be identified. Some decisions will exhibit this property in full development, with the decision executor unmistakably acting as its formulator. This may be illustrated by such decisions as the right of an individual worker to opt for a promotion or to secure a recall after having been laid off, and the right of an entire workforce to pursue a general wage increase. Others, under analysis, will disclose only partial achievement of this property, but they will tend historically in the direction of its fulfillment.

The underlying feature of the workers' structure is not therefore confined to the illustrated example. It is a general characteristic of the system. It may be stated as a tendency toward assigning the formulation of decisions to their executors.

Why "in varying degrees"? Why is this structure not fully characteristic of the workers' decisions? Can it be considered a property of the system if it is not universally present in its full state of development?

This structure does not spring up automatically. Despite the simplicity of the underlying notion, its realization is the work of monumental social organization and invention. It does not come about by merely identifying individual decisions and assigning them to their executors. The discovery of a decision, of its executors, of the

fact that someone other than the executors is formulating it, and of transferring it to the executors is the outcome of a complex social process. There are transitional states between wresting a decision from the employer—if he is actually the formulator—and assigning it to an entity which the system itself recognizes as the executor. Any individual decision may be found somewhere en route toward its ultimate executor. It is this dynamic factor which requires that the property be stated as “in various degrees and states of development.” The relentless working of this internal dynamic process gives assurance that this structure is a property of the workers’ system, even though a particular decision has not yet reached its proper executor.

This decision structure is the basis of a theory of worker organization. Empirical evidence discloses that when workers organize, they establish a system of decision making whose particular characteristic is imbedded in the structure of its individual decisions: The executor is also its formulator.

The theory claims that workers organize in order to bring this kind of structure into being. This assertion does not attribute to workers any conscious or explicit objective. It merely implies that when the characteristic is achieved for any individual decisions, the workers’ organizing or extension process, in so far as the particular decision is concerned, terminates. It is in this mechanistic sense that the structural property is identified as the objective of worker organization.

## APPENDIX

### The Written Agreements

Agreements governing overtime exist at all formal levels of this company's employer-union relationship. They include the company (two-plant) contract, the General Mill (Thompsonville) side agreement, the departmental side agreements, and agreements with intradepartmental occupational groups.

The contract sections which pertain directly to overtime are contained in Article III, of which the relevant sections are cited herewith.

All work performed by an employee in excess of eight (8) hours in any one day or in excess of forty (40) hours in any one week or on the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) consecutive day of work of his regularly scheduled work week shall be paid of time and one-half of such employee's regularly hourly earnings.

[Article III, Sec. (2a)]

All work performed by an employee on the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) consecutive day of work of his regularly scheduled work week shall be paid at double such employee's regular hourly earnings.

[Article III, Sec. (2b)]

In the event an employee has worked less than forty (40) hours in his regularly scheduled work week, he shall be paid at time and one half of his regular hourly earnings for all work performed on the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) day of his regularly scheduled work week and double such regular hourly earnings for all work performed on the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) day of his regularly scheduled work week.

[Article III, Sec. 2(c)]

All work performed on Good Friday in Thompsonville, Connecticut, or Easter Monday in Amsterdam, New York, or past an employee's regular quitting time shall be paid at the rate of time and one-half of such employee's regular hourly earnings.

[Article III, Sec. 2(d)]

However, no employee shall be paid for both weekly and hourly overtime or for the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) and seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) day, when payment has already been made under any one of the foregoing provisions.

[Article III, Sec. 4]

Regularly scheduled shifts which start at or before midnight shall be considered as part of the working day which began with the first (1<sup>st</sup>) shift at six (6:00) A.M., as provided in Section 1(b) of this Article, of such day.

[Article III, Sec. 5]

Employees who are habitually absent during the regular work week without justifiable cause, and who report for work on the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) or seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) day, shall be subject to disciplinary action.

[Article III, Sec. 6]

The employer agrees that the distribution of overtime work will be equalized among the employees within an occupational group every three (3) months as of the last full payroll week in August, November, February and May, in so far as it is possible and practical to do so.

[Article III, Sec. 7(a)]

However, employees who agree to work such overtime when requested and who fail to report for such work shall be credited with the amount of overtime worked that day in the quarterly equalization. Employees who are absent on a work day in which overtime is worked will also be credited with the amount of overtime worked that day in the quarterly equalization.

[Article III, Sec. 7(b)]

The employer, however, agrees to give sufficient and adequate prior notice of requirements for overtime work to meet such production schedules to the Union representatives of the departments involved.

[Article III, Sec. 7(c)]

The General Mills side agreement contains the following language, adopted on 18 November 1943 and reaffirmed in the codification of side agreements on 14 April 1948: “after the emergency the plant will return to normal hours.” During the war, the regular work week was extended beyond forty hours. This agreement was written to protect the regular forty-hour week after the war.

There are also six written departmental side agreements on overtime. They concern the following groups: the Axminster weaving department; the loomfixers in the Jacquard weaving department; the machinists; the reinspection department; a subdivision of the service department; the spinners; and the entire yarn construction department. These six agreements are given below.

1. Overtime work will be distributed as equally as possible among workers on their respective shifts.

[Axminster Weave Department Side Agreement]

2. Overtime work will be distributed as equally as possible among the fixers on their respective shifts.

[Jacquard Department Side Agreement]

3. Machinists assigned to the Axminster Department the Tapestry Department or the Jacquard Department shall share their work and overtime according to the amount available, in the particular department to which they are assigned.

[Service Department Side Agreement]

4. The following is a condition a foreman is forced to operate under if he requires workers to

work overtime hours: Workers in department have agreement between themselves that no worker will work overtime unless every worker in the department works overtime during same period.

[Production Control Department Side Agreement]

5. ...it was agreed that the Spinners would work eight hours overtime on a voluntary basis for eight consecutive Saturdays, i.e., from September 25<sup>th</sup> through November 13<sup>th</sup>. This agreement can be extended for four (4) week periods by mutual agreements.

[Yarn Construction Overtime Agreement]

6.1. The Yarn Construction Department will work such overtime on a voluntary basis by agreement on Saturdays in the number of hours and people so as to afford the company the necessary flexibility required to accomplish its production requirements.

2. The first and second shift will share overtime on Saturday independently of the third shift. However if over a period of time the third shift workers average 6 or more hours below the average of the first and second shift workers, they then will be permitted to work whatever additional weeks are necessary in order to equalize the overtime hours.

Overtime for the first and second shifts on Saturdays will be scheduled on shift

basis, i.e., if a sufficient number of volunteers for overtime are not available on the first shift additional volunteers may be called for from the second shift according to their seniority and conversely for the second shift. Those employees who refuse to work overtime will be charged with the amount of time as though they had worked.

3. Overtime for the first and second shift will be scheduled on a 6 A.M. to 2 P.M. shift on Saturday, however, the hours of work shall be six. Whenever called upon if such emergency arises in order to maintain the necessary balance with the Yarn Construction Department, it is understood that the Card Room will work up to the full eight hours. The overtime for the third shift will be from midnight Saturday until 6 A.M. Monday. However, if the number of volunteers falls below four,



management may use its discretion as to whether or not it is profitable to maintain this overtime schedule.

4. The Company will notify the employees and the Union during Thursday morning of any overtime to be scheduled for the following Saturday.
5. The company will endeavor to share overtime equally and in turn among all employees of the department.
6. While employees in the Yarn Construction Department are required to work overtime, the company will not schedule any short work days or work weeks. This was agreed upon because there should be no need for a short work day or work week under this flexible plan.
7. In the event of a breakdown due to fire, flood, heat or steam, water or power failure, the contract provisions will apply.
8. Any additional experienced Spinners beyond the potential Spinners necessary for operation may be hired from within the plant or directly from the outside.
9. This tentative agreement is subject to the approval of the Personnel Administrator and the Yarn Construction Department personnel.

[Yarn Construction Department Overtime  
Agreement]

### **The Unwritten Practice**

There was, at the time of the study, one important procedural practice relating to overtime. If the employer wished to obtain overtime work, he was required to inform the union chairman of the department in which the work was to be performed. Thereafter, the chairman, acting in accordance with internal union procedures, notified the employer as to whether or not the overtime would be permitted. If the chairman's answer was affirmative, the overtime routine would then proceed to the next step. If, however, the chairman refused, then there would be no overtime work.

### **Notes**

1. A fuller statement of the results is contained in the report, as yet unpublished, entitled "Workers and Decision Making on Production."
2. The plant, located in New England, manufactures carpets. It is an old company, and a large and important one in the industry. The union was organized in the thirties, but the record of union activity goes back much earlier. Both the company and the union, as well as their collective bargaining relationship, are typical of manufacturing industry in the United States.

3. It is important to this study that the activities at this plant are typical, not unique. For this reason, a comparison of agreements is essential. Bulletin 1425-15 of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Hours, Overtime, and Week-end Work, presents the practices on this subject in U.S. industry. The plant under study falls readily within the range of plants as depicted in the Bulletin.
4. In this local union an occupation is an organizational unit. It often consists of more than one job within a department or process. The internal rules of the department or local union contain definitions of every occupation.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORKER DECISION MAKING

How do workers develop their decisions'? There is a substantial literature dealing with aspects of this question: workers' demands for improved terms and conditions of employment, their motivations, the means they used to achieve them, and other collective bargaining and union activities. Much of this material sheds light on the topic under inquiry, but only indirectly, because it raises a different kind of question and it looks at phenomena from an altogether different perspective. The relationship between the available literature and the ensuing discussion will be evident--they converge on the same world of the local union and its quest for improved terms and conditions of employment. The difference between them arises from two elements of perspective which may be briefly explained.

First, this inquiry focuses on the internal processes of the worker organization, not on the union-employer relationship. It seeks in these internal processes the impulses, the influences, the forces, the organizational inventiveness and whatever else may be needed to generate the demands and gains sought by workers. It treats the world outside--the employer, the government, the community--as a continuing environment impinging on the workers' world, and to which the workers' response is generated, timed and shaped by internal, organization processes.

Second, this inquiry deals centrally with decisions and their structures: with the subjects of decisions, their executors and their formulators. This is a subject not ordinarily treated in the existing literature, except, as aspects of local union internal government--a very minor item.

The next topic of this inquiry, following directly from the results of the preceding chapter, is the process by which workers develop their decision structures. As just indicated, the process will be sought within the internal organization of workers, and it will relate to decision structure as such. The theory of the process will attempt to account for how the workers discover decision problems, and how they implement the solutions in the form of new or revised decisions.

To derive this theory, an analysis will be made of the processes by which the three overtime decisions were developed. This chapter will investigate the decisions *to work overtime* and *to allocate overtime*. An initial formulation of process will be available when this examination is completed, at the end of the present chapter. The decision *to permit overtime* will bring to light many more complex aspects of the development process. These will be presented in Chapter 9 and 10.

Problems of data and methodology will arise in the course of the analysis. They will be dealt with as they occur.

## To work overtime

The decision *to work overtime* contains all the meaning of the workers' right to refuse overtime, and more. The right to refuse reflects what the workers sought in their relations with the employer, but amounts to only a half of the whole decision; that is, it expresses only the decision not to work overtime. As later discussion of *to allocate* and *to permit* will reveal the right to accept overtime work was also at issue. When the right to refuse was finally recognized, the workers actually exercised both parts: the right to refuse and to accept--that is, the whole of the decision *to work overtime*. However, at its origins, the salient part of the decision to work overtime was the right to refuse, and it is here that the investigation must begin.

## The History

The workers in this plant date their right to refuse overtime from the time of the first contract in 1936. Not that the contract itself mentioned any such right. Its only reference to overtime was the definition of the workday and week as having eight and forty hours respectively, and the provision of time and one-half pay for overtime work. The first contractual recognition of the right to refuse occurred in the 1947 agreement and even this in very indirect language<sup>8</sup>.

The right to refuse became an established decision almost by default. There was apparently no overt or formal recognition of this right of workers. Its exercise, from the start of the collective bargaining relationship, was apparently not challenged, at least not effectively, by the employer. During these years of the union, in the latter thirties, there was actually little overtime work. The production departments occasionally needed some extra hours, usually in an emergency. The maintenance and service departments were called upon somewhat more frequently, especially where the work had to be performed while the production departments were not in operation.

These were times, not of extra work, but of lack of work. Workers were usually eager to earn the extra income afforded by the overtime work in this period of short work weeks and layoffs. If any worker refused overtime, the employer could find plenty of others who were glad to get it. In this context, the right to refuse gained de facto recognition. By the end of the thirties, when employment was on the increase, the right to refuse overtime had become an established practice.

The union people furnish very meager factual information relating to origin of the right to refuse. They consider it a perfectly obvious need of workers, a kind of inalienable right. They argue that when the contract fixed eight and forty hours as the normal workday and week it set a limit to the individual's obligation to work, and that anything in excess of these amounts must be on a voluntary basis. They speak of the many objections to overtime work, such as its inconvenience and physical burden. Finally, they claim that overtime pay provides the wrong kind of increase to a worker's income—an increase in hours instead of in basic wage rates--and therefore militates

---

In many contract this identical language does not cover the right to refuse. Cf. ....

against their getting genuine improvements in wage levels. These are considered to be the determining factors which caused the workers to demand the right to refuse overtime.

Thus there is no recorded or recollected history of the right to refuse, specifying the events and circumstances which led the workers to discover the issue, to formulate their demand, and to press upon the union to negotiate it with the employer. Nor is there any record of bargaining the issue with the employer or any written or verbal agreement instituting it. It nevertheless came into existence—the workers distinctly recollect this because they remember that they once did not have the right to refuse. There was a time when mandatory overtime prevailed in the plant.

### **Mandatory Overtime**

Under mandatory overtime, a worker who was asked to work overtime was expected to comply. It was considered part of his duties which he accepted along with all the other obligations he undertook when he became employed by the company. To refuse when asked would place the employee in jeopardy; he could be disciplined for insubordination if the employer so chose. It may readily be presumed that this obligation was applied sensibly. If a worker had a compelling excuse for not working overtime, he would certainly have been excused, especially if a substitute worker were available which was often the case in the late thirties.

The system of decisions within this relationship is worth examining. The employer made a series of prior decisions pertaining to quantity and rate of production before arriving at the decision that additional man-hours of work would be required in a particular process. This series would reach the supervisor-of the process who would then make the final decision: to designate some worker (or workers) to work overtime. Once this designation was made, the sequence, insofar as the employer was concerned, came to an end--there was no further choice or discretion, no further decision to be made, only compliance. Accepting the employment relationship signified the relinquishment of decision making by the worker. Obedience, an essential element of employment, precluded the right of decision. But from the viewpoint of decision-making, this was illogical.

There was inevitably one further decision in the sequence. There was an action, the performance of work at overtime, and this had to be the result of a decision. There was an executor, the individual worker who did the work, there had to be a formulator, the one who decided to do the work. The formulator should have been the worker, but he did not make the decision except as an inescapable act of human volition. He had given up the right to make it as part of the agreement to accept the employer's orders when he took the job. As a worker, the orders he received were part of his Job performance, the productive activities of the plant. In the sequence of decisions, they were the terminal ones of the production system. The employment relation meant, both historically and functionally, that the employee agreed to perform the work as directed by the employer; that is, that he would execute the terminal decisions according to the employer's orders. Since logically there had to be a decision because an action took place, and since the

worker was forbidden, by his own agreement, to formulate it independently, he was in effect a constrained or coerced formulator of the terminal decision *to work*. The decision *to work* did not exist under mandatory overtime, except as a logical and theoretical necessity. Without the right to refuse, the right to accept had no meaning. The worker was deprived, or alienated, from making the terminal decision which in fact he had to make, even under coercion, simply because he was human. But neither he nor the employer recognized that terminal decisions were in fact being made

### **The Right to Refuse**

No one remembers where the right to refuse came from, who figured it out, or how it arose . Judging from its essential characteristics as a terminal decision, it could only have been discovered and made actionable by the workers themselves. Not only would the employer have had no interest in bringing such a decision to light, it would--as indeed it did--create difficulties for him. The origins must therefore lie in the fact that it is a terminal decision, and that the workers were coerced into formulating it. But this adds very little to an understanding of the evolution of the decision, because the workers are the coerced formulators of all terminal decisions. How was this one discovered and desalinated?

Part of the explanation can be traced to three significant factors which arose at the time: the establishment of the union, the first contract, and the overtime clause in the contract.

### **The Overtime Clause**

The overtime clause did not prohibit mandatory overtime. But in defining the regular workday and workweek, it cannot have failed to raise a question about the limits of the obligation to work. Workers must have found in this clause the suggestion--if they had not already discovered it--that they might not have to accept more than 8 and 40 hours. Those who had already harbored a desire to refuse overtime must have found support in the new clause. And to some workers, the definition of the work day and week, despite the implied overtime, must have raised the question as to whether the individual would even be permitted, by his own decision, to work a longer day or week than the contract defined. Accordingly, the overtime clause either stimulated the discovery or strengthened the awareness of workers that mandatory overtime was something coercive and not sanctioned under the overtime clause.

### **The New Contract**

The collective bargaining agreement must have contributed in many ways to the emergence of the right to refuse, as well as to many other things. Two ways appear particularly pertinent to the issue under consideration. First, the contract as a whole has, and must have been perceived as having, a far-reaching effect on the workers' situation in employment. It modified and transformed a wide range of terms and conditions of the employment relationship. It cannot therefore have failed to bring to workers a new and more critical awareness of the obligation to obey orders, to perform work as directed by

the employer—in short, to expose the existence of terminal decisions which the workers had to execute, but which they did not formulate, or were constrained or coerced into formulating by the employer's orders. This loosening of the employment obligation, demonstrated in many contract clauses, must have brought to the surface many hitherto unrecognized terminal decisions, among which was the obligation to work overtime.

Second, the grievance machinery and the just cause (for discipline) clause gave new procedural and substantive support to the right to refuse, as well as weakening the employee's obligation to obey. Mandatory overtime rested ultimately upon the employer's ability to impose discipline upon any worker who refused to work. The new contract allowed the worker to raise the issue as to whether the refusal to work overtime was a just cause for discipline. The grievance machinery provided the means for adjudicating the question. In this sense, the contract as a whole, and the two specific parts, gave the workers a new means by which to challenge mandatory overtime and any other such obligations.

### The New Union

The third ambient factor contributing to the right to refuse was the establishment of the union. It provided the workers with the means for presenting and prosecuting demands on the employer. It had negotiated the contract and was responsible for administering it. But above all, the union was the workers' decision system, with its own internal, organizational imperatives and constraints. The existence of the union and its special kind of interrelationships among workers influenced, perhaps decisively, the resolution of the problem of mandatory overtime, as will now be explained.

Once the issue of mandatory overtime was raised within the union--whether as a demand for its elimination or indirectly as a question of "just cause" discipline--the union had to address the problem in principle, as a problem of decision structure. As a straightforward collective bargaining issue, the union would need only determine if the contract obligated workers to work; if not (as was in fact the case) the workers did not have to accept overtime. If they refused the employer's order, they could not be held insubordinate or subject to disciplinary action. The union however had other considerations, some favoring, others opposing, mandatory overtime. The opposing considerations were plain; the overtime clause itself, the coercion of workers, and others. The considerations favoring mandatory overtime included such things as the need for the output to maintain production--and employment--in preceding and succeeding operations, the desire to maintain a constructive relationship with the employer, and the like. There was enough on each side of the issue--seen purely in its collective bargaining aspect--to pose a serious question within the union as to what position it should adopt on the right to refuse overtime. Interest blocs and votes could also be expected on each side.

The resolution of the issue is known: the union supported the right to refuse and acted to eliminate compulsory overtime. The question is how it reached such a conclusion. An analysis of the union's internal decision problem provides explanation of the outcome.

## A Theory of the Decision Process

The union's problem, seen from the inside, was not simply to take a position for or against a grievance--compulsory overtime or "just cause." It was compelled, by the inner logic of its decision making function, to decide for itself whether or not workers could be obligated to accept overtime work. It could not hide behind the employer's decision, nor could it plead its inability to impose its decision. From within the system, it was confronted with the obligation of deciding for or against mandatory overtime if it decided in favor of mandatory overtime, it became de facto the coercive decision maker, instead of the employer. By raising the question and presenting their demand to the union, the individual workers actually confronted the union with a dilemma: who should decide that an individual should work overtime?

This was the structural issue from the start, from the moment the issue was raised inside the union. The right to refuse was a controversy between the worker and the employer. It was transformed, when brought inside the union, into a question of who should decide whether the individual should or should not accept overtime. If the union supported mandatory overtime, it would have decided that it--an aggregate entity of the system--should formulate a decision whose executor was the individual. From a purely structural viewpoint, this was the issue confronting the union. Its final conclusion was to solve the structural problem in the way already noted: by assigning the formulating function to the executor of the decision.

By what path—organizational, argumentative, political or otherwise—the union actually reached this solution is not known. The issue itself, its transformation into an internal structural problem, and the final structural solution are material elements in the evolution of the decision to work overtime. By reconstructing this evolution within the domain of decision structure, it has been possible to suggest a theory of the origins of the decision.

A substantive issue arises in employment. When brought to the union the issue is necessarily transformed into one of decision structure. The union as such cannot decide the merits of a substantive issue without assuming the function of decision formulator. It might seek to do just this, but it is then open to challenge by members on the grounds that it has no right to make the decision. Thus, within the union, the substantive issue exposes a structural problem: who is the proper formulator of the decision underlying the issue? When confronted internally by a structural conflict--who should formulate the decision, the union or the executor?--the internal processes of the union itself do not achieve an equilibrium until the formulating function is assigned to the decision's executor.

By such a process, it is suggested here, the decision *to work overtime* came into being.



## To allocate overtime

Early in the history of the union, beginning shortly after the signing of the first contract, rules governing the distribution of overtime began to appear. They sprang up irregularly as verbal agreements between individual supervisors and the occupations under their jurisdiction. By the end of the thirties, these agreements were widespread in the plant. Some of them were subsequently committed to writing as side agreements. Only in 1947 was the subject of distribution of overtime work covered by a clause in the plant-wide contract.

The 1947 clause (which remained in effect thereafter) provided that overtime work was to be equalized among the members of an occupation over three-monthly periods. There was also a second, unwritten rule which was operative in many parts of the plant. It provided that workers were to be selected for overtime work on the basis of their seniority. These two rules were not contradictory. The seniority principle merely supplied the sequence within which the equalization was to be achieved.

These rules are applicable to a very special situation, which the workers call partial overtime. This is overtime work, which requires less than the total number of workers employed on a single occupation. If all were required, there would be no problem of allocation, since everyone would receive work. When only part of the total occupation was needed, these rules furnished the basis for assigning workers to the extra work and premium pay.

The clause governing the equalization of overtime work among the members of an occupation constitutes the decision, which this study calls *to allocate overtime*. As a decision it contains directives: it limits the application of the equalization rule--hence of the overtime work--to the members of an occupation, thereby excluding others from the work and from the test of the rule; and it constrains the selection of workers by requiring that the overtime work be equalized, that is, that all workers, within a three-month period, shall be offered the same amount of work. These two directives are steps in a single decision sequence; they designate the occupation as the exclusive recipient of the overtime work, and they provide a guideline for designating which member shall receive the offer of overtime.

Actual evidence of the origins of these rules no longer exists, neither in documentation nor in the memory of the participants. The lore of unionism and industrial relations provide explanations as to how rules of this kind were developed. Foremen allocate some benefit such as overtime in ways, which came to be regarded as unfair or discriminatory. The workers then object and insist upon some fairer way of apportioning the benefit. The equalization rule may have arisen in response to some such situation

The charge of unfairness or discrimination is probably the most potent one in a union's arsenal. The equalization rule sounds like the union's response to claims of discriminatory allocation of overtime work. The authority to distribute the benefits of overtime was undoubtedly a useful control mechanism in the foremen's hands. It would

be almost inhuman to expect the foreman not to utilize the granting or withholding of overtime as a way of rewarding and punishing their men, and thereby to reinforce their authority. Whether in fact this happened, and if so, whether it was frequent or seldom, widespread or not, remains unknown. It is certainly possible or potential and the equalization rule points unerringly at such a practice as an evil it sought to expunge.

But as an explanation of what actually (must have) happened, this account is not entirely satisfactory. It doesn't explain how workers became sensitive to this alleged unfair treatment as against others which must have existed. Nor does it deal with what must have been the most difficult and important part of the process, the events which occurred within the union. It makes of the rule the outcome of a controversy between workers and employer, and neglects entirely the intra-union problems and probable events. Accordingly, theory of *to allocate* which locates the process within the union will now be presented.

In constructing the theory, two methodological constraints will be imposed. First, any situation supposedly generating a response by workers must be one which they encountered directly and could themselves observe. Its place of occurrence and participants must have been in or around the workplace and not in some locale, which workers, as part of their living and working experience, would not know at first hand. Methodologically at least, this rules out assigning worker responses to actions or conditions occurring elsewhere—such as within management—which were not actually visible and perceptible to workers. Second, the only kinds of problems which workers can be thought to have identified and solved are those which, given the limitations and possibilities of their employment situation, they were in a position to handle. An adverse or otherwise undesirable situation will not per se be considered sufficient to create a worker response or to define a problem for them. It will have to be a circumstance for which both the problem and the solution are within their reach. It will be argued below that the explanation suggested above for the allocation rules violates these constraints and this makes them unacceptable. The constraints may sound too restrictive, but they will prove a protection against theorizing on the basis of considerations attributed to workers which they could not realistically have entertained.

### **The Emergence of a Structural Problem**

It is useful to think about the decision *to allocate* as a solution to a problem of decision structure. Overtime was allocated before the decision was instituted, perhaps inequitably, by the foreman. The new rule constrained the foreman in ways already described. The source of the new rules and the constraints add up to a structural change in decision-making. Accounting for the change as a structured solution means locating a problem under the old arrangement which was eliminated or resolved by the new one.

Since partial overtime was worked before the decision *to allocate* was instituted, there must have been some kind of decision structure to bring it about. This structure may be readily deduced from the known circumstances of the procedure on the employer side, decisions had to be reached concerning production requirements and schedules, and

on the need to increase man-hours of work by overtime. Thereafter the individuals to whom the work was to be offered had to be selected, presumably by the foreman. Once selected, the individuals had to decide whether or not to accept the work; that is they formulated the decision *to work overtime*. In the entire sequence, only the last one was within the workers' decision system.

At this point, the methodological restrictions imposed earlier take over. How much of this decision sequence on overtime was actually within the scope of vision and action of the workers? Obviously they could see the foreman offer overtime work to individuals, or if not actually see it, they could infer it by the results—individuals working at overtime. But above all, they could see some individuals work while others did not work and were not offered the opportunity to work. The focus of their attention must have centered upon their own fellow members of the occupation who enjoyed the benefits of the overtime. These individuals and not the foreman were the visible source of a potential problem for the workers

The perceptible route to the allocation rule was suggested by an experience which the Thompsonville workers recount in connection with a different, though closely related issue of work allocation. During the thirties, before the formation of the union, workers noticed that many people were never laid off, while others suffered reduced workweeks and extended period of unemployment. They called these favored ones the "Twelve Apostles" because there were supposed to have been twelve who worked steadily. Naturally, the unfavored ones considered this allocation of work unfair and discriminatory. But they tended to blame the supervisors less and the favored ones more for this situation. They claimed that the twelve received steady work because they curried favor with the foreman. The old timers in the union recite detailed anecdotes about the things the fully employed workers had to do for their foremen in order to win their favored treatment: washing the foremen's cars, mowing their lawns, and the like. Whether and to what extent these later accounts reflect actual events cannot be established, but they serve to delineate the perspective from which workers see and analyze events at work. The foremen can be counted on to play favorites and to practice discrimination against individuals. He is not the problem and nothing can be done about him anyway. What makes it possible for the foreman to discriminate is the presence among the workers of willing collaborators. When a worker receives special treatment from a foreman, he is not an innocent, passive recipient of some bounty. He earns his treatment by the explicit things he does—either for the foreman personally or by his activities on the job. The individual beneficiary is a collaborator or an initiator of the discrimination, not its lucky victim.

The value of this anecdote lies in what it depicts of the point of view and the reasoning of workers in a situation closely resembling the alleged unfair allocation of overtime. Although it does not pertain directly to overtime, it nevertheless contributes two valuable pieces of insight into the decision generating process: how discriminatory acts are perceived by workers, and the internal task involved in responding to them. In the actual telling of the story, the workers assigned no role to the foreman in the evolution of their response. The summary given above accurately reflects the repeated

assertions of the informants: the foremen did what foremen always do--they discriminate. The fault lies with the men who collaborate. Further, the discrimination became visible and actionable because the other workers could see what the collaborators did and what it got for them.

The anecdote illuminates the internal surface of discrimination, and it suggests how it happens that workers seize upon some particular discriminatory act at a particular time. They respond apparently when they see and identify the causal collaborative acts committed by workers. At the very least, this provides a theoretical model by which to account for the selectivity of worker response to employer decisions.

The anecdote also reveals, however fleetingly, the dimensions of the task involved in solving a problem. The difficulty which an alleged discrimination of this kind creates for a union is internal, not primarily with the foreman. The foreman is expected to act so as to reinforce his authority and to distribute or withhold benefits towards that end. Viewed from within the union, the critical issue is the collaboration by workers in the employer's unfair allocation. If some workers suffer, others benefit by the practice of favoritism. The disadvantaged can see the benefits, the beneficiaries, and the acts of collaboration.

To the union, the problem thus becomes one of devising a remedy and persuading the members of the occupation to accept it, including the collaborators. This is a work of perception, discovery, invention, persuasion or coercion and finally confrontation of the employer with the new fact that there are no more collaborators. Methodologically this process, as undocumented as the more conventional explanation, places the problem within the direct line of vision of the workers, and makes it actionable by them. They can reach the collaborators within their ranks more easily by argument, by proffer of long-time advantages, and where necessary by coercion. The foremen and the employer are far less accessible to the workers especially if the workers remain divided by the benefits of continuing collaboration.

The anecdote suggests a set of possible real circumstances which prevailed before *to allocate* was instituted, and how they might have stimulated a response by workers to the unfair allocation of overtime. It is the way things could have happened and perhaps might have happened. It sheds light on aspects of worker response and activity, which the more conventional explanations do not consider. For present purposes, it adds one other useful element. It illuminates the decision structure which existed before *to allocate* and which was modified subsequently by it. When the so-called collaborators accepted the foreman's offer of overtime, they thereby prevented the offer of work to others. Structurally speaking, they implicitly made two decisions. They made a decision *to limit* which excluded all other workers of the aggregate available for the work from being offered any extra hours. In so doing, they did not define the aggregate; they simply limited all access to the list of possible recipients. They also made a decision *to designate* which specifically named themselves as the proper recipients of the hours instead of any other possible claimants.

The principal service of the anecdote is to make it easier to locate this bit of structure within the workforce. Otherwise, the more obvious location of the decision structure before *to allocate* would have been with the foreman, the individual who eventually assigned the work to specific persons. For the methodological reasons stated earlier, it is preferable to locate the acts and the structure within the work force, where they can be seen and acted upon. Even without the anecdote, the decision role of the collaborating workers could have been inferred simply by asking, what formulating functions were carried out by workers in response to the discriminatory allocation by the foreman? The anecdote makes this theoretical question far more realistic.

The origins of *to allocate* may also be inferred from quite a different set of circumstances. It can be reasoned--as will be shown--that *to allocate* became necessary as a consequence of the decision *to work overtime* which had already been instituted.

The decision *to work overtime*, once instituted, solved one structural conflict and created another. After this decision was incorporated into the workers' decision structure, it was the right of any individual to formulate it, if offered overtime work. By accepting the work, he implicitly formulated the same decisions attributed above to the collaborating workers: a *to limit* against all excluded workers, and a *to designate* naming himself. The internal decision structure before *to allocate* was the same in both instances.

The difference between them may prove instructive. The discrimination anecdote placed the coercive decision-making outside the worker's decision system although still among workers. It could have been viewed as an assault against worker decision making as such, carried on by workers. The *to work*\_consequence places the coercive decision making directly within the system, an outcome of a structure instituted and practiced by the workers. It is reasonable to expect that both could have occurred, sometimes separately and sometimes even on the same occupation.

Their differences notwithstanding, they each expose the same decision structure preceding *to allocate*. Individual workers who accepted overtime work--as a consequence of collaboration or by formulating *to work*, or by both--emerged as the coercive formulators of a more general decision *to designate*. The existence of this internal coercion must inevitably have become perceptible to the other workers, thereby posing a problem to decision structure within the union and setting the stage for its solution.

### **The union as formulator**

The solution of the structural conflict just described was brought about by the overtime rules adopted by the union and incorporated in the contract. In assigning the overtime to the occupation, the union itself acted as the formulator of the *to designate*, thereby relieving the individual workers who accepted the overtime of implicitly formulating the decision as well the implicit *to limit*. By instituting the equalization rule, the union removed from the individual workers the second decision *to designate*, by

which they named themselves as the proper recipients of the work. It did this, not by formulating a decision *to designate*, but by a decision *to limit* which put an end to the acts of decision making by the collaborating individual. The structural conflict was solved in this way. The question now arises: how did it come about?

Again, there is no record or recollection as to how it took place: the events leading up to it, the considerations taken into account, the contending solutions, or the grounds on which the final decision was made. As usual, questions about all this evoke only the response that the new rule was fair and it remedied the previous discrimination, hence self-evident. In the absence of explicit history, it becomes necessary to identify the inner structural implications of the new rule and then to attempt to reconstruct the process leading to it.

Actually, there are only two problematic aspects of the union's decision from the perspective of decision structure. The first is the designation of the occupation as the recipient of the overtime, that is, as the executor of the union's decision *to designate* (as against other aggregates), and hence as the formulator of the next decision to designate naming which individuals should receive the work. Proceeding from the structural premise attributed to worker decision making, the issue may be stated as follows: was the occupation the executor of the decision for which it was made the formulator? The second aspect of the union's decision requiring explanation is the equalization rule itself. Why should the union have formulated it, if the executor was the occupation? To these questions, in sequence, attention will now be turned.

There were several conceivable entities which might have been considered proper recipients of overtime, other than the members of the occupation: the laid off workers of the occupation and of other occupations, the underemployed members of other occupations within the same department and from other departments and, if there were no laid off or underemployed workers, then the fully employed members of other occupations from the same department or from other departments. Yet none of these was named as recipient of the overtime. What led the union to decide that the recipient was only the occupation and none of these other potential claimants to overtime work?

It is useful to visualize the issue as it might have arisen in context. The problem must have occurred on many occupations .in various parts of the plant. Therefore, all the workers were involved in the issue both as potential recipients of overtime on other occupations and as sharers of the overtime on their own occupation with workers from others. Sheer self-interest in additional hours could not have dictated any particular decision in the matter. Similarly, they were all affected in the same way by the production shortages, which generally dictated the need for additional hours. Given this probable context, the reasons behind the union's solution appear to be at once practical, organizational and structural.

As a purely practical matter, anyone who should reasonably be offered the extra work ought to know how to perform the job, since the overtime was needed to meet some sudden and critical condition. Because of the flow character of the process, this was as

essential for the workers as for the employer. If preceding and succeeding occupations did not produce the schedule, the intermediate one would have to be curtailed, thereby resulting in possible layoffs of short duration. To avoid such layoffs, the workers must have agreed that the people asked to work overtime be able to step right in and do the work, without spending time on training. This was a practical consideration which all the workers shared. The occupation itself was the only aggregate to satisfy this requirement. To permit workers from other occupations to work the overtime, the union would somehow have had to deal with the problem of occupational qualification. It would make no sense to provide a benefit, and then make it impossible to take advantage of it. Either some promotional path (practically impossible in a large plant) or a period of training time (practically impossible under the emergency conditions and short duration of partial overtime) would have to be introduced. Further, some procedure, then non-existent, would have to be set up to choose and notify the workers to whom the work would be offered, again a time-consuming step. Thus, organizationally, there was no way to include the workers outside the occupation, and no disposition to set up machinery to do so.

Finally, the seniority rules already established the occupation as the first allocation unit for newly available hours of work other than partial overtime. Thus, a structural paradigm existed for allocating the work.

This combination of factors is presumed to have led to the rule that partial overtime should be restricted to members of the occupation. The underlying decision rule might be formulated in these terms: When small amounts of additional hours of work become available and are needed immediately (i.e., when there is insufficient time to select, notify and train other workers to perform the jobs), they shall be allocated to the members of the occupation. The occupation thus emerged as the executor of the decision, hence its formulator, because no other entity could satisfy the critical time, availability, and qualification constraints attached to the formulation of the decision *to work overtime*.

### **The occupation as formulator**

The second problematic aspect of the allocation decision, as noted above, pertains to the equalization rule itself. The rule poses two questions to the present inquiry. First, if the occupation was the executor, and therefore the formulator of the allocation decision, why should the local union enact a rule of designation for it? Under the premise attributed to the system, should not the occupations have enacted their own rules of designation? Second, the equalization rule is not a complete rule designation. If the workers' decision system assigns the formulating function to the executor, how did it come to leave a part of the allocation of overtime work to the foreman, who obviously was not the executor or even an entity of the workers' system? These are not actually questions concerning the development of worker decision making, but rather about reconciling the equalization rule with the premise attributed to the system.

The first question may be answered directly by a closer look at the rule itself and its enactment. It has two main components: equalization and its domain of application and testing, the occupation. As noted above, the union might have allocated the overtime to other entities such as other occupations, the department or the entire local. No matter which it had chosen, the rule of equal allocations could still have been applied. The point here is that equalization and occupation are separable elements. The reasons for designating the occupation were analyzed above. Accordingly, the union did not supersede the occupations in this case; it enacted a union-wide rule to be applied at the level of each occupation.

The rule governed a term of employment which applied uniformly to the entire local union. The available number of hours of work constitute an important economic benefit, to be distributed consistently with other benefits. It had to be adopted by the union as a whole, and incorporated in the contract so as to govern the employer as well as the union members. The only entity, which could legislate uniformly for the entire local, was the union itself. Accordingly, the union was the proper entity to adopt equalization because it alone is the decision maker for the whole membership.

Further, equalization is not a rule of designation, but a framework or constraint on designation. It provides that overtime be given equally to members of an occupation and it stipulates that the equalization be tested over three-month periods. Thus, equalization is only a criterion of the ultimate result, to be applied after the designations have been made and carried out. The rule does not prescribe any sequence at all. The union, therefore, did not intervene in the formulation of the occupations' *to designate*.

Finally, the equalization rule has to be seen from the perspective of its impact upon the internal life of the union. Within the workers' system, it imposes a constraint upon the members' behavior, as explained above. Thenceforth, no individual could benefit from any activity which might secure for him more than his equal share of overtime hours. This general rule of conduct, applicable to all members alike, had to be instituted on a union-wide basis.

True, the equal allocation rule adopted by the union was not a rule of designation at all. It was a decision *to limit* made by the whole union restricting, in the first instance, the activities of its own members. Its executors were individual workers, not occupations. The premise of the system was not violated by the decision. It was in fact meticulously observed. This view of the equalization role leads directly to the second question posed above—as a framework for designating individuals, it did not actually formulate the whole decision *to designate*.

Even with the equalization rule, the occupations still had to enact their own rules of designation. Three kinds of rules were actually instituted by the occupations. A few decided that overtime would have to be offered to the entire occupation, not to any single individual. "If one works, all work." A few adopted the rule that the overtime be offered to individuals according to their seniority. Most of the occupations decided to allow the designation to take place within the framework of equal allocation over three months.



Occupations thus had options and they made their individual choices. Equal allocation as a framework for designation must be considered as the occupations' decision *to designate*.

The existence of a choice among methods provides some indication that equal allocation was not incompatible with the system. If it were so perceived, the occupations could readily have chosen another method. More to the issue, it appears that the foreman's role was so constrained that it offered no scope for individuals to continue collaboration as a way of obtaining the offer of overtime. Equal allocation did not pose any noticeable or actionable problems to the occupations which elected to operate under equal allocation alone.

The second question ought really to ask: what governed the choice between equal allocation and seniority? The choice was between two contrasting systems of designation--seniority with its specified, self-administering designation of individuals, or equal allocation with an open, non-automatic but constrained method of designation. Since the alternatives were known to all the occupations, the assumption must be that they made their choice knowingly and to their own best interests. Why any given occupation made its particular decision is not known, but the implications of the choice may be readily perceived.

As designatory methods, each of the options created internal effects which were both good and bad. Seniority eliminated internal conflict among workers but required an elaborate system of rules and processes for handling contingencies properly. It could very possibly have made equal allocation impossible. Equal allocation left the sequence of designation unspecified, resulting in some possible internal friction, but it did not require rules and adjudicatory processes. These contrasting pluses and minuses probably add up to the result that each occupation made its choice in response to its internal situation, so as best to minimize the problems which might arise over the allocation of overtime.

## **In Sum**

The union adopted a rule, incorporated in the contract, which regulated the allocation of overtime work. It has two operative parts: one, that overtime be given to the members of the occupation, and two, that the amount to each member be equalized over three month periods.

The worker decisions embodied in this clause are called, in the present study, the decision *to allocate (partial) overtime*.

The decision *to allocate* was brought about by three implicit decisions. The first was a decision *to designate* by the whole union, which named the occupation as the proper recipient of (partial) overtime and hence as the formulator of the next *to designate* in the sequence. The second was a decision *to limit* by the whole union and embodied in the equalization rule; it terminated the implicit decisions of individuals (to limit against

other aggregates and individuals and *to designate* for themselves) by limiting the amount of overtime they might receive. The third was a decision *to designate* formulated by occupations, which established the basis for assigning overtime work to individuals. This was the decision by occupations to utilize equal allocation or any other preferred method by which to name the overtime workers.

The decisions of the whole union are attributed to a discernible process, as follows. Individual workers, by accepting overtime, created a conflict in decision structure. They formulated a decision *to limit* against other individuals and aggregates and a decision *to designate* for which they were not the executors. To relieve the conflict, the union identified the occupation as the executor of the decision and assigned to it the formulating function. The occupations, in turn, formulated decisions *to designate* which established the procedure for naming the individuals to be offered the work.

## **Conclusion**

A problem was raised at the beginning of this chapter. How do workers develop decisions having the unique structure they were shown to possess? To answer this question, the development of two decisions was subjected to examination, one a terminal decision, the other a pre-terminal one. Even with the fragmentary available evidence, it was possible to reconstruct the circumstances, forces, and other elements of process, which generated them. In each case, a summary formulation of process was achieved. Now, in conclusion, a first general formulation of the process by which workers develop their decisions will be presented.

## **A Theory of Process**

1. An entity of the worker group identifies itself as the executor but not the formulator of a decision *to designate*. (Under mandatory overtime, the individual worker was forced to accept overtime when asked. He was thus the executor of the decision which named him to work overtime, but he was not the formulator, or in this particular case, he was the coerced formulator.)

(Members of the occupation were excluded from overtime, while some individuals received it. The individuals who received the work were the formulators of a decision *to designate* naming them and not the rest as the recipients. The excluded workers were thus the executors of the decision but not its formulators.)

2. A problem of decision structure is raised: who shall formulate the decision, the executor or the union?

The individual who seeks the right to refuse overtime confronts the union with a choice: either to accept the right to refuse (i.e., to name the individual as the formulator of the decision *to designate*), or itself to compel the worker to work overtime (i.e., to

become itself the formulator of the decision to designate and name the worker to work the overtime.)

The aggregate demanding the right to share overtime compelled the union either to allow all members to receive overtime work (i.e., to make the aggregate--the occupation-- the formulator of the decision *to designate* which named the recipients of the work), or else to give the overtime to selected individuals other than the aggregate (i.e., to become itself the formulator of the decision *to designate* and name the workers to receive the overtime).

3. The union assigns the formulating function to the executor of the decision.

This process will be further developed and elaborated as the next decisions are subjected to analysis.

A word must be added about the elements of this theory. Obviously, it is not claimed or implied that these are the terms or the explicit methods by which workers develop their decision structure. An effort was made throughout the analysis to point out that none of the apparatus or nomenclature was to be found in actual use by workers. What does exist are the final decisions, the procedures and processes by which they are used and fragmentary, anecdotal material about their history. Two pieces of methodology are important to this inquiry. One is the requirement to locate the generative process within the worker group and within the occupational relations prevailing among the workers themselves. The other is to analyze decisions as the solutions to problems of decision structure, which they certainly were no matter what else they dealt with. The outcome, as explained through out the chapter, is the process just stated.

Above all, it must be understood that the decisions *to designate* and *to limit* are abstractions and constructs. They are not any part of the workers' vocabulary, nor part of their explicit way of perceiving structural problems. They were introduced into this inquiry because they express aspects of decisions and decision structure with respect to which the workers acted quite consistently. In this sense, they are useful for the analysis and for the statements of the process.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW DECISION: *TO PERMIT OVERTIME*

The decision *to permit* provides the vehicle for a much broader and deeper exploration of worker decision making. This decision differs noticeably from the two already examined. It was a new decision, invented by the workers themselves, and it had four distinct structures during the course of its history. From an examination of this decision, a large part of the elaborate internal machinery of worker decision making will be exposed.

The decision *to permit overtime* came into being in the late 1930's and ended on April 16, 1953 when it was eliminated from the workers' decisions. Each of its four different structures was in effect during a particular period of time. Except for the hiatus during World War II, it remained in operation for approximately 25 years.

The first period of the decision dates from the late 1930's to the end of 1941. During this period, the decision was formulated by occupations or other aggregates on the basis of a vote or by the decision of the departmental chairmen. During the war, from the end of 1941 through 1945, the decision was placed in abeyance on account of the general overtime regulations of the wartime period. Immediately after the war, the decision was reinstated formally by the local union and assigned to the various departments. Here it remained until June of 1949.

The third period in the history of the decision opened in June, 1949 and lasted until the beginning of January, 1951. During this time, the decision was formulated by the officers of the local union and the chairman of the department in which the overtime was to be worked. This is the period and structure of the decision, which are evident in the overtime meeting. In January 1951, the third structure gave way to the fourth, in which overtime was decided by the executive board of the local union. On April 16, 1953, a new contract was signed between the employer and the local union. Under it, the union abandoned its decision *to permit overtime*.

The origins and the first structure of the decision will be examined in the remainder of the present chapter. The next chapter will investigate the second structure of the decision. The third structure has already been partly analyzed in connection with the overtime meeting and will be taken up again in subsequent chapters. Neither structure four nor the elimination of decision will be treated in this study. They did not arise as part of the normal evolution of the decision. They were brought about and largely governed by a deep internal division within the local union and the consequent weakening of its position vis-à-vis the employer. To analyze this history would involve exceedingly large digressions from the main theme of this inquiry.

## The origins of to permit structure 1

*To permit* overtime is a unique kind of decision. It had no counterpart among the decisions of the employer, as did *to work* or *to allocate*, both of which were made by the supervisor before they were absorbed into the workers' decision structure. Moreover, it does not correspond, as the other two do, to overt occupational or production activities which any workers explicitly performed. The decision *to permit* was invented de novo by the workers. To do so, they had to isolate a hitherto unidentified action, locate its executors and identify the formulators of the decision, which specified the action. All this started in Period 1 of the decision. The objective of this section is to reconstruct the process by which *to permit* was evolved.

The beginnings of the decision *to permit* overtime can be traced back to the same formative years of the local union as the two previous decisions--to the end of the thirties. From historical evidence and by logical analysis, it is established that *to permit* arose, within individual occupations, groups of occupations, and even whole departments, after the decision to work overtime had become a recognized assignment to the individual workers. *To permit* was instituted piecemeal by single aggregates of workers. There was no formal recognition of the decision by the union as a whole or by employer. Individual units of workers launched the practice of making the decision, to work, they prevailed upon their supervisors to notify them, consult with their committeemen or chairman, and to accept the aggregate's answer as to whether or not overtime would be permitted in principle.

By the end of 1941, this practice was relatively widespread in the plant. Its further exercise and extension were interrupted by the war, because overtime became a general condition of employment during the time of accelerated war production. When the war was over, the decision *to permit* was reinstated, this time on a universal basis. The formative period of the decision may therefore be said to have ended with the start of war production, in 1941, the years 1941-1945 representing a hiatus in its practice and development.

To reconstruct the process by which *to permit* was developed in Period 1, it is first of all necessary to formulate its precise meaning as a decision. Ostensibly, its function was to allow or disallow the working of overtime, and its particular force was to permit or prohibit the employer from proceeding with the next steps in the procedure of obtaining overtime work. In this sense, it was a decision which regulated the occupational activities of the employer. There can be no doubt that *to permit* had such effects from the very beginning and throughout its history and this may have been one of the compelling elements in its exercise but the process by which it arose and its immediate function within the workers' decision structure endow it with quite a different significance. Its meaning within the workers' structure contains the fundamental keys to its origin as a decision.

*To permit* was primarily a modification of internal decision structure among workers, and not a revision in their decision relations with the employer. As a decision, it arose and was formulated by the particular aggregate from which the overtime work was desired. This structure is indeed the differentiating characteristic of Period 1. When overtime work was asked, the members of the aggregate would confer together or be consulted by their committeemen or chairman--and reach a majority decision as to whether or not the overtime should be worked. This practice, carried out throughout Period 1, was a startling modification in internal decision structure.

Each individual worker possessed the right to decide for himself whether or not he wished to work overtime. The exercise of this right arose, on each occasion, directly from the receipt of a request by the supervisor. In setting up the consultative or voting procedure, a limitation was imposed upon this right. If the occupation voted not *to permit* the overtime, then the individual's right to decide to work was eliminated--clearly a diminution in the prerogatives which the individual formerly had. Herein lies the startling aspect of the structural modification introduced by *to permit*.

The fundamental problem to be explored in this section grows out of this analysis of the internal significance of *to permit*. The modification in structure was not imposed by any external forces. The individual members themselves adopted the voting practice. Indeed, the entire force of *to permit* rested upon (1) the individuals' right to refuse overtime and (2) their voluntary adherence to the occupational decision *to permit*. To explain the rise of *to permit*--the location of the hitherto unidentified actions, its executors and alienated formulators--it is necessary to explain why the individual workers changed, and partially gave up, their right to decide to work overtime. This was the source and the process out of which *to permit* arose.

Where then did this modification come from?

The argument has often been stated that some workers or aggregates just oppose overtime work in principle. The creation of this decision *to permit* would therefore represent nothing more than an application of such principled opposition to overtime work. This kind of explanation doesn't really contribute anything. In the first place, it is undermined by its own circularity--the evidence that such a principle existed among these workers is the fact that they instituted the decision *to permit*. Secondly, when these same workers instituted *to work* and *to allocate*, they violated this alleged principle by explicitly allowing overtime work to occur. Thirdly, if they were against overtime, they would not have developed a decision *to permit*, but rather an outright prohibition of overtime work. The decision *to permit* operated not only to forbid such work, but also positively to sanction it whenever it was affirmatively made. Finally, the attempt to provide an explanation by means of this kind of a principle simply sets up a new and unresolved problem: where did the principle come from, and how did it produce the decision *to permit*?

The birth of *to permit* was not marked by any notable historic events, at least insofar as available evidence reveals. Informants recall only that it arose as an almost

natural outcome of their union activities and collective bargaining. Because the decision was a recurrent one, attached to systematic conditions which called forth its use, the workers were able to identify two broad causal circumstances. The first one under which the decision came into being was identified as the sheer occurrence of overtime, partial or full, and the problems which they produced for the workers. This circumstance reflects the extension of decision making about overtime, grappling with issues which succeeded the development of *to work* and *to allocate*. The second one, very differently, attributes the decision to the workers' response to unsuccessful collective bargaining experiences with the employer. Being denied some grievance or demand, the workers curtailed overtime work. Different from the extension of decision making which characterizes the first source, this one reflects a limitation imposed upon it.

The two directions of development provide the specific framework within which the origins of the decision must be sought. These circumstances must be connected to the decision *to permit* as a modification of internal decision structure. While they may have occurred separately or continuously, singly or in combination, within particular occupations, they will be analyzed as individual and discrete sources of pressure acting upon workers. To each the question is put: could this one alone have generated the decision *to permit*, and if so, through what interconnecting process? This will seem at first sight unreal, in the sense that the participants may have responded to all kinds of combined or even extraneous forces. But the problem at hand is not to explain what motivated the particular people. Rather, it is to isolate the decision pressures arising from existing structures which impinged upon individuals in ways that compelled them to act at the occupational level: in a word, to discover the structural determinants of structural changes. For this purpose, each must be treated as a distinct and separate source of the ultimate decision.

### **The Extension of Overtime Decisions**

Underlying the development of the workers' decisions governing overtime there is evidence of a remarkable degree of continuity and orderliness. The decision *to permit* overtime was a product of the sequential extension of this system of decisions. Three elements of the continuum may be noted as evidence of the interior regularity of the development. First, the decisions themselves provided a closed, sequential procedure by which the final steps in the achievement of overtime work were completed. *To permit* established whether the overtime in principle could be worked. If it was decided affirmatively, it opened the way for the next decision. Where partial overtime was sought, the next decision was *to allocate*, which, when made, provided the names of the workers to be offered the overtime. Those named by *to allocate* then made the decision *to work*. Through this system of decisions, a determinate result was achieved in respect to overtime work. Each decision, made at its particular level of generality, opened or closed the way for the next one in the sequence.

Second, the continuum is indicated by the historical sequence in which they were developed. The terminal decision *to work* was the first to arise. Thereafter, *to allocate*

was developed. Finally, *to permit* was added to the structure. The sequence ran from the terminal decision to each succeeding anterior one which governed its formulation. Third, this historical and procedural sequence evolved out of a process of structural modification. Each decision arose out of the inadequacies of the structure which preceded it, and which it rectified by the arrangements which it introduced. This is the fundamental property of the continuum itself. This structural continuity has already been shown in respect to *to work* and *to allocate*. It remains to be shown that *to permit*, was also the outcome of structural deficiencies made evident by the prior system of decisions.

The first origin of *to permit*, as identified in the preceding section, was attributed to the occurrence of partial and full overtime. This origin, however, is nothing more than the overtime itself, a continuation of the practice of performing such work. All overtime is either partial or full--either part or all of the members of an occupation are asked to perform the work. To identify these as the origin of *to permit* only says that the workers' produced a response to permanent features of overtime to which they had hitherto not responded in an organized way.

From the perspective of the individual worker, there was no apparent distinction between partial and full overtime. Each kind arrived at the individual as an undifferentiated request to perform the work. Moreover, within the customary flow of overtime requests and decisions, the question as to whether or not it should be worked in principle--either by part or all of the occupation--did not impinge upon the individual as a subject for decision. Nevertheless, the evidence discloses that precisely this question arose; that it was handled by the decision *to permit*, and that the question was made perceptible under the two variant conditions, partial and full overtime.

The problem to be solved is formulated in these observations. How did the question of principle, in respect to partial and full overtime, arise for the individual workers? What were the underlying structural issues which led necessarily to the decision *to permit overtime*?

These two different kinds of overtime will be treated separately in the analysis which follows. This will be done, even though there may not have been as sharp a differentiation to the workers as the separation here might indicate. The reasons for dealing with them individually are these. There were historical differences in their extent: there was more partial overtime in the early years, while full overtime became noticeable only as the full employment period of World War II approached. More importantly, the structural implications of the two, upon careful analysis, turn out to be quite different. It therefore becomes possible to ask of each: how might it individually have yielded the decision *to permit*?

### **Partial Overtime**

A preliminary issue arises, which must be disposed of before this topic can be considered. Were the causal elements in partial overtime associated with under--or full employment, or both? The ensuing analysis will be based upon the premise that partial



overtime contributed to the development of *to permit* when there was underemployment, for the following considerations. First, this was historically the actual circumstance at the time of its development during the years after the formation of the union. Second, partial overtime during a period of full employment would be the more exceptional kind of condition. Finally and most important, there would probably not have been a general structural issue if the partial overtime had taken place under full employment. For in this circumstance, individuals could have accepted or refused the work, under the decision to work, without provoking the issues at the occupational level which led *to permit*. Accordingly, the emergence of this decision, as a response to partial overtime will be considered in relation to general underemployment.

Partial overtime, in this situation, assigned the work to a fraction of an occupation selected under the rules of *to allocate*, possibly, in particular cases, in the sequence given by the seniority list. Individuals accepting such work were acting properly within the framework of established rules. In doing so, however, they absorbed some of the available (and low) number of hours which might have gone to other workers. Their individual decisions to work therefore contained other, yet unisolated decisions. They made a decision *to limit*, in the sense that they curtailed the work of other workers. The recipients of this decision were the other individuals, not necessarily the occupation as a whole, for they did not set a new and lower quota of hours for the occupation. They also made a decision *to designate*, of which the occupation as a whole was the recipient. Given the available hours of work, they designated who should and who should not receive them. Their acceptance of overtime by the decision *to work* was tantamount to a de facto decision that available hours should be assigned to some, not all, workers through the medium of overtime.

Yet these were perfectly proper decisions within the established procedures. While the beneficiaries of the work secured advantages, even to the detriment of the rest, they did so in accordance with rules which the others could not conceivably oppose. For they too, on other occasions, were equally the beneficiaries. Yet it was precisely this common involvement in the structural crisis which made it possible for an entire occupation to accede to a modification in procedure. Because every member might be, on any occasion, the recipient or non-recipient of overtime, or the recipient or non-recipient of reduced hours, each had some overriding concern with deciding the issue of overtime in principle.

But this alone, while perhaps predisposing the individuals to accept a modification, could not have turned the trick. For whenever more than half the occupation was needed for overtime, the decision of the full occupation would be foregone. Conversely, if less than half were to be offered the work, an automatic majority opposing the overtime would come into being. Yet even though this continued to be true, even after *to permit*, the members were compelled to go along, though for quite a different set of reasons.

The occupation as an entity was confronted with a hiatus in its own rules for which it had to invent some correction. Under the overtime provisions, the allocation

procedure was appropriate, without any distinction as to the conditions under which it was to be applied. But many occupations also had work sharing arrangements, which went into effect automatically whenever the level of work fell below an average of 40 hours per worker per week--which is exactly the situation under consideration. Given then an insufficient number of hours, how were they to be allocated? By overtime and *to allocate*, or by sharing?

This was a problem for the occupation because all workers were proper claimants to the work under one or the other set of rules. Whose claim then was justified? If overtime were worked, the other workers could demand that the committeeman carry a grievance asking that they be compensated for the failure to share work equally. The occupation would then have to decide whether this claim was valid. Confronted with such a situation, the occupation had no choice but to find a way to resolve this kind of internal conflict in its own rules.

The decision *to permit* therefore became the occupation's way of deciding which of its rules was to be applicable. If it voted to refuse, then the work would be allocated by sharing. If it voted *to permit*, the rights of the individuals to accept overtime were assured. The essence of the structural conflict was contained in these two different decisions to work, the one pertaining to overtime and the other to the sharing. What was needed was an anterior decision which designated which group of individuals might decide to work. This was the structural determinant of the decision *to permit* which emerged under partial overtime.

### **Full Overtime**

The second circumstance giving rise to the development of the decision *to permit* was the occurrence of full overtime. To establish the connection between full overtime and *to permit*, it is necessary to retrace the discovery, by individual workers, of their common occupational problems arising from this particular circumstance. For this purpose, it is helpful to recreate the occurrence and impact of full overtime upon the members of an occupation.

A supervisor asks all his employees to accept overtime work for some specified period. (Many other issues intervene here, such as sufficient advance notification, but these will be disregarded as tangential to the main theme.) Some of the workers—any number, large or small--agree to work the overtime. The remainder elects to refuse the work. All have acted according to their unchallenged rights under the decision to work. But there are now two groups of workers who are differentiated by having made opposite individual decisions on the same subject. Even though their individual decisions were entirely proper, each group experienced effects arising from the others' decisions, as the following will explain.

Those who refused the overtime made a decision which resulted in circumstances to be described, in the curtailment of overtime work for the entire occupation or process. In some processes, all or most of the jobs form a single integrated production unit. If any

jobs are needed, all or most of them will be equally needed. If any of the jobs is unfilled, the total group may be unable to work. In this type of process, full overtime demands full participation by members of the occupation. In other processes, a similar interrelationship may exist within smaller clusters of jobs which work together and mutually service one another. Different from the first type, each of these clusters must be fully manned, if the unit as a whole is to work. Where individual workers are absent, single clusters of jobs may be affected, but overtime for the rest of the process can proceed. The pressure for full participation is significant in this type of process, but a somewhat greater toleration of absences is permissible. In still other processes, there maybe an interrelationship of jobs, but the absence of individual workers simply creates an imbalance in workloads. The process as a whole can still operate but at a higher than usual production cost, perhaps sufficiently high to make the operation prohibitive. Finally, there are processes in which the absence of some workers need have no effect upon the performance of others. But even in such processes where the output is urgently required, there can be, not a functional interdependence of jobs, but an equally pressing need to maintain a proper balance in the flow of work.

These alternative kinds of interrelationship among jobs occur within all sequential production processes. No matter what the particular form of the relationship may be, there exists a critical minimum number of workers which, if the workforce falls below it, the overtime work may be either impossible or uneconomic. The sheer occurrence of full overtime, as opposed to partial, must be explained on the basis of these process requirements. When the number of workers refusing overtime reaches the critical limit of their occupation, the work as a whole has to be curtailed.

Where this took place, the refusers acquired, from the perspective of the members of the occupation, the responsibility for two ensuing decisions. The first was the decision which reduced the quota of hours available to the other workers as individuals. To each individual, this was a decision *to limit*. It was not a decision *to designate* because (a) it did not name or select these individuals and (b) they had already designated themselves by agreeing to accept the work. This decision *to limit*, of which the individuals were the recipients, followed necessarily from the second of the two decisions made by the refusers, and whose recipient was the occupation as an entity. This second decision designated the occupation as an entity which was not to be assigned to perform the overtime work and was thereby a decision *to designate*. It was not a decision to limit because it did not curtail the quota of work available for the occupation: the quota still existed, but the occupation could not perform it as the designee of overtime work. Thus, having negatively decided to work there followed a decision *to designate*, acting upon the occupation as a whole; and as a necessary consequence of this occupational decision, the decision *to limit*, reducing the amount of work available to individual members of the occupation. Insofar as this sequence of decisions acted solely upon the refusers, it accorded entirely with their individual pursuits.

The accepters of the overtime also made decisions which governed the other group. From the preceding analysis, it will be apparent that they also made the decision *to designate* for the occupation as a whole. In accepting the overtime, they implicitly

accepted the assignment of overtime work to the occupation. From this, there followed the same decision *to limit*, making additional hours available to themselves and to all other individuals. This limit of itself was merely permissive, allowing whoever desired additional hours to receive and work them. The question which arises at this point is: how did these decisions adversely affect the refusers?

Two adverse effects can be discerned in this situation. First, the occurrence of overtime could result in a modification of hours of work in later work periods. That this is not a speculative consideration is evidenced by the overtime agreement concluded in the Yarn Construction Department. This agreement provides that during the stated period during which overtime was to be worked on Saturdays, no layoffs were permitted within the regular workweek. This provision reflects the workers' concern with shifting hours from the regular working days to the weekend, even though the overtime premium was paid for Saturday work as such. Therefore, the decision *to designate* the occupation as a recipient of overtime contained within itself a choice among alternative working times, as seen from the perspective of its members. This designation *per se*, made by the accepters of the work, conveyed potentially adverse effects to the others.

Second, this sequence of decisions created considerable pressure, emanating both from the accepters and from the employer, for the others to accept the overtime work. Even though they had the right to refuse, their refusal, by jeopardizing the work of others, exposed them to such pressure. This amounted to a coerced decision *to designate* themselves to work.

Full overtime, as a state of employment, impinged directly upon individuals in the manner just described. Some members of an occupation wanted to work but couldn't, because too many others had refused. The others wanted to refuse but were susceptible to coercion and pressure because a sufficient number had already accepted. All were liable to encounter a modification in workweek, if the allocation of hours forced future reductions in their employment. There is no further need--nor in fact, any warrant--to search beyond the level of the individual worker himself to discover how the occurrence of full overtime came to be an occupational problem.

But this situation posed a profound dilemma to the occupation. Each group was dissatisfied with its own situation. Each could clearly attribute its situation to the recalcitrance or eagerness of the other. But neither could do anything about it. For the situation, which each side imposed upon the other came from the same source--their right to make individually the terminal decision to work. To expunge these concrete, material employment effects, which each side experienced, they would have to stop the other from making this decision. But how could this be done without stopping both sides? And since the sides were not permanent interest blocks, but conjunctural groupings with changing membership, none could be sure that he might not be on the other side the next time full overtime was sought.

To solve this dilemma, the problem had to be reformulated. The dilemma itself, if sufficiently acute, establishes the basis which must have predisposed the members of .the

occupations to seek a solution. But how they reached a solution, or how they succeeded in reformulating the problem, no one remembers any more. However, they did achieve a solution--the decision *to permit* overtime. By connecting this solution to the essential problem with which they were confronted, it is possible to discern the mechanism by which they must have been guided.

The removal of the dilemma and the reformulation of their problem can be most succinctly stated in the language of decision structure. The usefulness of this mode of statement is this: it translates the real effects which they experienced into the decisions which produced these effects, without losing any of the force of the effects themselves. By this translation, the generation of these effects can be traced through the sequence of decisions out of which they arose, and not from the final ones which gave rise to them; and by uncovering this internal structure of decisions, the precise origin and role of their corrective--the decision *to permit*--will become apparent, for it was exclusively a modification in decision structure.

The problem confronting the workers can be readily defined by putting together the sequence of underlying decisions as described in the preceding paragraphs. While each group produced different effects upon the other, these effects flowed from the identical system of decisions, and hence can be presented here as a single sequence. The sequence begins with the terminal decision *to work*, made individually by all the workers. This decision, whether yes or no, yielded the decision *to designate* whose effect was either to assign, or not assign the overtime work to the occupation. Again, whether yes or no, this decision *to designate* gave rise to the consequent decision *to limit*, which either raised or maintained the quota of hours available to the individual workers. Only when these three decisions had been completed did the adverse effects upon individuals come into existence. And these too were associated with the identical decision. For *to limit* could only become activated by the next one, *to work*. One group wanted to formulate the decision, but couldn't; the other wanted to formulate it negatively, but was being pressured otherwise. Where then was the issue?

It did not lie in the final decision which produced the adverse effects. This was the established decision *to work* with which neither side could tamper. Since this was also the initial decision in the sequence, it too was outside the range of their problem. It could not have been the decision *to limit*, because (a) this one was only activated by the last and (b) was the automatic outcome of the second, *to designate*. The crux of the problem was this decision *to designate* whose recipient was the occupation as a whole.

That this was indeed the only structural problem confronting the occupation can be seen by analyzing the ultimate modification, the decision *to permit*. As a decision, it had no effect whatsoever upon the real and material employment conditions experienced by the workers, nor upon the immediate decisions which produced them. *To permit* changed nothing that would have occurred anyway--with or without the vote of the occupation--insofar as the effects of overtime work was concerned. If a majority voted *to permit* the overtime, it could still be obstructed, just as before by the refusal of more than a critical number of workers to accept the work as individuals. If a majority voted to

disallow the work, those who wanted it would still be no better off. The only possible difference made by the vote is the unlikely nary circumstance in which some who voted with the majority to refuse would have wanted as individuals to accept. The decision *to permit* was entirely irrelevant to the ultimate consequences which full overtime imposed upon the individuals. This then eliminates the decision *to work*, at both ends of the sequence, as immaterial to the structural change introduced by *to permit*.

Since the vote had no necessary effect upon the occurrence of full overtime, what possible difference could it make? It resolved the only structural issue which this (entire) problem had for the occupation as a whole. The issue was this: the decision to designate was being made, in opposite senses, by two groups of workers, neither of which was equal to its full recipient, the entire occupation. *To permit* corrected this structural defect by transferring the formulation of this decision from the individual workers--or the ad hoc aggregates which they formed--to the full occupation. This was achieved by having the occupation vote in advance, as to whether its members would be permitted to make the decision to work. Once this vote was taken, it decided what the members might thereafter do, or not do. If a majority voted no, the occupation designated itself as not available for overtime work, and its members would not be permitted to decide to work. If a majority voted yes, it explicitly allowed the individuals to decide to work in any way they chose. This lifted from the individuals the necessity of deciding both whether they might make their decision and what specifically it should be. The occupation took over the first part, relieving the individuals of the onus of making the decision *to designate* for the entire group.

But the question still persists: could not a minority of individuals, by refusing overtime, reverse the occupation's affirmative decision *to permit*--and thereby continue to formulate the occupation's decision to designate?

Even though the same employment effects might accrue, there was, after the introduction of *to permit*, a significant difference in the decision structure. First, the occupation itself made its own decision *to designate* by deciding *to permit*. The scope of its decision *to designate*: the action which it specified, the recipients of the action, and its formulators, were fully encompassed by its decision *to permit*. It could not reach out further and force its members to accept the work, for that would have imposed upon individuals a coerced decision *to designate* which, for obvious reasons, it could not do. The next step in the sequence allowed the individuals to decide to work for themselves, without any concern for its consequences beyond the individual recipient and executor. Therefore, considering *to permit* within the structural limits of the occupational decision *to designate*, it was a completely formulated decision and once made, could not be affected by whatever the individuals might properly do thereafter.

The question then becomes: if, in a formal sense, the individual refusers couldn't modify the occupation's decision, what did they do which had the obvious effect of reversing it? Their's was a new kind of decision which has not yet been encountered. It was a decision whose consequences affected other workers, very much as a decision *to designate* or *to limit*, but which differed from them in one critical respect. It could not be

modified or mitigated without coercing its immediate executor into formulating it in favor of those it affected. It is one member of a significant class of decisions which become perceptible from the perspective of the workers' desalinated decision structure. It poses a formidable problem, for which a solution is far more complicated than the development of the structure itself. This problem arose as a major consideration in Periods 3 and 4.

For the time being, the unproved assertion will be made that the individual's possible reversal of the occupation's decision to allow the overtime did not violate, but explicitly conformed with the decision to designate.

Full overtime yielded the decision *to permit* overtime because it generated an internal problem in the workers' structure. It caused individuals within the occupation to formulate a decision *to designate* which coerced the entire occupation into accepting or refusing the overtime work. Because this coercion was practiced by members of the occupation, it was available to correction by the aggregate. The way in which the coerced decision *to designate* was eliminated was by the members themselves assigning to the occupation the prior determination as to whether they might be permitted to make the ensuing decision, to work overtime. If imperfections were noted in this corrective, they do not affect the completeness of the solution of the particular structural problem.

## CHAPTER 10

### CHANGING A DECISION'S STRUCTURE

#### To Permit Overtime

##### Structure 2

By 1941, the decision to permit overtime was in wide use. While not universal, it could be found in many occupations and departments of the plant. With the onset of the war, it fell into disuse. Overtime became a standard working condition. Workers accepted 48 and more hours per week. In effect, a general decision had been made to permit overtime for the duration. There was consequently no occasion during the War years to activate *to permit*. Until after the war, the decision, especially structure 1, lay dormant.

But even though it was not put to use, the underlying notion of *to permit* remained alive and was expanded during the war period. The records reveal that the following agreement was concluded on November 8, 1943 between the company and the union.

After the emergency the plant will return to normal hours and no schedule of hours worked during the emergency will be used as a precedent for establishing peace time hours.

Several things are reflected by this agreement. The extended workweek was explicitly conceded by the workers as an emergency measure; this itself was an affirmative decision *to permit* in the full sense of the decision. The termination date of this general decision *to permit* was specified. And finally, it reflects the entry of the local union -- the maximum overtime aggregate -- into the domain of the decision *to permit*.

When the war and defense production ended, a new epoch was inaugurated in the history of *to permit*. The local union voted, shortly after the war, to assign the decision to the individual departments. The departments were authorized, in the same resolution, to handle the decision in any way they chose. It became, for the first time, a recognized decision in the workers' system. This resolution remained in effect until June 1949.

From this action of the local, two changes took place in *to permit*. The first was the designation of a formulator, the departmental level of the union. By its vote, the local officially transferred the decision from individual occupations to the departments. This study identifies the resulting structure as structure 2. It is also worth noting that the union did not assign the decision to itself, even though, by its 1943 agreement, it gave signs of preempting some of the domain of *to permit*. The assignment to the department as an explicit identification of a formulator, selected from among other possible entities that might have been named. From this assignment, a derivative structural consequence of interest may be noted. Previously, *to permit* was decided, either directly or with



predominant influence, by the occupations which were to perform the overtime work. Under structure 2, the formulator was not directly involved in the performance itself. The second change arising from the local's vote consisted of the arrangements which the departments subsequently instituted. These will be treated separately in the next chapter.

Structure 2 broke no new ground insofar as relations with the employer were concerned. *To permit* still enjoyed no formal, contractual recognition. It was entirely a de facto arrangement in the plant. The changes introduced by structure 2 were entirely within the workers' system in the internal structure of the decision itself.

### **The Problems of Inquiry**

The rise of structure 2 requires an explanation. The events producing the transfer of *to permit* raise the following questions. Why was structure 1 terminated? Was structure 1 an original error, acknowledged finally after its many years of operation? Why was the department chosen as the formulator of *to permit*? In sum, how did the departments emerge as the formulators, thereby replacing the overtime occupations?

This chapter will advance a theory for the rise of structure 2. However, before the theory itself can be presented, it is necessary to reformulate the events under examination in a way, which, while preserving their accuracy, renders them more amenable to inquiry. Using some of the theoretical propositions already established about worker decision-making, the rise of structure 2 yields to the following analysis and restatement.

The event which produced structure 2 was a single structural change: the departments were made the formulators of *to permit* instead of the occupations. If one fundamental assumption, based on past findings of worker decision making, is now made, this event can be usefully restated. The assumption is that under structure 1, the premise attributed to worker decision making was becoming endangered, and that structure 2 succeeded in rescuing and preserving it. Using this assumption, the rise of structure 2 may be described as follows: the overtime aggregates had ceased to be the executors of *to permit*; in their stead, the departments emerged as the executors. The premise makes it possible to produce a working hypothesis as to why the structure was changed. This hypothesis is that a change had taken place in the identity of the executor of the decision *to permit*.

The hypothesis furnishes problems of inquiry, which are capable of being handled. Did the occupations actually cease to be the executors? And did the departments become the executors of *to permit*? How could such unusual events as a change in the identity of executors come about? These are questions which can readily be investigated and answered; the answers will provide a theory of the rise of structure 2.

### **The Method of Inquiry**

The problems of inquiry just formulated dictate the requirements for their solution. A change in the identity of *to permit*'s executor indicates that a change must

have occurred in the content of the decision itself -- this despite the local union's intention to preserve *to permit* intact under structure 2. The preceding chapter, in discussing the origins of *to permit*, established that the overtime aggregate was its executor, and hence became the formulator. It follows, therefore, that if the executor of *to permit* changed, there must have occurred some change in the content of the decision. This inference points the way for the ensuing investigation.

The inference relieves the investigation of some lines of inquiry which are bound to be fruitless. Since the origins of the change in executor are presumed to reside within the content of *to permit*, there is no need to look to external, organizational, or political events within the union for the motivating causes of structure 2. This provides relief because there are no records or memories, which illuminate the historical events leading up to the local union's vote. The source of structure 2 lies, not in the dramatic struggles within the union, but in the development of its decision-making practices.

To discover the source of structure 2, it therefore becomes necessary to investigate the developing state of decision making which impinged upon *to permit*. Sufficient data are available for such an investigation. They consist of the known processes of worker decision making which existed prior to and during the transition to structure 2; the physical processes of production; and the ways in which *to permit* was employed, together with its impact upon worker decision making and the physical processes of production. These data are easily available because they are the commonplace continuing constituents of occupational and productive life in the plant. Using them, it becomes possible to reconstruct deductively the setting, which gave rise to structure 2.

The reconstruction will be accomplished by pursuing separately each of the two possible routine decisions of *to permit*. The first such routine decision was to allow overtime work. That is to say, when a request was received, the overtime aggregate agreed to allow its members to work overtime. The section immediately following this one will explore this affirmative decision for the source of structure 2; the change in content of *to permit* and the change in its executor. The second routine decision of *to permit* was a refusal to allow overtime work. It too will be investigated, in a subsequent section, as a source of structure 2. These two possible decisions -- yes and no overtime -- exhaust the alternative ways in which *to permit* could have been decided. If the foregoing derivations of the problem and method of inquiry are tenable, either or both will provide the solution to the rise of structure 2.

### **Overtime Permitted**

This analysis opens by making some plausible and realistic assumptions about overtime permitted. These assumptions stem from the available data described in the preceding section. It may reasonably be assumed that occupations, acting correctly under structure 2, sometimes permitted overtime to be worked. Following such permission, it may be further assumed that individual workers, formulating the decision to work, accepted the overtime and worked. These assumptions are entirely reasonable; overtime

work certainly took place, and under structure 1, prior permission of the overtime aggregate was needed before it could be worked.

The fundamental hypothesis of this analysis applies to such a routine and commonplace permission of overtime. It holds that the occupations, by permitting overtime, either brought into being or exposed to view the fact that they were not the executors of *to permit* and that the real executors were the departments.

To uncover this development, one real consequence of allowing overtime work needs to be described. It is a real consequence in the sense that it is wholly credible as a possible occurrence and it is logically necessary from the conditions arising out of overtime work. The notion of overtime work contains two central ideas: first, that some additional hours of work are being made available by the employer -- additional, that is, to the number of such hours currently offered to the people engaged in the work; and second, that these hours are to be assigned to a particular class of people -- to workers who are already fully employed, receiving either eight hours per day or forty hours per week or both. Both these ideas apply to any overtime, but the second touches the issue now under consideration. Permitting overtime contains the real consequences of allocating additional hours of work to the fully employed. Under the rules of the local union, these fully employed workers had to be members of the occupation on which the work was to be performed.

The decision *to permit* originated, it will be recalled, from this same inevitable consequence of allowing overtime. When an individual was given overtime work, after *to allocate* and *to work* had been properly decided, the newly available hours were assigned to him instead of to other possible recipients of the same hours. *To permit* was instituted as a way of stopping individual workers from allocating the hours to themselves through the combined effects of *to allocate* and *to work*.

*To permit* under structure 1 did not eliminate the consequence of allocating hours to the fully employed. The consequence was, as stated above, an inevitable one attaching to the physical reality of overtime itself. Structure 1 merely divested the individual worker of all responsibility for the consequence and for the allocation of hours which it implied. The allocation persisted even after structure 1 was established, for it was inherent in the practice of overtime work.

For such newly available hours, many possible candidates can easily be imagined: the underemployed members of the same occupation or of other occupations; workers currently laid off -from the same occupation, from other occupations in the same department or from other departments; or from workers not even belonging to this plant but unemployed and looking for work; or workers from outside the productive work force, such as supervisors (unemployed or employed and eager to learn some additional income) or favored individuals from any place in or out of the plant. These individuals and aggregates might easily be considered as possible candidates for any additional hours of work which the plant might have to offer.

All these are possible candidates, not necessarily actual ones for the work. They only become actual candidates -- indeed claimants -- to the degree that the decision system acknowledges their claims; and by acknowledging them as proper claimants, gives them grounds upon which to advance their claims. Without such grounds, the workers would have only personal demands for some differential advantage or complaints and grievances about alleged inequitable treatment. Accordingly, while these were imaginable candidates who existed from the beginnings of *to permit*, they were not automatically claimants for the work. They became claimants only later, as worker decision making expanded.

The growth of decision making -- specifically of certain codes -- transformed some of these potential candidates into genuine claimants for the hours of work. Gradually, as the codes evolved, the local union identified the workers whom it considered as entitled to such newly available hours and it regulated the priority of their claims. Also as a consequence, the union identified those who were not entitled to the hours. This whole development was not accomplished by a single resolution, nor even by any explicit effort to regulate the allocation of hours of work. Rather it arose, as did the many previous examples of extending worker decision making, by originating and extending particular categories of terms and conditions of employment.

The categories of terms and conditions of employment, which produced the claimants for these newly available hours of work, were seniority, recall, work day and work week, and overtime. All of these arose at the very beginning of the local union and probably preceded the decision *to permit*. But they arose in very rudimentary form, consisting only of initial principles and fragmentary rules of interpretation and application. With time, or more particularly with the expansion of worker decision making, they became elaborated into substantial and intricate codes governing an ever-widening range of issues arising under each topic.

These codes -- each developing in response to particular employment conditions - - produced three sets of claimants for the newly available hours. The first sets of claimants were accorded rights to the hours in the following way. The codes governing the work day and work week provided that the regular work day and week consisted of eight and forty hours respectively. This in time came to be interpreted as meaning that workers actually were entitled to these hours before any laid off workers were recalled and before any member of the occupation could be given overtime work. Accordingly, the underemployed workers of the particular occupation -- those receiving less than eight and/or forty hours -- acquired claims to the hours on the basis of the work day and week codes.

The second set of claimants for the hours arose out of the seniority and recall codes. These codes provided, among many other things, that whenever additional work became available, workers who had previously been laid off were to be recalled. The rules also defined the priority of their claims: first the employed members of other occupations in the same department; and finally, the unemployed members of other departments. The order of recall within these aggregates was by seniority. Thus,

unemployed workers acquired claims to the newly available hours on the basis of these seniority and recall codes.

Between the two sets of codes just identified, an original contradiction had eventually to be erased. If additional hours became available, who had the prior claims, the underemployed (of the same occupation) or the unemployed, or some mixture of the two? This contradiction was removed by further developments of the codes governing employment. They provided that the newly available hours be given: first, to the underemployed members of the occupation until they were brought up to eight and forty hours; and then, any remaining hours were to be used to recall the laid off workers according to the order described above.

A third set of claimants to the newly available hours consisted of the fully employed members of the occupation on which the work was to be performed. Their claims to the hours were based upon the general right to work overtime -- to decide to work -- as already established among the workers decisions; and upon the right of overtime to occur, despite the existence of unemployment, when various special circumstances were encountered. The rules governing such overtime were partly defined in the contract itself.

One contradiction gradually emerged between the first two sets of codes and the third -- between the claims of the underemployed and unemployed and the claims of the fully employed. As described above, the early conflicts between recall and work day and week rules were settled by fixing an order of priority to the hours. But the right to overtime when underemployment or unemployment existed, particularly when short periods of work were involved or when other special circumstances prevailed, provided an inescapable alternative way of allocating newly available hours.

This contradiction was enforced by the rise and operation of the decision *to permit*. Under structure 1, *to permit* enabled the fully employed workers to obtain the newly available hours without redress by the other claimants. Whenever additional hours were offered as overtime, the occupation -- the formulator of *to permit* -- was the first decision maker to allocate the hours. If it voted to allow the overtime, it allocated the hours to its own fully employed members. By its decision, it supplanted the whole allocation scheme contained in the other codes. Furthermore, even when the occupation decided to forbid overtime, it still assumed a prior right of decision over the codes; this, because the implementation of the other codes was compelled to await the decision of the occupation.

This evolving discrepancy between the codes reveals two related aspects. One consisted of the conflict in the allocation of hours: each of the codes gave the hours to different groups of workers. And since the codes furnished the bases upon which each group could claim the hours, or demand redress for not having received them, the growth of the codes gradually created a kind of judicial contradiction which had to be resolved. The second aspect was a conflict in decision-making. The departmental organizations were the accepted formulators of the codes assigning the hours to the underemployed and

the unemployed. This structure had been established in the local union by the rule of departmental autonomy. The departments were assigned the responsibility of administering the employment and recall rules; accordingly, they were the effective formulators of the inherent decisions. The occupations -- constituent and subordinate organizations of the departments -- interfered with the departments' exercise of their authority with respect to these codes. By virtue of the decision *to permit*, the occupations were able to precede the departments in the chain of decisions allocating the additional hours. The conflict in decision-making resided in this unresolved issue: who should decide upon the allocation of hours, the occupations or the departments? As things stood, the occupations were the effective formulators.

### **The Structural Problem**

Of the two aspects just described, the actionable one will prove to be the structural conflict. This may appear surprising, especially since the conflict in hours is a tangible, material issue which directly involves the economic interests of workers. No doubt, this conflict provided the basis upon which a controversy could have arisen and enlisted could not have solved the problem. As an issue, its solution could only consist in assigning the hours to one or another of the contending interest groups. But a prior question always arises: who shall decide how the hours are to be allocated? It is this question which converts the allocation issue into a problem of decision structure. For by answering who shall decide?, a structural problem is solved; and once solved; there is no further need for deciding how the hours are to be allocated. The entity which is named to make the decision will decide upon the allocation. And under the premise of the workers' system, the entity named to make the decision can only be its executor. Furthermore, since structure 2 was a structural solution, it appears the more likely that the structural problem itself was the one which engaged the attention of the local union.

A first statement of this structural problem has already been given. The occupation and the department were in conflict as to who should decide the allocation of hours. But left in this form, there is no evident reason as to why structure 2 should have been the outcome. The obvious argument that the department is the larger aggregate, and therefore could dominate the smaller occupations is without substance. The same people were members of the occupations and the departments; it is their vote which would have to be explained, and the size issue alone is not informative as to their reasons for voting. A second argument might claim that the underemployed and unemployed -- actual or potential -- outnumbered the fully employed. This might be so, but again the same people are involved in both aggregates. As against these apparent reasons, it is quite possible to expose an underlying structural explanation, parallel with those advanced in former cases, which accounts for the transition to structure 2 as a solution to the conflict just described.

The decision structure of the codes governing work day, work week, and recall will first be extracted. The recipients of the newly available hours, as embodied in these codes, consisted of the underemployed members of an occupation, unemployed members of this occupation and of others in the same department. These recipients may be

considered the executors or designees of the decisions embodied in the codes. As an aggregate, these recipients were defined by the local union as the individual departments. In this sense, therefore, the departments were the formulators of a set of decisions which named the recipients of the available hours. The decision itself was a *to designate*, with the department as executor.

The decision *to permit* ostensibly designated the members of the occupation as recipients or non-recipients of the newly available hours. But, as already shown, it also decided whether or not the entities named above should or should not receive the additional hours: if yes overtime, they were not recipients; if no overtime, they did get the hours. *To permit* was capable of imposing a decision *to limit* on the other entities. It was this *to limit* which brought about the allocation of hours so unfavorable to the others. But *to permit* was also a decision *to designate*, since it named the recipients both ways; and its executors included all the entities comprising the departmental unit. It was a *to designate* whose formulator was the occupation, and not the total aggregate of its designees.

The structural problem which came to a head on the eve of structure 2 is identical in the form with those which anticipated the rise of the decisions already *to designate*: it effectively named the aggregates that were to receive the additional hours of work. The formulator of this *to designate* was the overtime occupation. Its executor however was not solely the occupation; it included all the other aggregates which had claims to the hours. These aggregates were defined as, and bounded by, the departmental units of the local union. The structural problem which emerged with the growth of the codes was the existence of a decision to designate whose formulator was not the same as its executor.

### **The Rise of Structure 2**

Structure 2 provides a complete solution to the structural problem just derived. The test of this solution is conformity with the premise attributed to worker decision making. Under structure 1, *to permit* had a formulator, which gradually ceased to be its executor. Under structure 2, a formulator who was demonstrably its executor was assigned to the design. The rise of structure 2 performed the double function of removing a formulator who was not an executor and of instituting the actual executor as the formulator of the decision. To the original question: why the transfer from the occupations to the departments? A fundamental answer can now be given. The transfer reinstated a decision structure which conforms to the premise of worker decision making.

The process by which this transfer came about can also be stated. The occupations as formulators for the decision *to permit* turned into formulators of a decision *to limit* -- a denial of decision making or of additional hours of work -- to other workers or aggregates. This *to limit* was the excluding portion of a decision *to designate* which embraced all the workers entitled under the union's rules to receive additional hours of work. The boundary of these designees was the departmental units of the local union. The whole executor of this *to designate* was being coerced into formulating its decision by another entity of the workers' decision system. The rise of structure 2 shows

the system actually resolving this internal structural conflict -- presumably after having been confronted with a choice of formulator -- by voting to assign *to permit* to its full executor, the departments. This is the process which brought about a change in the structure of an already established decision. It is the same process which produced the three decisions previously considered. This finding yields the conclusion that the development process is continuously at work and it operates in the same manner both to institute new decisions or to modify the structures of established ones.

The discovery that a single process produces both new and modified decision structures raises one final question. If the process is capable of producing a decision structure in which the formulating function is assigned to the executor, why did it have to operate twice in the case of *to permit*? Or alternatively, having operated twice -- and each time directly against coercive decision making -- might it not operate a third, a fourth, or more times? And if it does, is the conclusion reached earlier that structure 2 was a solution conforming to the premise a tenable one? Might not future operations of this process produce new structures *to permit* which are still less coercive -- or perhaps even more coercive -- than structure 2?

The rise of structure 2 cannot respond to all these implications, but it does help illuminate some of them. For example, it cannot answer whether or not the workers may abandon the premise in some future structural change; nor can it even say whether or not structure 2 represents the most uncoerced arrangement of *to permit*. However, it can say that structure 2 was less coercive than structure 1; and it can say why a succession of structures may arise, with each one approximating more closely the underlying premise attributed to the workers decision system.

The differences just described explain why the developmental process operated twice in respect to *to permit*. The circumstances which produced structure 2 simply were not present -- or at least not in sufficient strength -- at the time structure 1 was instituted. These circumstances included the rise of decisions at the departmental level, which absorbed the hours allocating features of *to permit*, and the emergence of the departments as the formulators of these decisions. If they had existed sufficiently at the time *to permit* was first instituted, structure 1 might have been by-passed. But the fact is they didn't exist, and accordingly structure 1 came into being.

Answers to the above questions arise from the differences which prevailed, relative to deciding about overtime, between the two periods: between the time *to permit* was originated and the rise of structure 2. These differences may be found in the codes and their concomitant developments. The codes governing work periods, seniority and recall had expanded to include more work periods, seniority and recall had expanded to include more and more bits of working conditions. This expansion was the outgrowth of acceptance by the workers of increasing internal decision making. Concomitantly, procedures and organizational apparatus also were created. Out of all this, two central developments may be identified. First, a synthesis or generalization occurred in the evolving codes, which brought them together under one homogeneous subject of regulation. The codes had originated in quite different conditions of unemployment. But



as they expanded, they produced a body of decisions regulating one underlying subject: allocation of hours of work. These decisions had to be brought together to provide consistent treatment to different kinds of workers -- underemployed and employed. Second, in the process of producing this body of decisions, the departments emerged as the formulators. These two developments -- a body of decisions and their formulators -- constitute the principle differences between the two periods of the history of *to permit*.

When *to permit* first arose, overtime was strictly an occupational issue: the work was given to the members of the occupation. The principle problem perceptible to the workers was the allocation to proximate claimants, especially the underemployed or unemployed of the same occupation. It would most likely have been regarded as an intrusion by non-executors if other occupations (meaning the department as a whole) had tried to intervene in deciding whether or not overtime should be worked. By the time the war was over, the decision *to permit* had become entangled in the departmental decisions governing the allocation of hours. The conflicting allocations of hours as well as the conflicting decision structures were clearly evident.

This same explanation declares that there might be future changes in the structure of *to permit* or of other established decisions. So long as worker decision making continues to extend, it is always capable of refining its identification of the executor of any decision. And when this happens, it must perforce change the existing structure of the affected decision. It is also possible to assert that the continuing developmental process, by changing established decision structures, is capable of diminishing continuously the amount of coercion which remains in the system. To say these things is not to disparage structure 2. It was demonstrably less coercive than structure 1; and conceivably, a future modification may remove some coercion, which is present but not yet apparent in structure 2.

### **Overtime Prohibited**

Another possible theory of the rise of structure 2 -- either an alternative or a supplement to the one just propounded -- remains to be considered. It is suggested by a routine consequence attributed to *to permit* under structure 1. The typical circumstance from which the consequence -- and the theory -- arise may be briefly recounted.

Acting properly under structure 1, occupations sometimes forbade overtime work. Whenever an occupation made such a decision, it prohibited its own members from working overtime. Consequently, unless man-hours were secured from some other source, the occupation consumed less materials and produced less product than required of it by other occupations in the production sequence. This was sometimes followed by a reduction in the other occupations' production rates and by a layoff of some of their workers.

According to the second theory, structure 2 was instituted as a way of preventing this sequence of events from happening. Under structure 1, the occupations, deciding *to*

*permit* according to their strictly internal interests, could initiate a chain of events leading to layoffs as suggested by the above account. By removing the decision from the occupations and assigning it to the departments, this consequence would be diminished, if not eliminated altogether. The departments, as formulators of *to permit*, would be compelled to take into account all internal consequences, including possible layoffs, whenever it had to decide about overtime. Thus, the theory accounts for both critical features of the structural change -- for terminating the occupation as formulator, and for elevating the department to this role. Both are explained uniformly as a measure for preventing one occupation, through the decision *to permit*, from causing layoffs on others.

A question is now raised as to the validity of this second theory. Does it account for the structural changes under consideration? It is an acceptable, inviolable explanation. At first sight highly plausible, it fails to withstand careful scrutiny. Its weakness resides in its fundamental assumption: that the refusal to work overtime caused the layoffs. However, these two events, the refusal and the layoffs, turn out, under close examination, not to be causally connected, as the following exposition will show.

Obviously, the occupation, in refusing to permit overtime did not explicitly decide that layoffs must occur. Indeed, the decision sequence under which the layoffs occurred reveals quite the opposite. The refusal and the layoffs were the outcome of two wholly different decisions, formulated by different entities from within two entirely different decision systems. The occupation decided against overtime, and its decision was executed exclusively by its own members and no one else. The decision to lay off workers was made by the employer. It is therefore irrefutable that no entity within the work force -- and particularly, the refusing occupation -- decided that anyone must be laid off.

Next, the occupation did not compel the employer to lay off workers. By limiting the working hours of its own members, it did not restrict the number of hours which might be employed on the occupation by other workers -- by laid off or newly employed workers, or by workers obtained from other sources. If the employer could obtain such workers, he was at liberty to use them. Further, if additional workers could not be gotten, the employer might possibly resort to other expedients to supplement the shortages of the occupation, including the purchase of materials outside, the installation of laborsaving equipment, and the like. Finally, even if none of these alternatives could be realized, then only one consequence can be attributed to the refusing occupation: by not working overtime, it did not help maintain the level of output on the dependent occupations. It can hardly be blamed for the reduction, since managerial responsibility requires foresight and planning for such contingencies. But to the extent that the occupation refused to work overtime, its action contributed to the curtailment of production.

But this does not mean that the occupation caused the layoffs. The employer did not have to lay the other workers off. He could have retained them in the plant either with or without other work to perform. There is even a clause in the contract which requires such retention under specific circumstances -- but not including the kind now

under consideration. The clause merely indicates that keeping the workers instead of laying them off is not unthinkable. The layoffs were the employer's final conclusion, presumably after weighing all the considerations which govern the operation of the plant. On various occasions, the workers manipulate these considerations as a way of bringing pressure on the employer to reach decisions they desire. Sometimes he finds such pressure irresistible. But the considerations to which the employer is susceptible are features of his own decision system -- cost, coercive decision making, and the like -- and he yields to them, not to shift decisions to the work force, but to extend his own decision-making. In this sense, the refusing occupation did not compel the employer to lay off workers; they indeed afforded him an occasion, perhaps not wholly to his liking, to exercise his independent decision-making. The employer, in sum, decided the layoffs himself.

From this conclusion -- that the refusal did not cause the layoffs -- other consequences follow for this second theory of structure 2. Since the employer, and not the workers, decided the layoffs, clearly the structure of *to permit* was irrelevant to the layoffs: the structure as such neither posed the problem nor offered any avenue of solution to the layoff issue. Stated otherwise, if a refusal -- as implied by the theory -- caused layoffs under structure 1, it would produce the identical effects under structure 2. Therefore, even accepting the assumption of the second theory -- already shown to be invalid -- it simply does not offer a logical explanation for the structural change.

Rather, carried to its limit, the second theory winds up in an internal contradiction and in a departure from the historical evidence. Relying upon the invalid assumption, the second theory helpfully considers that there would be fewer layoffs, not because the causal connection was weakened but because overtime would be refused less frequently. By implication, it envisages, not a restoration of *to permit* to full and unhampered use, but rather its partial retirement as a decision. The logical conclusion to which the second theory drives, relying upon its assumption, is that *to permit* should be eliminated altogether, certainly whenever a refusal might cause a curtailment of production. The theory is therefore not an explanation of the restoration of the decision, but of its partial eclipse. And in this, it fails to correspond to the recorded history. The workers did not bury the decision; with structure 2 they accorded it official recognition for the first time.

Accordingly, by the reasoning just recounted, this second theory despite its initial plausibility had to be rejected as an explanation of structure 2. Again, this does not deny that individuals might have been moved by the arguments of the second theory; nor indeed that it might have been part of the climate of opinion during the time structure 2 was enacted. The conclusion merely implies that the second theory alone would not have sufficed to bring about structure 2, for the reasons already stated.

## Conclusions

A practice had existed fairly widely in this local union from the thirties until late in 1945, with an interruption during the war period. Under this practice, whenever the employer wanted any workers to work overtime, the entire body of workers belonging to

the occupation -- or occupations -- on which the work was to be performed would assemble and decide in principle whether or not it should be worked.

Late in 1945, the workers abandoned this practice. They voted as a local union to turn over to their entire departments the right to decide the principle of whether or not overtime should be worked. In making this change, the workers gave up a highly desirable privilege -- the right to decide whether or not to give themselves extra hours of work. Moreover, they gave this right to other workers who were not directly involved in performing the work or in receiving the hours.

This chapter has explored the reasons for the change just described. Why did the workers voluntarily give up their privilege, and especially to other workers who were not plausible performers of the work?

To answer this question, an elaborate analysis was made of the experience, which must have arisen, in the ordinary, day-to-day use of the original occupational decision. This experience was traced out under the only two ways the workers could have decided: when they permitted overtime and when they prohibited overtime. Upon examining these two ways, it was found that each produced its own central effect upon the workers. By permitting overtime, the workers created conflicts within the organization as to which workers were entitled to the additional hours offered to the occupation as overtime. By prohibiting overtime, layoffs sometimes followed. The resulting question then is: was either or both of these adverse consequences responsible for persuading workers to turn over their closely held occupational privilege to their departments?

Both consequences appear to be sufficiently real and painful to bring about the change in decision-making. It is no less likely that some members supported each consequence as the motivating cause of the change, and some members supported both. An explanation however, cannot rest upon the vote or upon the results of any non-existent poll of opinion at the time the change was made. It can only be based upon the logical application of a valid methodology to a reasoned hypothesis about the change.

The theory which appears logically and methodologically the stronger explains the rise of structure 2 as the consequence of the structural conflict between the decision *to permit* and the related codes. This theory was advanced and defended in the preceding section which dealt with overtime permitted. (The conflict became apparent by analyzing the case of overtime permitted, but as noted in the text, it also existed when the occupation refused overtime. In either case, the department had to await the occupation's decision before it could proceed to allocate the hours.)

The layoff theory is at first sight the more plausible. But it falls far short of an adequate explanation of structure 2. It supposes that workers voted themselves out of the privilege of deciding upon their own overtime (1) for an illogical reason (that the refusal caused the layoffs, which everyone knew was untrue); (2) for an ineffective reason (the structure itself *to permit* would change the consequences of the decision, which was obviously unfounded); and (3) for a punitive reason (it would stop the other fellow from

causing layoffs, which would apply the same restrictions to all alike). Actually, as the vote shows, the workers were not in favor of suppressing *to permit*. They really instituted it firmly for the first time under structure 2.

The structural conflict theory at first sight appears so complex that it seems hardly meaningful as the cause of a majority vote. Its complexity however is purely in terminology and abstraction; logically it is the sounder of the two and the more related to the practices of the workers. It says that the workers were confronted with two contradictory sets of rules of their own creation. They had to make a choice: which set of rules should prevail -- those governing work periods and recall or those governing overtime. Within this framework they did not give anything up under structure 2. They simply relegated the overtime rule to a place they considered proper in the hierarchy of rules governing the allocation of hours. Stated otherwise, they gave up the privilege of occupational voting about overtime in order to acquire the benefits of the rules they enacted about work period and recall. They were forced into this choice because they couldn't have both in their original form.

The structural conflict theory possesses more validity than its reasonableness with respect to the perspectives of the voting workers. It ties structure 2 to an existing structural problem of *to permit*. It satisfies the test of restoring the decision's structure to conform to the premise of worker decision making. And it makes full use of the developmental process as the logical way in which structure 2 came into being.

## CHAPTER 11

### THE CODE INDICATING FUNCTION

What is the place of the union official in worker decision making? Every local union has its roster of officials: stewards or committeemen, officers, and many other titleholders and functionaries. They are elected or appointed, and they carry out a wide range of duties on behalf of their constituents. Thus far, this investigation has not yet encountered any of the local union's officialdom. It has dealt only with workers -- as individuals, as occupations, as aggregates defined by some special criterion such as unemployed or underemployed, and as departments and local unions. These entities were the decision executors -- and subsequently the formulators -- of worker decision making. Now for the first time, local union officials are about to make their appearance in this inquiry. Hence the question: what is their role in worker decision making?

Local union officials make their appearance in connection with the next developments in the decision *to permit* overtime.

The same resolution which instituted structure 2 of *to permit* also contained another provision. It authorized the departments to set up their own procedures for handling the decision. All but one of the departments immediately assigned it to their chairmen; the exceptional department followed suit somewhat later. Thenceforth, each chairman was to receive from the employer the requests for overtime pertaining to any occupation in his department; and he was to decide whether or not it should be permitted. This procedure remained in effect until June 1949.

In June 1949, the local union again revised its disposition of *to permit*. This time, it assigned the decision to the officers of the local union (president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer) and the chairman of the department in which the overtime was to be worked. Under this arrangement, requests for overtime were still received by the chairman. But permission for overtime to be worked could only be granted by the officers and chairmen. The chairmen alone, however, were still able to prohibit overtime. This arrangement prevailed until the end of December 1950, a period of about eighteen months.

These two transfers of *to permit* -- first, to the chairmen; and later, to the officers and chairmen -- now bring into view these officials of the local union. The chairmen and the officers were the principal officials, respectively, of the departments and the local union. Their offices, together with their rights and duties, were established by the local's bylaws. They exercised, among other things, the kind of responsibility for handling decisions which was now given them in the transfers of *to permit*.

Accordingly, the assignment of a decision to these officials was nothing new for the local union; in fact, *to permit* was simply attached to an established organizational apparatus. All that was new was that this apparatus now included the decision *to permit*, and that the officers and chairmen were combined into a single entity in the second

transfer. These most recent developments in the history of *to permit* afford an opportunity to examine the role of local union officials in worker decision making.

From the viewpoint of worker decision-making, these transfers of *to permit* raise a dramatic and far-reaching issue. Neither the chairmen, nor the chairmen and officers were the executors of *to permit*; indeed, only occasionally might they belong to the aggregate which was the executor of *to permit* -- if their individual occupations or departments were among recipients of the overtime work. Thus, under these two transfers, a decision was deliberately assigned to entities which were not -- and could not possibly be -- executors of the decision. This proves nothing less than a complete challenge to the premise attributed to worker decision making. It raises as the fundamental issue of the transfers: did the workers abandon the structural premise of their system?

Why, it may be asked, should the issue of the structural premise be made the central problem? Why not accept the plain evidence that it was abandoned, and then explain the two transfers by the obvious reasons for such a move. Certainly, the union officials were able to decide *to permit* more quickly, conveniently, with greater knowledge and possibly even more than could entire departments. Additionally, the theory might be offered that the officials themselves engineered these transfers, using the ideas just expressed to persuade or gull their members, as a way of enhancing the authority of their offices. One might therefore conclude that the workers, finding it difficult to apply the premise beyond the level of simple decisions involving face-to-face aggregates, abandoned it in favor of the structural premise of surrounding society.

However simple -- even straightforward -- this might seem, from a methodological point of view it raises more problems than it solves. It presupposes a continuity in the line of development which the workers' system demonstrably followed up to this point. Accordingly, before accepting the abandonment of the premise, it would be necessary to account for the newly arisen discontinuity. This would require an analysis at least as elaborate, and probably more so, than the one which produced the continuum thus far discerned. For it would have to retrace the roots of the abandonment back to the original rise of worker decision making, and would have to account for its growth and extension under the new premise. It turns out therefore that despite its seeming complexity, the preservation of the original structural premise offers the simpler hypothesis upon which to investigate the transfer of the decision to non-executors.

The rigor of this hypothesis frames the ensuing inquiry. It dictates the statement that the chairmen -- and subsequently the officers -- were not created the formulators of *to permit*. This could not happen because they were not its executors. Out of this statement, two relevant problems emerge. What exactly did the departments actually transfer to their chairmen? And what function did the chairmen and officers actually carry out on behalf of the departments? From the answers to these questions, an explanation for these developments will be constructed.

The two transfers will be treated separately in the ensuing portions of this chapter: first to the chairmen alone, then to the chairmen and the officers. For while a common issue and solution is raised by each, insofar as the premise is concerned, they were actually different arrangements which grew out of quite different conditioning forces. Accordingly, the rise of each must be dealt with separately.

### **The Transfer to the Chairmen**

An explanation will now be advanced for the transfer of *to permit* from the departments to their chairmen. This explanation will first develop the proposition that *to permit*, once it was assigned to the department, was no longer a decision in the sense in which it was originally defined and subsequently employed in this inquiry. It will then show that the chairmen were given a function, inherently not decision formulating, which will be called code indicating.

### **The Transformation of *to Permit***

The *to permit* which the workers removed from their occupations was not the same one which their departments received. They had voted to transfer the decision without any changes in its content. But when the transfer was completed, something quite different – indeed, much less – turned up at the departmental level.

A transformation had been produced in *to permit* by the same expansion of the codes which brought structure 2 into being. It was obscured however by the continuance of structure 1. The dramatic consequence of structure 2, once it was instituted, was that it dislodged *to permit* from the occupations. Therefore, the occupations could no longer prevent the departments from implementing their codes. And once they were implemented, *to permit's* reduced state became fully apparent.

As shown in the preceding chapter, *to permit* contained an inherent decision to designate. This *to designate* allocated the newly available hours either to the fully employed members of the occupation as overtime, or to the other recipients of the hours, the underemployed members of the occupation and thereafter to unemployed workers according to the established priorities. As long as *to permit* operated under structure 1, this designation was made by the occupation each time an occasion of overtime arose. But when it was transferred to the departments, its *to designate* was absorbed by the codes.

The codes contained a fully prescribed pattern for allocating newly available hours. The transfer of *to permit* not only activated this pattern, it made an important addition to it. Thenceforth, newly available hours were given in the manner already described: first to the underemployed of the occupation, and then to the various categories of unemployed. The addition which the transfer made to the pattern was this -- it established firmly that the fully employed workers were the recipients of the hours with the lowest priority. Only after all the other recipients had been designated and hours still remained to be worked, were the fully employed given overtime. Thus, the choice of



designee which existed under structure 1 was completely wiped out by the rise of structure 2.

Under specific conditions, this order of priority might be reversed. The fully employed, under such a reversal, would receive the hours before the underemployed or unemployed. The exceptional conditions consisted of various emergency circumstances which required an immediate increase in hours worked. A partial list of these exceptional conditions is contained in the qualifications shown in the code of Chapter 4.

Operationally speaking *to permit* was no longer a decision. It had been drained of decision-making content by the codes which performed its designatory function under structure 1. Under structure 2, it could produce only one result: it could reverse the priority of the two fixed designees, the unemployed and the fully employed, but only when actual conditions coincided with those stipulated in the special qualifications. And this, as will now be shown, did not amount to decision making.

The residue of *to permit* -- the qualifications and the procedure for applying them -- were a rule of designation embodied in the code governing allocation of work. The code itself named the designees and their order of designation. The qualifications furnished a rule by which the order could be reversed. Structurally speaking, the qualifications bore the same relationship to the allocation code as seniority to recall and layoff. Both defined the order of priority among fixed designees. Neither could add to, subtract from, nor otherwise manipulate the designees already assigned to the decisions. Both furnished objective criteria of designation, which could be applied to observable conditions, and produce unambiguous designations. Just as seniority did not constitute a decision, but only a rule of designation, so *to permit*, capable only of reversing the priority between the stated designees, had ceased to be a decision and had shrunk to the dimensions of a rule of designation.

### **The Chairmen's Function**

From the perspective of local union organization, this arrangement for *to permit* presented only one new feature: the assignment of another responsibility to the departmental chairmen. The chairmanship as a union office was spelled out in the by-laws and other rules. The chairmen were empowered to make many decisions (i.e., to make findings and reach conclusions within the limits of the codes). Their decisions, however, were neither final nor binding. Supplementing the chairmanship were various superior offices, such as the local union officers and the executive board, and above all, the appeals machinery. Any decision reached by a departmental chairman was subject to review, modification and reversal in the various successive organs of appeal: the internal grievance committee, the board of appeals, and the local union. Accordingly, when *to permit* was assigned to the chairmen, it was in fact given to the union apparatus which started with the chairmen but which ended up at the entire local union.

The chairman's function, from the viewpoint of decision-making, may be best described as code indicating. Not encountered thus far, this function derives from the

special structure of the workers' codes. The codes, as already shown, embody formulated decisions; they contain a fixed structure of formulator, action to be decided, and either an outright designee or a rule of designation or both. Wherever a rule of designation (such as seniority or the qualifications) is spelled out in a code, rather than a fixed designee (such as a department or an occupation), an arrangement must be made to apply the rule. The outcome of such application is to indicate, according to the prescription of the code under which it arises, which of alternative succeeding codes shall be activated. Thus, without interfering with the sequence of decisions, formulators and designees, the chairmen carried out the code indicating function.

*To permit*, reduced by the surrounding codes to a rule of designation, was assigned to the code indicating function under structure 2. Where *to permit* formerly operated, a choice now existed between two alternative codes: one assigning the work to the fully employed members of the occupation, the other to the unemployed. The codes stipulated that the unemployed enjoyed a priority, except when conditions in the plant conformed to any of the qualifications stated in the code. The departmental chairmen were directed, under structure 2, to ascertain the prevailing conditions and determine whether the priority should be reserved; that is, to indicate which of the two succeeding codes should be activated. Thus, code indicating was introduced where decision making had stood before. Were the chairmen, despite the codes, potential decision formulators? Not at all. They could not institute any other designees than those fixed by the codes. They could do nothing more than reverse the priority of the designation. And this reversal had to be based upon explicit qualifications. The chairmen could add to the qualifications, if they encountered new conditions in the plant. But their findings, both as to applying old qualifications or adding new ones, were subject to the appeals procedure. To the workers -- and to the chairmen themselves -- this procedure offered sufficient protection against the rise of any coercing formulators.

### **The First Transfer**

A distinction must now be made between *to permit* under structures 1 and 2, and *to permit* after its transfer to the chairmen. In the former case, *to permit* was a decision in the full sense employed in the present inquiry: it contained a *to designate*, an executor and a formulator. In the second case, it was no longer a decision in this sense; it was an organizational procedure for applying a rule of designation.

A paucity of language may create some confusion in the treatment of *to permit*. While it had ceased to be a decision according to the definition currently employed, it is still necessary to speak of the chairmen -- and later, of the officers and chairmen -- deciding *to permit*, or deciding whether or not overtime should be permitted. This usage will convey the impression that *to permit* is still a decision. This is unfortunate but unavoidable because there is no word by which to call the residue of *to permit*. The language notwithstanding, future references to *to permit* as a decision are to be understood in relation to its state of development.

It is possible that the first transfer did not violate the premise attributed to worker decision making. Since *to permit* was no longer capable of acting as a designator, it had neither formulator nor executor. It still served an important purpose in the allocation system, however. It provided for the application of the rule of designation contained in the allocation code. The transfer to the chairman was made for the purpose of assigning the code indicating function to these officials of the union. And since code indicating was not decision making, the transfer to the chairmen was not an abandonment of the premise.

There is one remaining issue which will be taken up in the final section of the chapter. The reason for the transfer, as thus far spelled out, was purely a permissive one: since *to permit* was no longer a decision, the chairmen could not be coercive decision makers. The remaining issue is to show that *to permit*, once stripped of its decision making content, had to be removed from the departments. This point will be taken up in the next section. But presupposing the point will be demonstrated, the choice of the chairmen from among all other possible code indicators is readily explained. Under structure 2, *to permit* had come to rest at the departmental level, its acknowledged executor and formulator. Its reassignment as a code indicating function was logically made to the department's principal official, their chairmen.

### **The Officers and the Chairmen**

In June 1949, the local union transferred *to permit* from the chairmen alone to the local union officers and the chairmen of the departments in which the overtime was to be worked. Under this new arrangement as under the old, all requests for overtime work were to be presented by the employer to the departmental chairmen. But the chairmen alone could no longer grant permission for it to be worked; such permission could only be granted by the officers and the chairmen.

Despite the transfer, one element of the previous arrangement remained in effect. Individual chairmen still had the right to prohibit overtime. Thus, if the employer submitted a request for overtime, the chairman might decide, within the limits of his departmental criteria, that the overtime should not be worked. He could then deny the request on his own authority, without bringing the issue to the local officers. There were some variations within the union concerning this residual practice of the previous arrangement. But apparently, by mid-summer, it was generally the practice for the chairman to exercise the right to refuse overtime without invoking the officers.

This second transfer now invites an explanation. It poses the following straightforward questions. Why was the code indicating function transferred from the chairmen to the officers and chairmen? Why was a residual portion of *to permit* allowed to remain with the departmental chairmen?

## The No Overtime Rule

The local union transferred *to permit* from the chairmen alone to the officers and chairmen in order to enforce a multiple-union rule against overtime in the carpet industry. During May 1949, negotiations took place between the employers and unions of three carpet companies, including Thompsonville. These were the first multi-company negotiations in the industry. The unions were seeking a general wage increase and pensions. On June 3, 1949, the parties agreed to defer further negotiations over these demands until no earlier than September 1, 1949.

When the negotiations ended -- unsuccessfully for the unions -- an agreement was reached among the unions that no overtime would be worked throughout the three-month period (from June until September) or until a satisfactory new contract was reached. The reported reason for this agreement was to prevent the companies from building up inventories of carpet, in case a strike should be necessary when the negotiations reopened in the fall. The representatives of local 2198 returned home, early in June, with the multiple-union decision against overtime work.

The Thompsonville local implemented this decision by transferring *to permit*, under the arrangement just described, from the chairmen to the combined officers and chairmen. To this implementation, the following meaning may be attached. The local interpreted the multiple union decision as a prohibition against such overtime as would produce a higher than prevailing level of output. But overtime work, which would not raise the plant output level, was not prohibited under the multiple union rule. Accordingly, *to permit* was not set aside; it was transferred to officers and chairmen. This new arrangement was regarded as a temporary one; it was to last only until the wage and pension issue was settled.

For a whole account of the transfer -- its fundamental reasons and the choice of officers and chairmen as the code indicators -- it is now preferable to employ the language and concepts of decision-making.

The transfer rested upon a new allocation rule enacted by the local union. This rule stipulated that if the employer made available any additional hours of work, they were not to be allocated to any fully employed workers of the plant -- unless the hours would not increase the prevailing level of output.

Inherent in this allocation rule are two decisions. One is a decision *to designate*: given an additional number of hours, the local union designates itself as a non-recipient of the hours. Since these hours then presumably go to some other entity, not to itself, the local union cannot be considered the total executor of its own decision. (This is analogous to the case of the occupation voting against allowing its members to have overtime work.) The other inherent decision is the *to limit* which arises from the negative *to designate*. The local union denied to itself the additional hours; it thus imposed upon itself a decision *to limit*. But neither the *to designate* nor its derivative *to permit* were formulated as a way of allocating hours to appropriate recipients. They were formulated

for the purpose of terminating decision making. This use of *to permit* as an allowable substitute for a strike was fully discussed in Chapter 9. The union's decision against overtime was this kind of a *to permit*.

The rule which incorporated this *to permit* also stipulated the conditions under which it was to apply: when a general increase in output would be created by the overtime work. Otherwise, when such an increase would not arise, the overtime work was not prohibited by the *to permit*. And when the rule did not apply -- that is, when the additional hours would not produce an increase in general output -- the codes governing the allocation of hours would then go into operation. Thus, if the employer offered overtime, a determination had to be made as to whether the overtime would cause increased production. If it would, then the overtime, according to the rule, had to be prohibited. If it would not, then a determination would have to be made as to whether the hours were to be given to the underemployed, the fully employed, or the unemployed. The new rule added one code -- embodying a *to permit* -- to the front end of the decisions governing the allocation of hours.

As things now stood, two sets of qualifications had to be applied in order to allocate newly available hours. The first had to determine whether the hours would create an increase in output; the second, whether conditions justified or required assigning the hours to the fully employed. A structural problem thus arose: who should make these determinations -- or who should do the code indicating?

The local union solved this problem in a startlingly appropriate way. It assigned the code indicating function to a composite entity: the officers and the chairmen. The officers were appropriate because the *to permit* which had to be administered was a code of the entire local union; and since the officers were entities of the local, theirs was the regular function of indicating its codes. The chairmen were also appropriate because the remainder of the allocation decisions were still departmental. The local might have set up two different code indicators: first, the officers to decide the first one; and if they permitted the overtime, then the chairmen. But such an arrangement would have caused difficulties both within the local union and with the employer. If, under such an arrangement, the officers permitted the overtime, the chairmen would encounter much trouble if they subsequently tried to prohibit it. That is to say, once the officers approved the overtime -- no matter that they did so only under a single, special criterion -- the chairmen would be under pressure both from their own constituents and from the employer to make the same decision. By combining the two sets of officials into a single entity, this kind of public division in respect to a single decision would be avoided.

The transfer of *to permit* from chairmen to officers and chairmen may be traced, in the manner just shown, to the no overtime rule enacted by the multiple unions and by local 2188.

## Other Causes of the Transfer

The new overtime rule was by no means the only reason for the transfer. Other causes had been gathering during the years *to permit* was with the chairmen. They deserve mention because they contributed -- although in indeterminable degrees -- to the transfer, and because they represent profound and lasting forces acting on *to permit*. Accordingly, they will be considered at this time.

The first source resides within the individual departments and may be traced to the problems and dissatisfactions arising from the chairmen's exercise of *to permit*. The members of the departments began to discover differences and inconsistencies in the ways the various chairmen applied *to permit*. Some chairmen allowed overtime under conditions which other chairmen refused. In one sense, these differences were foreseen when *to permit* was assigned to the departments; the notion of departmental autonomy meant that each department would evolve its own criteria for allocating hours to the fully employed -- within the framework of the other codes it administered. Despite these implications of structure 2, the lack of uniformity in deciding about overtime work produced unfavorable responses from the workers.

These unfavorable responses in turn acted unfavorably on some chairmen. The chairmen became the objects of pressure and pleading by individual members that they be given overtime. These pressures militated against handling the issues with sufficient objectivity, an outcome which compounded rather than settled internal problems. For example, at an executive board meeting held during the summer, one of the chairmen complained:

“This overtime business has created more dissension in this plant than anything else. They (the management -- ed.) have sweepers whom they want to come in Saturdays now. They (the sweepers -- ed.) even come in here and ask us why can't they get more overtime! Because they're accustomed to getting bigger pay. Now that the base has dropped down to the 40-hour level like they're getting, they don't like it. Our own people!”

While this comment was actually made after the new arrangement was instituted, it expresses the kind of complaint to which the chairmen had become exposed when they alone were deciding *to permit*.

Another intra-departmental problem arose from the use of *to permit* as an instrument of pressure against the management. This was the use of *to permit*, not as an allocation decision, but as a *to permit* -- a surrogate but allowable strike. It was always possible to use *to permit* in this way; indeed, the new multiple and local union code now under consideration was partly this use. But when *to permit* was transferred to the chairman, the *to permit* acquired a new vitality. Since the chairmen could refuse overtime without a vote of the members, they developed the decision into one of their most valuable bargaining pressures. It now served the members and the needs of the chairman's office. This use of *to permit* does not signify that the chairmen were

becoming coercive decision makers. Nor does it mean that they applied the *to permit* without justification to, or against the interests of, their members. It does mean however that *to permit* was being used a great deal for the purpose of applying pressure to management, and that some members were not pleased with the practice.

The inconsistencies, the pressures of the chairmen, and the growing use of *to permit* as a bargaining pressure were a source of the transfer arising within the individual departments. That is to say, the conflicts which they reflect occurred among the members of single departments and were focused upon the procedures and practices of each department desperately. Consequently, they were probably capable of being corrected within the departments. Important though they might have been it is unlikely that they could have brought about the second transfer of *to permit*.

The second additional source of the transfer was an interdepartmental problem arising from the chairmen's deciding *to permit*. It will be recalled that prior to structure 2, an issue had been raised about layoffs arising from an occupation's refusal to allow overtime. This was amply discussed in Chapter 10 and the conclusion was reached that the layoff complaint may certainly have persuaded individual workers, but it could not be considered as a determining cause of structure 2. This same issue now arises in the transfer of *to permit* from the chairmen of the officers and chairmen.

This time, the issue is stated thus: by refusing overtime, a chairman caused his department not to produce output, or consume input, which was essential to maintain the level of production of preceding and succeeding departments. Accordingly, *to permit* was transferred from the chairmen to the officers and chairmen in order to prevent the chairmen from causing such layoffs to occur. This point of view was explicitly stated by the president of the local union.

“When you've got seven or eight large departments, I mean, a chairman might very easily know within his own department, but he has no way of knowing what might happen to the department before him -- that services needs for his department -- or departments after him. I mean, they would have no way of knowing that. But because of our (the officers -- ed.) general knowledge of the mill, we know that although a decision here is made, let's say, for all intents and purposes on a good, factual basis, you still have no way of knowing what's going to happen in the mill beyond it, or the department beyond it or before it. Now only with knowing those things can you visualize one request here that might reflect itself ten other different places before it's through. And very easily it could do that. Now a chairman of a department wouldn't know that, because he has no way of knowing it.”

However much the president's words might appear to confirm this theory they are insufficient to establish the layoff effect as a determining cause of the transfer. The plain fact is that the chairmen retained the right to refuse overtime -- the alleged cause of the transfer -- even after *to permit* was assigned to officers and chairmen. Thus, if the layoffs were a cause, the transfer did nothing to mitigate the problem.

All these other possible causes contributed to the climate of opinion which prevailed at the time of the transfer. If the no overtime rule had not been enacted, it is unlikely that they would have been sufficient to produce the transfer. In point of fact, of the four individual causes enumerated above, only two of them -- the interdepartmental inconsistencies in administering *to permit* and the pressures applied to the chairmen -- were in any way satisfied by the ruling. The *to permit* and the layoff effect were not handled by the transfer; that is, even after the transfer, they continued to inhere in *to permit* as long as it remained in the hands of the chairmen.

But to say that the *to permit* and layoff effects were not handled by the transfer does not mean they were irrelevant to it. They unquestionably were problems to the workers -- problems which just weren't capable of being handled. This only means that they were profound and lasting problems which arose at the outset of *to permit* and continued through each successive structure change. And they remained unsolved when the second transfer was completed.

#### The Second Transfer

Several possible sources of the second transfer of *to permit* were considered in the foregoing sections. It is likely that all of them contributed to molding opinion within the local union in favor of the transfer. But it is not likely that they were equally the cause of the transfer. Of them all, the only one which -- in the absence of all the rest -- could have brought about the new arrangement was the no overtime rule.

The new arrangement coincided in all respects with the structural requirements created by the no overtime rule. The rule contained a criterion for allocating hours which had to be applied; it was a criterion which preceded in sequence the others arising from the departmental allocation rules. To apply these two sets of criteria, the officers and chairmen were made into a combined code indicating function, each corresponding to the author of the codes they were required to administer. Accordingly, the new arrangement was tailored to suit the structural needs of the codes. Additionally, the transfer was instituted at the time the code was enacted, and it was to remain in effect for the duration of the code. The conclusion is therefore inescapable that the no overtime rule brought about the transfer.

The other possible causes of the transfer were not sufficient to bring it about. Two of them, the *to permit* and the layoff effects, continued unchanged even after the transfer -- the chairmen were still able to prohibit overtime. They are therefore ruled out as possible causes. Similarly, the internal inconsistencies and the complaints of the chairmen were not eradicable by the new arrangement. All of these were sources of discontent and dissatisfactions among individual workers. They were not the kind of issues pertaining to decision-making which are actionable and which lead to structural changes.



## The Structure of Code Indicating

The content of the code indicating function was set forth -- insofar as present knowledge allows -- earlier in this chapter. It consists of evaluating prevailing conditions against various criteria which are contained in codes for the purpose of determining which among alternative codes is supposed to be applied. The criteria are embodied in the codes enacted by the workers; they are also interpreted, elaborated and extended by the code indicating function and by the judicial processes within the union. As component parts of decisions, the criteria represent rules of designation; they furnish the objective indicators by which to name the designees of the decision. Since the formulator, the designees and the rules of designation are already stabilized within the decision, the code indicating function -- the application of the criteria -- cannot be adjudged a decision formulating function.

A question is now raised about code indicating. Under the system's premise, to whom can the code indicating function be properly assigned? The evidence shows that code indicating was assigned to the departmental chairmen, the combined officers and chairmen, and by implication to the local union officers. It also shows the actual assignments were made deliberately by aggregates of workers: by departments and by the local union. Structurally speaking, the following may be said about the disposition of the code indicating function. (1) Aggregates -- decision executors and formulators of the system -- will not perform the code indicating function. (2) They assign this function to elected officials -- in each case the principal representative official of the aggregate enacting the code.

An assumption will now be made about the way code indicating was arranged. It will be assumed that the disposition just described was a structural necessity brought about by some implicit rule of the system. By assuming that it was necessary rather than permissive, it becomes possible to raise the question as to whether such a rule exists and to conduct a search for it. It will be understood that such a rule is not to be found on the books, but rather it will be an inference from observed regularities of the way code indicating was handled.

By this assumption, the disposition of code indicating, as stated above, may now be formulated. (1) Decision executors-formulators -- exemplified by the departments and local union -- were not acceptable as code indicators, and could not be assigned the function. (2) Code indicating had to be assigned to some entity belonging to the aggregate enacting the code, but which was not, and could not become, an executor of the decision contained in the code. From these two propositions, a definition of the structure of code indicating may be readily deduced.

This provokes still another question about the code indicating function. Why were decision formulators not suitable as code indicators, while non-executor-formulators expressly were? The answer to this question arises from the premise attributed to worker decision making.

The premise exposes a fundamental difference between an aggregate and its representative officials, insofar as decision making is concerned. It implies that any decision, once formulated by its proper executor, cannot be altered by any other member of the system. Indeed, anyone who sought to alter such a decision would be assuming the role of its formulator; he would therefore be acting as a coercer of the real executor -- a violation of the premise. The local union officials are not executors of any decisions (except their own terminal ones which are theirs because they are workers, not because they are officials). They therefore cannot formulate any decisions which someone else must execute without acting as coercers. On the other hand, the proper executors of decisions are the aggregates (again excepting the terminal ones). An aggregate's decision is therefore inviolate -- provided it is the proper executor.

By assigning the code indicating function to non-formulators, the workers produced some special effects; these in fact may be considered as the fundamental reasons for the structure of code indicating. By assigning it to the officers, instead of to the aggregates, it became possible to attach the function to the union's judicial appeals machinery. This provided the workers with the right to challenge the officials' decisions - - and to modify, reverse or uphold them. If the aggregates had retained the code indicating function, such appeals would be impossible. An aggregate's decision can only be challenged on the grounds that it was not the proper executor of its decision -- wholly a structural ground. And the outcome of such a challenge, if upheld, is only a change in the structure of the decision: its assignment to its proper executor. But in the hands of the officials, code indicating could be made an appeal able function.

This right to appeal, it now turns out, conforms to a fundamental requirement of code indicating, if it is to remain noncoercive. Code indicating must be an interpretive function, not a decision making one. Its task is to evaluate existing conditions against a body of criteria already accepted, or capable of being defended against challenge. The content of code indicating is thus: interpreting, evaluating, extending criteria and, in general, drawing conclusions from factual evidence. The outcome of code indicating is the naming of designees. The line, which separates such naming from real decision-making, is the fact that the criteria are explicit and the application must be factually grounded. The preservation of this difference depends critically upon the right to challenge and appeal the code indicating function.

This special structure of code indicating -- its assignment to nonformulators -- provided worker decision making with an important protection for its structural premise.

### **The Role of Union Officials**

A first glimpse has now been obtained of the union official in worker decision making. In the case at hand, the officials were the particular creatures of the individual local union, and their role, prerogatives, duties and limitations are explicitly fixed by the conditions of this local. It is therefore not appropriate to press generalizations beyond the obvious limitations of the evidence. Nevertheless, by way of concluding discussion, some notions about the role of the officials may be offered.

Two bits of evidence provide the foundation for the observations about to be made. One consists of the assignment to the officials of the code indicating function, including the characteristics of this function which have thus far become evident. The second consists of the reported discomfiture, on the part of the members, with the use of *to permit* as the chairmen's instrument of pressure against management. The latter is admittedly scanty, but by anticipating future developments concerning *to permit*, its force may be considered as definite and well established.

Within the workers' decision system, the local officials are code indicators. They apply to existing conditions the criteria embodied in the codes enacted by the workers. This function, together with the checks put upon it, are the justification within the system for establishing representative offices. There is no evidence -- at least thus far -- that any notions of "leadership" attach to these offices: leadership, that is, which partakes of any elements of coercive decision-making.

The local union officials also have another job to do for worker decision making. They are supposed to bring to the employer the decisions reached by the workers and attempt to persuade him to accept them. If the employer accepts less than the workers originally decided, the official is supposed to bring the employer's offer back to his constituents for their consideration: for modifying their original decision or holding fast to it. In this job, they play the part of bargainers with the employer.

This bargaining function is capable of contaminating the officials' code indicating function. As the use of *to permit* shows, the officials were able to convert this allocation decision into a pressure device against the employer. But such a device against the employer is equally one against the workers. *To permit* contained favors to bestow as well as leverages to apply to both sides. The same overtime sought by the employer confers added income to individual workers; the same overtime denied by the chairmen withholds output and work from occupations. The bargaining function can readily turn into a mediating process between the employer's and the workers' decision making whose exercise is enhanced by having such pressures to exert against both sides. This conversion of the code indicating function into an independent broker in decision-making can produce unsavory consequences for worker decision making and unionization.

## CHAPTER 12

### THE WORKERS' DECISION SYSTEM

Worker decision making has thus far been portrayed by parts. This must inevitably furnish the impression that it is made up of discrete activities, relatively modest in scope. These discrete parts of worker decision making will now be brought together and arranged in a systematic way. Also some additional elements not heretofore encountered can be added to the arrangement. From this, a new perspective of worker decision making is expected to arise: worker decision making as a system.

A decision system, in its broadest sense, embraces the whole society in which it operates. It consists of all the cultural, social, organizational, procedural and decision making practices which maintain the decision makers and connect them with the production system they regulate. In a narrower sense, a decision system is the organization which controls the production system. It is an organization through which decisions are generated continuously to specify all aspects of the flow of production. As such, it consists of the structure and functions through which decisions are produced and transmitted to production.

The workers' decision system about to be described will be confined to the narrower definition of a decision system -- the part which occurs within the production establishment. It will not be altogether possible to adhere to these limits, because the elements of the workers' system inevitably interrelate with cultural and social practices of the workers' world.

The decision system can be divided, for purposes of description, into two main parts. The first part is the system of decisions; this consists of the body of decisions by which workers specify productive activities and conditions. It is the workers' particular mapping of the production terrain, based upon their special way of perceiving production and of causing it to occur. Some elements of this system of decision have already been examined, in particular to permit, to allocate, and to work overtime. A considerable expansion of the subjects of decision will bring to light a vast apparatus, which deserves to be called a system of decisions. This material will be described in the present chapter.

The second part of the workers' decision system consists of the operations and processes in which decision makers engage. These too have already been encountered in preceding chapters. The various findings will be brought together and supplemented by additional material. A coherent description of the internal decision making processes of the workers' system will be presented in Chapter 13.

An important disclaimer needs to be made even before embarking on the description of these parts of the workers' decision system. The description will in no sense encompass the whole of the workers' decision system, nor even all the elements of the subjects with which it deals. It will shortly become evident that such a task would far exceed the scope of this undertaking. The more limited goal of the presentation is to

show the systematic character of portions of worker decision making. Enough of the internal composition of the workers' system will emerge to permit some valuable generalizations about it.

### **The System of Decisions**

Worker decision making possesses an established body of decisions. This body of decisions consists of the continuing subjects and arrangements of decision-making, not the individual actions which may be specified on particular occasions. Many examples of these decisions have already been examined, some singly as in the case of overtime and others in the form of codes. They have not yet been dealt with compositely, as a structural element of the total decision system. It is in this form -- as a system of decisions -- that they will be presented in this section.

The workers' organization -- their local union -- enacts all kinds of rules and makes many decisions which interpret and apply their rules. These are known and spoken about within the union as rules, agreements, decisions and other similar names which characterize the outcomes of the procedures by which they are produced. These regulations are to be found in many places, as already described: in the contract, side agreements, departmental and occupational minute books, minutes of the executive board and in other such repositories.

Out of this proliferating mass of regulation, there evolves a kind of common law: a body of doctrine dealing with all issues arising within the organization and which is employed to decide upon matters raised for adjudication. These materials are not collected nor are they formally codified. Nevertheless, they are employed continuously and are applied in a coherent and consistent fashion to the problems which arise in the workers' organization. To become any kind of an official in the organization, a worker must acquire a knowledge of this material, at least of a level adequate to the conduct of his office. For this body of common law and doctrine, the workers have no distinct term, nor do they even refer to it as an identifiable entity. As prior evidence indicates, however, it is nonetheless real and observable. To this body of materials this study has applied the term "codes". To work, to allocate and to permit are titles utilized in this study to refer to specific codes dealing with their particular subjects.

Within these codes, there are decisions. They specify actions or subjects of action, formulators and executors. The system of decisions which will be described here refers to this innermost layer of the workers' body of rules, regulations and precedent decisions. Indeed, only at this level is it possible -- as will be amply demonstrated -- to discover the vast and encompassing systematic character of the workers' decisions.

From the demonstration to follow, three principal results are anticipated. First, it will be shown that workers' decisions, heretofore examined discreetly and individually, constitute an interrelated network over a vast range of actions. Neither the underlying interconnections of this system of decisions nor its scope have yet been sufficiently

evident in the present inquiry. Second, the internal structure of this system will be established. It will be shown to consist of unitary decisions, decision sequences and combined sequences. It is this structure -- again not apparent from earlier investigations - - which make the body of decisions an integrated system. Finally, the demonstration will expose the location of this system of decisions and the method by which it can be uncovered. This is considered an essential part of generalizing the findings which will accrue from empirical analysis.

To accomplish these results, an important distinction must now be made between two aspects of the workers' decisions -between overt decision routine and the underlying decision structure. Heretofore, the inquiry has operated within both, but without distinguishing between them. Overt decision routine is the ordinary body of procedures by which individuals and aggregates practice decision making. They are the explicit routines contained in the codes -- in the contract, side agreements, internal rules, etc. They are the visible decisions and practices which workers enact and according to which they carry out their decision-making activities. Much of the previous investigation has been concerned with this level of worker decision-making, even including much of the analyses of *to designate, to allocate and to permit*.

The workers' system of decisions only becomes evident at the level of underlying decision structure. This is the level at which the full composition of decisions can be made explicit -- their actions, formulators and criteria. These things do not appear in the overt routine because they are usually implicit and because they would encumber the routines with excess and generally unnecessary verbiage. The underlying structure consists therefore of a full exposition of decisions, incorporating all the elements which make up a complete statement of the component decisions. There is no contradiction between the overt routine and the underlying structure. The latter can be abstracted from the overt routines, and when this is done, the system emerges in its fullest sense. This process will be amply demonstrated in the analysis to follow.

The system will be presented by means of an illustrative example. The example is drawn from a wide-ranging group of rules, including overtime, layoff and recall, seniority and others. These have already been stated in various parts of the study and therefore need not be repeated here. In order to make the original rules serviceable for the present use, they needed to be codified: that is, brought together in a coherent way in relation to a particular class of decision problems. Here again, the codes have already been formulated in different contexts of the present study, and adequate references will be made to them in the course of the exposition. However, the forthcoming presentation draws together a code which is broader than any thus far considered. It is a code which systematized the workers rules for allocating newly available man-hours of work. The terms of this code and its component unitary decisions will be utilized to describe the decision sequences and the integrated sequence of decision sequences in the ensuing sections.

## The Decision

Simple decisions are the elemental components of the system. They specify a particular action; they have a stated formulator; and they prescribe a criterion or rule by which to decide the action. The unitary decisions inhere in the codes although they are not necessarily visible as such. To become evident, they need to be abstracted from the codes by a process which will be demonstrated shortly.

The individual decisions possess a common structure and may be formulated according to a single, uniform model. The basis of this model is the fact that the workers' decisions -- at the level of abstraction now being investigated -- specify only one kind of action. This action is the decision *to designate*.

This single action is the logical consequence of the developmental process and the premise of the system. Each decision, prior to being incorporated in the system, was shown to expose two inherent decisions which compelled a response on the part of the workers: *to designate* and *to permit*. These were present, regardless of the subject with which the workers were concerned; were the elements which brought the developmental process into operation. It was further shown that the inherent decision which entered the system and which governed its structure was *to designate*. Moreover, this transformation of a substantive action into a *to designate* provided the means by which the structural premise was applied to the system. If, on each occasion, the substantive problem becomes transformed into a question of who shall decide it, it follows that the system establishes the structure of decision-making, not the concrete activities and conditions which shall obtain. As a consequence of the developmental process and the premise, the system of decisions -- at the level of its underlying structure -- consists solely of *to designates*. The force of this generalization will emerge in later applications.

This common subject of decision contributes the basis for the rest of the model. The formulator of the *to designate* tends to be its executor, insofar as his identity is apparent at the time the decision is established. (Within the codes, the formulator is usually not mentioned, primarily because he is the entity who enacts the code, and his identity is therefore obvious. It is nevertheless possible, as has been shown several times, to identify the formulator from the code itself.)

The final part of the model is the criterion or rule of decision. Since the decision itself is *to designate*, this rule may now be more specifically identified as a rule of designation. Further, the rule of designation is one which applies to some member of -- or the entire -- formulating entity. This follows because the recipient of the designation must himself be part of the entity which formulates it. The rule of designation therefore takes on one of two possible forms: either it names the designee outright, or it establishes some way of naming the chosen designee from among all possible candidates. Examples of both kinds have already been encountered, and more will be seen in the empirical material to follow.

This kind of unitary decision -- possessing these common properties -- will appear universally in the system of decisions. Because it has these properties, it is possible to formulate the general pattern of the unitary decisions. This pattern, embodying the structure just described, is as follows:

Formulator	All workers belonging to this decision -- executing entity.
To designate:	designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision,
Rule of designation:	those workers who...

### **The Decision Sequence**

The second structural element in the system of decisions is the decision sequence. A decision sequence is a series of unitary decisions which are joined together in a sequential way. They are joined by two devices. The first is the ultimate action to which they are directed. Each unitary decision in a sequence emerges from the one preceding it and proceeds to the one which follows; it is a subdivision of the decision hierarchy, which culminates in the terminal decision: All members of the sequence proceed towards the common terminal decision. The second way in which the members of a decision sequence are joined is by the identity of their formulators -- executors. The formulator -- executor of any decision in the sequence is a member of the aggregate of the decision which preceded it, and the executor of the terminal decision is a member of the entity which formulated the first decision in the sequence.

A set of unitary decisions linked in this way forms a sequence. This sequence may be described as descending, in the sense that each one approaches the terminal one more closely, and each names as its designee a portion of the preceding designee. The whole sequence is unified by the final productive activity to which it applies.

A decision sequence in the workers' system of decisions is an abstraction from their rules and practices. The workers' organization has no such terminology as unitary decision or decision sequence. Nor are the actual decisions in sequences about to be described recognizable as such in any of the workers' body of rules and practices. However the rules and practices have inner relationships in reference to any particular kind of employment or productive activity. Any given subject, such as overtime, promotion, recall and the like usually is regulated by one or more rules. The collection of such rules governing a single final activity furnishes a concatenated procedure which disposes of the topic with which it deals. The codes about overtime, for example, yielded an ordered group of individual decisions to permit, to allocate, and to work. From this kind of internal substantive relationship, a decision sequence can be extracted. It requires only that the ultimate action be identified with precision, that the relevant causes and practices be brought together, and that their underlying decisions be formulated according to the model of the unitary decision set forth above.



Three illustrations will be given of decision sequences. These are drawn from two common employment issues: overtime and recall. The rules governing these two issues will be supplemented by other relevant rules concerning the workday and work week and seniority.

The common subject with which these clauses deal now needs to be formulated. In the language of collective bargaining, it covers the issues of overtime and recall. In the language of decision making, however, the subject becomes something quite different, and more general. Overtime and recall arise as employment issues because a particular productive condition has occurred: an increase in production (hours of work) becomes necessary. This increase provides for a larger number of hours of work than the workers have been receiving. These newly available additional hours must therefore be allocated to workers. As overtime, they are allocated to workers currently employed who have already been receiving full workdays and workweeks. Under recall, the hours are given to workers who are laid off. The fundamental issue with which these clauses therefore deal is the allocation of newly available man-hours of work. The decision sequences about to be described will be presented in accordance with this formulation of the decision subject.

The sequences will be presented in the following order: (1) the allocation to employed workers; (2) the allocation of unemployed workers; and (3) the allocation of newly available hours. This order of exposition will facilitate the presentation of the material. Logically, however, the last of the three sequences is the first in the over-all sequence, and ought to come first, but the stated order is preferred for explanatory purposes.

### **The First Sequence: Allocation to Employed Workers**

The first sequence to be described is derived from four sources. Two are contract clauses and two are statements of the code presented in Chapter 4.

Article III, Sec. 2(a) of the contract defines overtime. It states, "All work performed by an employee in an excess of eight (8) hours in any one day or in excess of forty (40) hours in any one week, or on the sixth (6) consecutive day of work of his regularly scheduled work week shall be paid at time and one half such employees' regular hourly earnings." The purpose of this clause is to provide for the overtime pay, but it is premised on a definition of the regular workday and work week, namely 8 and 40 hours respectively.

Article III, Section 7(a) of the contract provides for equalization of overtime within an occupation as follows: "The employer agrees that the distribution of overtime work shall be equalized among the employees within an occupational group every three months..."

The second statement of the code as presented in Chapter 4 reads as follows:  
"Enlarge the employment of all workers currently employed until they each have eight hours work per day and forty hours work per week."

The fifth statement of the code is as follows:

5. Permit overtime when condition #3 is met, except:

- A. if the available work is so little that:
  - 1. it would constitute a financial loss to laid off workers to return to work for a short period because:
    - a. they would get less in earnings than they currently receive from unemployment compensation; or
    - b. they would sacrifice temporary jobs outside in order to return to work at the plant;
  - 2. because of 1) above, the laid off workers might be induced to terminate their employment status with the company.
- B. if such overtime is immediately necessary to avoid layoffs when
  - 1. such overtime is of limited duration and small amount; and
  - 2. the need is so serious that recall would not avert layoffs
- C. if the overtime will increase inventories during the period of the wage dispute.

These rules together with their application, as described earlier in chapters, establish the union's decisions and procedure in the matter of overtime. When the employer desires overtime work, the work is offered to the occupation on which it is to be performed. (This is already shown in practice and is reinforced by the equalization clause.) If any members of the occupation currently are receiving less than 8 hours of work per day or 40 hours of work per week, the newly available hours intended as overtime are to be diverted to the underemployed members of the occupation. Thus, while the employer may propose the working of overtime, his proposal is received by the workers' decision system as notice of the availability of some additional hours of work, rather than as an offer of overtime. Under the rules these hours go to the occupation on which the work is to be performed, and on this occupation they may go to one of two groups of its members: to the underemployed or the fully employed.

From this procedure, a decision may be formulated. The formulator of the decision is the occupation. This is the entity which received the decision allocating the

newly available hours of work. The decision *to designate* which the occupation is about to make names the entity within itself which is to receive the newly available hours. The designation is based upon the number of hours currently being worked by members of the occupation.

The unitary decision may be stated as follows:

Formulator: The members of the occupation which is to perform the work.

*To designate:* designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours

Rule of Designation: FIRST: Those members of the occupation who are currently receiving less than 8 hours of work per day and/or less than 40 hours of work per week.

SECOND: Those members of the occupation who are currently receiving 8 hours of work per day and 40 hours of work per week, whenever any of the following conditions prevail:

- A. if the available work is so little that:
  - 1. it would constitute a financial loss to laid off workers to return to work for a short period because:
    - a. they would get less in earnings than they currently receive from unemployment compensation; or
    - b. they would sacrifice temporary jobs outside in order to return to work at the plant;
- B. if such overtime is immediately necessary to avoid layoffs when
  - 1. such overtime is of limited duration and small amount; and
  - 2. the need is so serious that recall would not avert layoffs

- C. if the overtime will increase inventories during the period of the wage dispute.

Clearly, this decision does not stand-alone. It is both preceded and followed by other decisions. In this one, the occupation is the formulator. This implies that it was the designee of an anterior decision. On the basis of information disclosed in earlier chapters and by a logical extension of the structure of workers' decisions, this anterior decision may be readily stated. Its formulator represents an aggregate of which the occupation is but one entity. Such an aggregate in the structure of the union is the department. The formulator, therefore, of this anterior decision may be identified as the department. The balance of the decision then follows logically.

Formulator: The members of this department

*To designate:* designate, as the formulator of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours

Rule of Designation: the members of the occupation which is to perform the work.

Similarly, another decision precedes this one and its designee is the department in which the additional work is to be performed. The derivation of this decision, however, involves different rules from those already cited, and it will be presented in a subsequent section.

Decisions also follow the first decision described above. The first of these ensuing decisions follows the designee identified above as the

FIRST: Those members of the occupation who are currently receiving less than 8 hours of work per day and/or less than 40 hours of work per week.

This group of workers thus becomes, in effect, the formulator of the ensuing decision, and this decision designates which of the underemployed workers shall receive the additional hours. There are various rules of designation for this group of underemployed workers.

They include seniority, equalization, and the requirement that all must work, among possibly others. This unitary decision can be stated without specifying the details of the designation, as follows:

Formulator: The members of the occupation who are currently receiving less than 8 hours of work per day and/or less than 40 hours of work per week.

*To designate:* designate, as the formulator of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours.

**Rule of Designation:** (seniority, equalization, etc.)

This decision reaches the individual worker who is to be offered the additional work. A final decision embodying the terminal decision to work then belongs in this sequence. However, this terminal decision to work will not be given, because the language of the model, while wholly applicable, would yield an off-sounding formulation. It will be clear, however, that this decision brings the sequence to an end.

When this sequence is completed, all members of the occupation are then receiving no less than eight hours of work per day and/or forty hours of work per week. The first designee of the original unitary decision then disappears and the second designee enters into the sequence. This second designee now includes all those who were among the members of the first designee as well as those originally belonging to the second. Together, they represent the entire occupation which is now receiving eight hours of work per day and forty hours of work per week. The allocation of the, additional hours to this second designee now takes the form of overtime. According to the code, overtime is permitted under the specified conditions. These are the conditions which are spelled out in the formulation of the original unitary decision.

This decision is now followed by another which allocates the overtime among the members of the occupation. Here again, there are various rules under which the overtime is to be allocated. These are given in Chapter 7. The unitary decision following this one would then take the following form:

**Formulator:** The members of the occupation who are currently receiving 8 hours of work per day and 40 hours of work per week.

*To designate:* designate, as the formulator of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours.

**Rule of Designation:**

This unstated rule of designation reaches the individual worker who is then called upon, to decide the terminal decision, *to work*.

It is now possible to assemble these various unitary decisions into a single sequence. This sequence begins at the departmental level with the allocation of newly available hours to the department accepted as a given condition. It ends with the two terminal decisions, *to work*. The sequence is as follows:

The members of this department designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours, the members of the occupation which is to perform the work.

The members of the occupation which is to perform the work designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours

FIRST: those members of the occupation who are currently receiving less than 8 hours of work per day and/or less than 40 hours of work per week.

SECOND: those members of the occupation who are currently receiving 8 hours of work per day and 40 hours of work per week, whenever any of the following conditions prevails:

### **The Second Sequence: Allocation to Laid-Off Workers**

A second sequence, entirely independent of the one just described, allocates the newly available hours to a different aggregate of workers: to the workers currently unemployed but who retain reemployment rights with the company -- the laid-off workers. This sequence is drawn from four clauses of the collective bargaining agreement which regulate the recall of laid-off workers. The clauses are as follows:

"Seniority shall mean the accumulated length of service with the Employer,..." (Article X, Section 1 (in part)).

"Seniority is accumulated as follows:

1. Plant-wide
2. By job or occupation within the several departments of the plant." (Article X, Section 2 (in part)).

"Employees shall be recalled to their work after lay-off s according to their seniority status, as determined by the recall list, as required by the job in the department from which they were laid-off." (Article XII, Section 1 (in part)).

"Laid-off employees shall have their names transferred to an employment list and offers of jobs in departments other than their own shall be made on the basis of plant seniority, provided the employee is qualified by ability to perform the job available and has asked to be considered for employment in other departments." (Article XI, Section 3).

These clauses lay down the principles governing the recall of laid-off workers. They establish and define the principle of seniority; they stipulate the aggregates within which seniority is accumulated: by job or occupation, by department, and by entire plant; and they fix the order in which laid-off workers shall be recalled: by job, by department, and under specified conditions by the plant as a whole.

Recall signifies that additional hours of work are available. The contract clauses cited above furnish the principles by which these newly available hours shall be allocated to the laid-off workers. Using the decision structure and methods of analysis already explained, it becomes possible to formulate the unitary decisions underlying this group of contract clauses.

The formulators of the unitary decisions will be immediately clear from the meanings of these clauses. The largest aggregate of formulators embodied in the clauses consist of the total number of workers who are currently laid-off. This total group, under the conditions of any given recall, is divided into two designees. The first consists of the laid-off workers resident in the department in which the newly available hours are to be worked. The second designee consists of all laid-off workers from all the other departments. The recall clauses then permit a unitary decision to be formulated. This decision assumes as a given condition that additional hours of work are now newly available within some particular department. The unitary decision reads as follows:

Formulator: All workers currently laid-off

*To designate:* designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours

Rule of designation: FIRST: the laid-off workers resident in the department in which the work is to be performed;

SECOND: the laid-off workers resident in departments other than the one in which the work is to be performed.

The ensuing decisions now have to be traced separately for each of the two designees of the initial decision. The first designee, the laid-off workers of the department, becomes the formulator of the first ensuing decision. From the contract clause, the next decision may be readily derived as follows:

Formulators: All laid off workers resident in the department in which the work is to be performed.

*To designate:* designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours.

Rule of designation: FIRST: the workers laid-off from the occupation which is to perform the work;

SECOND: the workers laid-off from other occupations (in the department).

This unitary decision also provides for two designees, in accordance with the contract clauses. These clauses state that workers are to be recalled first from the occupational seniority list which is to perform the new work; and when this list is exhausted, from other workers laid-off from the same department. There are thus two designees for the decision, and the order in which they may claim the work is as stated in the unitary decision.

The next decision follows the first of the intradepartmental designees, the members of the occupation. Here again, the language of this decision follows directly from the content of the clauses.

- Formulator: The workers laid-off from the occupation which is to perform the work
- To designate:* designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours
- Rule of designation: laid-off members of the occupation according to their occupational seniority.

Following this, there is the terminal decision to work, in which the designated individual may name himself as the person to be recalled to the available work. The existence of this terminal decision is firmly fixed by the contract itself. Article X, Section 5 provides (in part) as follows: "An employee shall lose any and all seniority rights:... (d) if he does not return to work after a layoff within one (1) calendar week after the receipt of a written notice of recall..." This clause emphasizes a penalty for failure to return. It implies however, an explicit terminal decision assigned to the individual. He formulates a final *to designate*, naming himself -- or not -- as a recalled worker. The penalty makes sense only under this construction, for it arises only when the individual worker exercises his right to decide not to return.

The second intra-departmental designee consists of the workers who were laid-off from other jobs. In the decision following this second designee, the rule of designation adds an extra consideration, namely the need of the recalled worker to be able to perform the required work. This unitary decision may then be stated in the following language.

- Formulator: The workers laid-off from other occupations (in the department)
- To designate:* designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours
- Rule of designation: laid-off members of other occupations (in the department)



according to departmental seniority, provided they are capable of performing the required work.

Following this decision there is the terminal unitary decision *to work*, which is made by the individual workers designated to be recalled.

The opening decision in this sequence was formulated by the total aggregate of laid-off workers and it divided this aggregate into two designees: those resident in the department in which the new work occurred, and all other laid-off workers from other departments. The decisions just described pertain to the first of these designees, the members of the department. A second subsequence dealing with workers of other departments now remains to be formulated.

The contract provides recall rights to workers from other departments only if they individually request that they be given such consideration by placing their names on a special recall list. This establishes a rule of designation within the next unitary decision. The formulator of this decision consists of all laid-off workers from departments other than the one in which the work is to be performed. The rule of designation identifies the designee as those members of this particular aggregate who have placed their names upon a plant-wide recall list. This then yields the following unitary decision.

Formulator:                   The laid-off workers resident in departments other than the one in which the work is to be performed

*To designate:*               designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours

Rule of designation:       the laid-off workers who placed their names on a plant-wide recall list.

The workers who placed their names upon a plant-wide recall list become the formulators of the next decision in the sequence. For this group the contract establishes two elements in the rule of designation. Workers of this group will be named for recall, first, on the basis of seniority; and second, on the basis of their capability of performing the work. Accordingly the unitary decision is then as follows:

Formulator:                   The laid-off workers who placed their names on a plant-wide recall list

To designate:               designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours

Rule of designation:       members of this group according to seniority, provided they are capable of performing the required work.

This concludes the formulation of the second sequence: the allocation of newly available hours to laid-off workers. The sequence begins with an initial decision which provides for two designees in a stated order of priority. This priority causes the sequence to divide at once into two sub-sequences: the first dealing with workers within the department, and the second with all other laid-off workers. The several unitary decisions may now be brought together into the following single statement of the entire sequence.

### **The Third Sequence: The Allocation of Newly Available Hours**

Left to themselves, the first two sequences would create a dilemma in decision-making. Each sequence allocates the same object: newly available hours of work. This is partly obscured by the collective bargaining context in which it occurs. Overtime and recall are regulated by entirely different contract clauses, each expressed in its characteristic contract formulation. Their similarity, however, is exposed at the level of underlying decision structure. Both deal with the same object, the allocation of newly available hours of work. But they assign the hours to different people.

To resolve this dilemma a further sequence is required. It needs to state the conditions under which the newly available hours are to be allocated to the employed workers and to the unemployed workers. This gives rise to the third sequence, which precedes the two already described.

When additional man hours of work become available, the workers to whom the hours shall be given shall be designated according to the following sequences:

The content of the decision is already largely available from the material thus far presented. Its formulator is composed of the two aggregates already identified: the initial formulators of the first decision in each of the two preceding sequences. They are (1) all workers currently at work, and (2) all workers currently laid-off. The two constitute all the employees of the plant. Accordingly, the formulator of the opening decision is the aggregate of employees of the plant, and its two designees are the currently employed workers and the currently unemployed workers. Lacking still is the rule of designation of the two designees. This rule of designation states the order in which the two designees and their ensuing decision sequences follow the initial decision.

The basis for the rule of designation is given in the code of Chapter 4, in particular the second statement of the code. This reads as follows: "Enlarge the employment of all workers currently employed until they each have eight hours work per day and forty hours work per week." This particular rule reflects a generalized practice within the local union, to the effect that laid-off workers are only recalled after all people currently employed have been restored to full work days and weeks. Thus, the initial decision fixes the priority of the two designees as first: the currently employed workers, and second: the currently unemployed workers.

The first decision, comprising the opening sequence in this system of decisions, may then be formulated as follows:

Formulator: All workers employed by this plant

*To designate:* designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours

Rule of designation: FIRST: all workers currently at work;

SECOND: all workers currently laid-off.

Accordingly, this initial decision leads then directly to the first sequence described above, the allocation to employed workers. When this sequence is exhausted, the second sequence is activated. Their combined effect is to allocate newly available hours, first to the underemployed members of a given occupation, then under exceptional conditions to fully employed members of an occupation, and thereafter to laid-off workers in according to the order set forth in the seniority program.

Another sub-sequence is implied by those already shown. When all workers have been offered employment, the remaining hours become available as overtime. This would institute an additional sequence, again starting with the occupation. However, for present purposes, it is not necessary to spell out the details of this sequence.

### **The Integrated System of Decisions**

The three sequences can now be combined into a coordinated array of decisions. It is made up of the three sequences, each placed in its proper position according to the flow of decision. The preamble and the initial sequence appear at the top. The left hand side contains the sequence allocating the hours to the employed workers. The allocation to the unemployed is shown on the right hand side of the tabulation.

The tabulation is only a part, not the whole of the workers' system of decisions. It is taken, however, to exemplify the system throughout worker decision making. A similar tabulation can be erected for the workers' other decision subjects.

From this tabulation, three sets of observations will now be made. They pertain to: the structure of the system, and the span of worker decision making, and the existence of a system of workers' decisions.

### **The Structure**

The tabulation substantiates the internal structure attributed to the workers' system of decisions. The material from which the tabulation was constructed are codes, practices, and collective, bargaining agreements. These in general are not unified, either by content or by structure. The tabulation however, shows that they conform to a definite pattern. This pattern consists of the unitary decisions and their arrangements in appropriate consequences. These can be used to analyze the other subjects of worker decision making.

Figure 2  
**A Part of the System of Decisions Allocating Hours**

When additional man-hours of work become available, the workers to whom the hours shall be given shall be designated according to the following sequences:

All workers employed by this plant designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours –

FIRST: all workers currently at work:

All workers currently at work designate, as the formulators of ensuing decisions allocating additional hours, the members of the department in which the work is to be performed.

The members of this department designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours, the members of the occupation which is to perform the work.

The members of the occupation which is to perform the work designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours –

FIRST: Those members of the occupation who are currently receiving less than 8 hours of work per day and/or less than 40 hours of work per week.

The members of the occupation who are currently receiving less than 8 hours of work per day and/or less than 40 hours of work per week designate, as the formulator of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours --  
(seniority, equalization, etc.)

SECOND: Those members of the occupation who are currently receiving 8 hours of work per day and 40 hours of work per week, whenever any of the following conditions prevail:

- A. if the available work is so little that:
  - 1. it would constitute a financial loss to laid off workers to return to work for a short period because:
    - a. they would get less in earnings than they currently receive from unemployment compensation; or
    - b. they would sacrifice temporary jobs outside in order to return to work at the plant;

2. because of #1 above, the laid off workers might be induced to terminate their employment status with the company.
- B. if such overtime is immediately necessary to avoid layoffs when,
1. such overtime is of limited duration and small amount; and
  2. the need is so serious that recall would not avert layoffs

SECOND: all workers currently laid-off.

All workers currently laid-off designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours –

FIRST: the laid-off workers resident in the department in which the work is to be performed;

All laid-off workers resident in the department in which the work is to be performed designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours –

SECOND: the laid-off workers resident in departments other than the one in which the work is to be performed.

The laid-off workers resident in departments other than the one in which the work is to be performed designate, as the formulator of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours, the laid-off workers who placed their names on a plant-wide recall list.

The laid-off workers who placed their names on a plant-wide recall list designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours, members of this group according to seniority, provided they are capable of performing the required work.

FIRST: the workers laid-off from the occupation which is to perform the work;

The workers laid-off from the occupation which is to perform the work designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours, laid-off members of the occupation according to their occupational seniority.

SECOND: The workers laid-off from other occupations (in the department).

The workers laid-off from other occupations (in the department) designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours, laid-off members of other occupations (in the department) according to departmental seniority, provided they are capable of performing the required work.

## **The Span**

The tabulation is informative about the span of the workers' decision system. The notion of decision span refers to the number of persons or the extent of operations which are encompassed by any given decision. It has been amply demonstrated that worker decision making operates at the level of small face-to-face groups. The tabulation shows that the span also extends to the entire plant.

The tabulation reveals that this extension occurs by the application of identical structural apparatus from the smallest to the largest unit of decisions. Each level of decisions in the system is interconnected with higher and lower ones, ranging from the plant to departments to occupations and finally to the individual worker. The tabulation furnishes evidence that the span of workers decision making is capable of extending at least to the level of the entire plant. The internal structure shows how this span is achieved.

## **The Extensibility of the System**

The system is by no means limited to the level of the whole plant. By applying the apparatus of the internal structure to the subject matter of allocating hours, it can be extended beyond the top level appearing on the tabulation. It is only necessary to formulate the anterior to designate, using the same model as the unitary decisions, to project the system beyond the level of the single plant.

This further extension is done by converting the so-called given condition into a unitary decision. The given condition which appears in the preamble to the first sequence postulates the availability of some additional number of man-hours of work. When this given condition was stated, no question was raised as to the source of the additional man hours. It was merely assumed that management would decide that the plant increase its output by increasing the working hours. Such a decision would be based, among other considerations, upon an estimate of market conditions. The estimate would indicate that the market was capable of absorbing an increased amount of output. This can now be translated into an extension of the decisions appearing on the tabulation.

The designee of the first decision appearing on the tabulation is the whole plant. The implied formulator of the new unitary decision would be all the plants capable of producing the particular product. Accordingly, the prior decision may be formulated as follows:

Formulator: All plants engaged in the manufacture of this product.

*To designate:* designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision.

Rule of designation: the workers employed by this plant.

One further extension is still possible. In the unitary decision just stated, the formulator consisted of all the plants engaged in the manufacture of the particular product. For the next prior decision, this aggregate would be the designee. The aggregate of which this designee is one part would consist of some still larger combination of industries. The executor of such a decision would consist then (say) of all workers in manufacturing industries, or even all workers. To this aggregate an increase in hours of work becomes available, either through some expansion in the total national output or in a diversion of man-hours to this particular industry through some change in the national product mix. The resultant unitary decision would then read as follows:

Formulator:                All workers

To designate:             designate, as the formulators of the ensuing decision allocating additional hours (representing an increase in national product or a change in national product mix)

Rule of designation:    the workers of this industry

These two decisions carry the span of the system to the industry and to the entire economy. They illustrate the extensibility of the system, even beyond the level of a single plant or enterprise. This extension was projected by the same structural apparatus which was employed in extending the system from the individual worker to the plant. Obviously, this further extension presupposes substantial institutional changes, even in worker decision making. The two decisions show how the system, using its established structure, is capable of embracing even wider ranges of decisions than those shown on the tabulation.

An extension of this kind is by no means as fanciful as it might appear at first sight. Its seeds were evident in the history recounted in the preceding chapter -- the no-overtime rule enacted by the three local unions. The rule itself deals with additional work hours, as does the tabulation. The joining together of the three unions from different companies marks the formation of a new decision entity larger in scope than any appearing on the tabulation. Quite overtly, the extension of the tabulation took place in the enactment of the no-overtime rule.

For precision's sake, however, this development requires further explanation. The no-overtime rule as enacted by the three unions was really a decision to limit. It prohibited the three locals from making further decisions concerning the allocation of newly available hours. It thus terminated their decision-making within the sequence of decisions which would allocate such hours. But, as amply demonstrated already, a decision to limit is only a part of a decision to designate the part which affects the non-designees. Hence, on purely logical-theoretical grounds one may ask: what was the implied *to designate*? Who was its formulator? And who was the other designee?

In actuality, neither the *to designate*, nor the formulator, nor the other designee existed. The no-overtime rule reveals the developmental process only partially

completed, before the complete formulator came into existence and before the inherent *to designate* was identified. Nevertheless, the available information, together with the theory of worker decision making, makes it possible to fill in the missing portions of this partial extension of the system.

The no-overtime rule named the three locals as the non-recipients of overtime. Such an offer of overtime necessarily implies that additional hours of work might be made available. Accordingly, by the implied *to limit*, if additional hours of work were made available, the workers to whom the hours were not to be given were the members of these three local unions. Who then was to get them? On this, the rule was necessarily silent. If the multiple union aggregate had included all workers in the industry, the *to limit* would have been made general as the surrogate for a strike. This alone would have prevented the expansion of output. This missing formulator was therefore the other plants in the industry.

If the complete formulator existed, and if the *to limit* were lifted and replaced by the *to designate*, one element of the decision would still be unavailable and cannot be guessed. That element is the rule of designation. There is still no evidence available, from this union or others, to indicate how workers might allocate newly available hours among plants. The basis for designating which of the available plants should get the newly available hours remains to evolve with the workers' decision system.

### **The System of Decisions**

The tabulation demonstrates that workers possess, in their decision-making, a systematic, orderly and integrated body of decisions.

What makes this tabulation a system of decisions?

First, it is a system because the decisions form an integrated, interconnected network. Each decision is attached to a proceeding and following one; there are no gaps or ambiguities in the entire array. Once the initial given condition is fixed, the flow proceeds without interruption until the last terminal decision is reached. The decisions are fully articulated -- linked fore and aft in logical and systematic fashion. This internal linkage binds the decisions together into a unified system.

Second, it is a system because it is capable of bringing about a specified production objective. It produces this objective -- an increase in output with the existing technology -- by activating, seriatim, selected aggregates of workers. Its choice of workers is governed by the requirements of the decision system as a whole, but it nevertheless progressively designates the aggregates and individuals who are to perform the required work. Thus, the tabulation discloses a system of decisions from the viewpoint of effectiveness and operability.

Third, it is a system because the decisions contain a determinate ordering principle. They proceed from the most general to the most specific event, with the



intervening ones arranged in descending order of generality. This property was not added to the tabulation in the process of its construction. It inhered in the original decisions and therefore could be exhibited in the final results. This property is characteristic of a system of decisions which must provide an orderly procedure for integrating and activating the activities and conditions of production.

Lastly, these decisions comprise a system because they contain an operable image of the production system. They were couched in the language and categories of worker decision-making: individual workers, members of occupations, departments, and the plant. But these categories are the equivalents of elements of production: of unit operations, processes, and larger segments of the plant. The decisions not only furnish a continuous and deterministic link between decision makers and production; they also map the production terrain in a relevant and effective manner. Acting through this distinctive body of decisions, the workers are able to decide the activities and conditions of production.

## **CHAPTER 13**

### **THE DECISION MAKING FUNCTIONS**

The workers' decision system has a second structural part, the decision making functions. These are the recurring routines by which the members carry out acts of decision making. The system contains two kinds of decision process which may be identified by their end products. The first process produces the codes -- the body of decisions whose interior structure has just been examined. It will be called, for present purposes, code generating. The second process produces the actual, concrete productive work -- it includes the formulation and execution of terminal decisions. It will be designated as code implementing. This chapter will describe these two decision-making processes.

#### **The Code-Generating Process**

The code generating process is the name assigned by the present study to the ways workers enact their codes. The workers themselves do not employ the word codes, much less the term code generating process. Their notion of the way they enact rules and regulations consists of the formal organizational procedures of the local union. These are laid down in the local's by-laws and in the procedural rules of the departments.

These procedures can easily be observed within the local union. An issue is raised at a meeting. It may be the meeting of an occupation, a department or the entire local union. The issue concerns some term or condition of employment, and it arises by way of a grievance or in the course of preparing a contract proposal, or by some other such means. The issue may also be a procedure, or rule, or some organizational element of the local union which pertains to administering terms and conditions of employment. The members debate the proposal and then vote upon it. If a majority approves, it becomes part of the workers' code. If thereafter it has to be negotiated with the employer, it is carried into the appropriate channels of collective bargaining by the local union officials. Any modifications of the proposal which develop during the course of the bargaining are returned to the workers for their consideration. The procedure of discussion and vote is thereupon repeated. Again, if the results of the bargaining are approved by a majority, they enter the workers' code.

This visible portion of code generating does not suffice to explain how codes are produced. It depicts organizational machinery rather than the social processes which cause it to be utilized. The procedure as such assumes that issues arise; that workers are moved into action; that they avail themselves of the procedures; that they discover the proper aggregate to which to bring their causes; that they formulate solutions and proposals; that the aggregate will have reason to approve or disapprove, and above all

that the ultimate codes will possess the unique decision structures described in the preceding chapter. Precisely these assumptions contain the profounder questions as to how codes are produced, and they are not illuminated by the account of the organization's routines.

Before and during the formal procedures, there is another discernible process which contributes to generating the codes. It is the process of organizing, conceptualizing, formulating problems and solutions, and creating the social forces which use the formal machinery for enacting the codes. This is the process which has no official standing; indeed, it is probably not acknowledged as apart of the rule-making procedure. Nevertheless, as will be shown, it exists and it is responsible for generating the codes.

The results of earlier investigations, as already reported in previous chapters, furnish materials from which this code generating process may be constructed. These results consist of the findings, inferences and deductions produced during the analyses of the individual decisions, and the system of decisions. The rise of those decisions, it will be recalled, exhibited many similarities. These similarities are to be found in prior conditions, in evolving social relations, in patterns of action, and in the structure of the final codes. The similarities are present despite the differences in the subjects of the decisions and in the aggregates which enacted them. These common features in the development of the decisions furnish the materials from which the code generating can be formulated.

## **The Process**

The code generating process, insofar as it is perceptible from present evidence, can be formulated in three statements.

Each statement depicts an achievement or a development by workers en route to generating a code. The sources of these statements will be immediately apparent as results obtained in previous chapters.

Each statement, together with a brief explanation, will be presented in the succeeding paragraphs. The Appendix to this chapter contains a full explanation and interpretation of the code generating process. The statements now follow.

### **First Statement**

1. *An entity of the productive workforce identifies itself as a coerced formulator of a decision to designate.*

The initiator and mover of the code generating process is some entity of the workforce. The evidence discloses that many kinds of individuals and aggregates were code generators. The three analyzed decisions had, as their code generators, the individual worker -- for *to work*; the occupation -- for *to allocate*; and for *to permit*: first,

the occupation; next the department; and then the plant as a whole. The collective bargaining of Local 2188 had two plants as its code generator. The no-overtime rule reflects an even larger code-generating aggregate -- the multiple unions.

A decision *to designate* motivates (i.e., initiates, concludes) the code generating process. It identifies the initiator, the coercion and ultimately the designated formulator. It defines the actors by reference to this decision: they are its executors and coerced formulators. It states that the actors are members of the work force; i.e., they belong to occupations which can be both executors and formulators of the decision. Finally, it defines the action as self-identification: the workers must discover their own coercion as well as their right to formulate the decision.

### **Second Statement**

*2. The coercing formulator of the decision to designate as identified as a member of the workers' decision system.*

The coercion attaching to the *to designate* is traced, according to the second statement, to some entity of the workforce and not to the employer nor to anyone else outside the workers' decision system. This part of the process emerges from the cases and is reinforced by the logic of generating a decision *to designate*.

In each of the four cases, it was shown that workers were the coercing formulators. They were individuals or aggregates who were either not at all the executors of the decision, or not the whole of the executing entity. It was their coercion which the decisions eliminated in each of the cases.

Internal coercion is an important element of the code generating process as formulated in these three statements. On the one hand, the coercer is an entity whose visibility to the workers needs no further explanation -- as an individual worker or an aggregate, the entity is directly within the range of vision and experience of the coerced workers. And secondly, the internal coercion makes the corrective action -- changing the formulator of the *to designate* -- a feasible one because it can be accomplished within the organization.

### **Third Statement**

*3. The workers' decision system, confronted with a structural conflict: which of the two entities shall formulate the decision to designate? designates its executor as the formulator.*

According to this statement, the code is enacted by the consensus of an aggregate which is authorized to designate a formulator.

As the cases revealed, this action by the aggregate is brought about by confronting it with a structural conflict which it cannot evade. Two contending groups claim, either

overtly or implicitly, the right to formulate the decision. And in each case it was shown that the system responded by designating the executor as the formulator.

Only this decision by the aggregate brings the code generating process to an end. The case of *to permit* interestingly exposes this feature of the system. The original decision structure failed to satisfy the premises of the system. Accordingly, the code generating process was renewed in respect to it, and continued until its structure was changed. Alternatively, the structure of *to work* and *to allocate* remained when their decision structures were first established.

These three statements comprise the code generating process as discernible from the individual cases. Each statement reads therefore as a procedural step, setting forth actor, action and achievement. This unavoidably gives the appearance of a process that operates with logical orderliness and sequentiality. Such an impression needs to be corrected at once and be replaced with a more appropriate conception of the process. It is likely that the code generating operates continuously -- that each step goes on and on, in respect to the particular condition to which it is addressed, until it is completed. Moreover, it is possible that some of the steps will be retraced in order to bring about changes in previously completed results, so that the evolving understandings and organization become more suitable to the ultimate code.

### **The Code Implementing Process**

The workers' codes lay down the patterns of *to designate* which, at the end of each sequence, name the formulators of the terminal decisions. The codes prescribe the subjects, the formulators and the executors of the decisions and thus stipulate the procedure by which the terminal formulators are to be named. The terminal formulators are the workers who actually execute the conditions and activities which produce goods and services. The codes must, when the occasion requires, be put into action. The question thus arises: how is the system of decisions actually implemented?

The implementation process can be described, at least in part, from the evidence now at hand. This evidence includes the materials of earlier chapters, in particular the meeting, the codes and the system of decisions. The process is clear within this range of evidence, and the ensuing description will be applicable to this much of the implementation process. An unsolved problem will still remain, and will be discussed after the description is completed.

The process can be illustrated graphically, as in Figure 3. This figure presents a flow diagram of the system of decisions shown in Figure 2. Each decision, instead of being rewritten, is represented by its formulator. The sequence of flow through the system is shown by the arrows.

Thus, the system begins at the top, with the formulation of the initial condition -- the increase in man-hours (to maintain or increase output). Thereafter, the flow of

decision goes to the sequence pertaining to the employed workers. As before, the arrows point to each decision in the order in which they arise.

Viewed overall, code implementing is an automatic, internally directed, self-correcting process. At any point in the system, there is an explicit, unambiguous flow. The system is a complete circuit, with no breaks and no doubtful places.

There is one decision in which the system must intervene ad hoc. This occurs, in Figure 3, at the decision of the occupation where the designee is the fully employed. Here is where the code indicating function is used. Its purpose, as explained in Chapter 11, is to compare the existing conditions with terms of the code, and to determine which code is to be followed. It is of interest to note that this function occupies only a small place in the overall scheme of the system. It is an important one, and it deals with instant issues involving particular persons. But its true scope of action, however large it may appear from the meeting, is depicted by its place in the system of decisions as a whole.

The code implementing process is this automatic procedure as laid down in the codes from the moment they are enacted. Apart from the code indicating function, the decisions flow automatically, without further intervention, according to the predetermined course. Given the initial condition, the terminal decision arises as inevitably as any decision system is capable of achieving. But it is at this given initial condition that the unresolved problem mentioned above arises.

There is simply no evidence at hand which reveals how the initiating condition -- itself a decision -- is brought about. The available evidence permits certain things to be said about it. First, the workers' system has a limited range, and its threshold -- as at the initiating decision -- it is the employer who sets the condition: in this case an increase in man-hours. The workers' system can review and re-work the decision, as the meeting shows, and within its limited capacity, even attempt to compel the employer to fix a higher limit to production than he originally intended. But this does not gainsay the evident fact that the workers' system at its frontier absorbs high-level decisions imposed upon it from without. Second, the system can trigger the initial decision just as it does any other one -- by a still higher sequence. This is exactly a duplication of the structure within the system and among the sequences. There must certainly have been a time when the system did not reach as far back as it now does, and where, at the earlier threshold, it had to absorb the conditions fixed for it by some outside energy. This point of view leads to the conclusion that the initial decision is, or may ultimately be made by a reiteration of the process which occurs within the body of the system. In this view, the implementation process is uniform throughout the workers' decision system.

### **Conclusion**

The two processes just described contain all the actions of the system which can be called decision-making. Those which produce the permanent pattern of decisions and specify the subjects and structures of the decisions are the code generating process. Those which become evident as work performed -- as the activities and conditions which

workers execute in production -- can be traced to the code implementing process, either in its wholly automatic part, or the code indicating part. These encompass all the decision-making functions so far evident in the workers' system.

## **APPENDIX**

### **A Theory of Code Generating**

The purpose of this appendix is to present a theory of code generating. It will contain the following parts: the definition of a code generator; the emergence of the code generator; and the code generating process. The theory will be a statement of a model of the process which produces the workers' codes.

The text of the chapter presented the code generating process as formulated in three succinct statements. These depicted the process strictly according to the findings of earlier chapters and they employed notions and terms which were previously worked out and explained. These statements will be amplified and located within the whole model in the ensuing presentation.

#### **The Code Generators**

The code generator, according to the first statement of the process, is "an entity of the productive workforce." This raises two questions which need to be answered. First, why are workers able to generate non-coercive codes? And second, are not other occupations also capable of generating them?

To answer these questions, "productive worker" and "non worker" must first be defined in a relevant way. The words themselves suggest that the difference between these two groups of employees is based upon occupational tasks as such: productive workers perform manual tasks; non-workers perform all other tasks -- clerical, administrative, executive, etc. However, this is not a useful formulation for present purposes. These groups of employees may also be identified by their respective decision making functions. Defined in this way, their relationship to generating non-coercive codes will become apparent.

Production workers are the formulators and executors of terminal production decisions. A terminal decision is one which is executed by the performance of a productive task. It is the final decision in the sequence of decisions which specify the particular task, and it is not followed by any other decision in its sequence. The executors of terminal decision do not have to formulate any further decisions in the particular sequence. Their performance of the specified task brings the sequence to an end.

The non-workers (as here defined) include all the occupations which formulate -- or service the formulators of -- all decisions, the pre-terminal ones as well as the terminal ones not incorporated in the workers' system. In the employment relationship, this defines the employer function.



The difference between the productive workers and non-workers, according to these definitions, resides in the execution of terminal decisions. Only production workers execute, within the employment relationship, the terminal productive decisions. Occupations which do not execute terminal decisions belong to the employer function.<sup>9</sup>

In the light of these definitions, the two questions raised at the outset may now be reformulated in a more suitable way. First, why are executors of terminal decisions able to generate non-coercive codes? And second, can occupations which do not execute terminal decisions also generate them? Both questions can now be answered by the same explanatory statement.

Only executors of terminal decisions can generate non-coercive codes because they alone can institute such codes without destroying their occupations -- their work still remains for them to perform after the decision structures are made non-coercive. If the non-worker occupations undertook to generate such codes, they would wind up by abolishing their own jobs. Why? Because their jobs consist only in formulating (or serving the formulators of) decisions for other jobs to execute. If, by instituting non-coercive codes, they assigned these decisions to their executors, no work would be left for them to do. It is therefore not conceivable for a non-coercive system to arise among occupations which do not execute terminal decisions. Only those occupations which would not be abolished by a non-coercive decision system can be expected to generate such codes.

### **The Emergence of the Code Generator**

The code generating process begins with the discovery, by some entity of the workforce, that it is the executor and coerced formulator of a decision to designate. Both the *to designate* and the entity are, at the start of the process, wholly new to the workers' decision system. They emerge together. The entity achieves an identity by the *to designate* which it discovers; and the *to designate* comes into existence as the decision imposed upon and executed by the new entity. Neither exists, nor has any reality within the decision process without the other. Code generating starts with this combined identification.

Every code generator arises as a new entity of the workers' decision system. The entity must be a new one, regardless of its status as an organized aggregate of the local union and regardless of its previous experience in code generating. It is new because it has no prior history in respect to the decision it seeks to institute. The entity emerges as

---

<sup>9</sup> There are other executors of terminal decision in contemporary society, other than production workers. Many professional and craft occupations are executors of terminal decision; and of these, many exhibit organizing characteristics similar to productive workers, e.g. physicians, teachers, musicians, etc. The difference between them and unionized workers, insofar as organization is concerned, may be readily explained by other occupational characteristics; doctors as self-employed teachers as state-employed and often with tenure.

the hitherto nonexistent claimant of the formulating function. Insofar as the code generating process is concerned, the entity thus arises for the first time.

Similarly, the *to designate* is a new decision. It has no counterpart in the employer's system of decisions -- nor indeed in any other known system. Since it is uniquely a non-coercive decision, there is no opportunity for workers to borrow it from any system within their experience or knowledge. This is even the case where, as in the transfer of *to permit*, a decision seems already to have existed and only its formulator was being changed. For even here, the *to designate* had to be reconceived -- in effect, emerging as a new decision -- before the code generating process could be under way.

The process by which workers pass from an undifferentiated collection of individuals, lacking any internal organization, to becoming the self-identified executors and coerced formulators of a previously unknown decision *to designate* will be reconstructed in this section. This process is an extremely complex one, for it involves human insight, courage and audacity, as well as intellectual and imaginative strength of a rare order. The process has not heretofore been reported, and it is probably extremely difficult, if at all possible, to subject it to minute and detailed investigation as it unfolds in any specific case. (Among other things, when it begins, how long it will take, whom it will encompass, and to what end it will proceed can scarcely be anticipated.) The process will be reconstructed here on the basis of information available from various sources including the findings of this study as well as the history of organized labor and reported observations about the growth and development of worker organizations.

### **To Limit and To Designate**

The analyses of the several individual decisions reveal that on each occasion two inherent decisions became apparent, a *to permit* and a *to designate*<sup>10</sup>. In each case, the *to limit* was the first to become perceptible and only thereafter was the *to designate* discovered. The three statements of the code generating process make no mention of this *to limit*; the start of the process is placed after it has been discovered. It is this *to limit*, however, lying outside of -- or really, anterior to -- the code generating process, which provides the clue to the emergence of the code generator and the process.

The discovery of a *to limit* means that workers achieve an understanding of their situation as follows: they become aware that they are being injured or deprived; and they connect their state with the action of some other entity. For reasons which will become apparent, this understanding can most accurately and realistically be described by means of the term, decision *to limit*.

---

<sup>10</sup>An important word of caution needs to be uttered at this point. This account will speak of the discoveries of *to limit* and *to designate* as though they actually took place in just these words. Obviously, there is no occasion when some illumined soul cries out, "Eureka! I have discovered a *to limit*! I have identified a *to designate*!" The discoveries of these decisions are wholly unseen, unexpressed, unrecognized events. How then can they be said to occur? They may be said to occur because the workers act in ways which are best expressed by these words and the meanings assigned to them. These words are used because they are believed to depict with greater accuracy than any other words the nature of the acts to which they are applied.

The discovery of the *to limit* probably occurs well along the route leading to the code generating process. Its discovery presupposes that the workers have already completed a fairly complicated analysis of their situation. Something of the way they discover the situation may be logically deduced from the decision itself, from the surrounding conditions of the individual cases, and from other observations of organized workers. This can be illustratively described against the background of any contemporary local union.

The atmosphere of a local union is always saturated with the workers' response to their conditions of employment. The response covers the whole spectrum of possible reactions. At one end, an individual may casually express the mildest displeasure with some condition or other. At the other end, a group of workers may protest vigorously and unyieldingly by concerted action at some other condition. There is also a zero to this range. Conditions may exist which, in other unions or to the perception of outsiders, deserve some response but which receive none. Thus, a continuum may be said to occur in the ranges of workers' response to their employment conditions. It starts at no response and gradually rises to a crescendo of concerted action to eliminate the cause of their disaffection, i.e., to generate a code.

Within this continuum, four distinct states can be described. This is not to suggest that these states are graded stages or that they have any given time of duration. They are part of the same continuum, with each one either coming into being or giving way to the next development. Nevertheless, the four states are sufficiently pronounced, by reason of certain large characteristics, that they can be identified for purposes of general description.

### **The Zero Response**

The first state is the zero case. This can be recognized simply as no worker response to some seeming source of discontent. The zero case may be exemplified by the lack of interest, in the part of one group of workers, in some gain or benefit already achieved by others.<sup>11</sup> This is commonplace as between industries and plants of the same industry. But it also may be found among departments of the same plant. The mere fact that new issues arise which were never raised before argues that there were times when the workers must not have responded to the condition at all. The zero case is also exemplified by the absence of workers' response to conditions which outsiders might think undesirable. One of the most pronounced of these is the relative absence of worker protest against the monotony attributed by outsiders to factory work. This does not imply that monotony might not be there, but rather that workers have not responded to it.

---

<sup>11</sup>A group of foreign trade unionists was once conducted through an American plant, and they were astonished to discover that the plant had no showers for the workers. They asked the local workers about it and got no interest whatsoever in the notion. The visitors could not understand how union workers could not desire such an advantageous working condition.

## Recognition and Solidarity

The second state covers a large range of the total spectrum of the workers' response. It begins with the initial awareness on the part of a worker that he is being adversely affected by some employment condition. This awareness, however tentative, marks the end of the zero state and the state of the second one. The second contains all the responses up to, but not including, the workers' protest or grievance against the adverse condition. This range is also a continuum; embracing responses of all degrees of vigor within its boundaries and are clear demarcations in the evolution of the workers' response.

The history of employment offers countless examples of adverse conditions which persisted for long periods before they evoked a response from workers. There are conditions now existing to which workers react indifferently, if at all. Examples of current conditions, in addition to the monotonous, repetitive work already mentioned, are work which has hazards and other disagreeable features such as odors, noise, heat, humidity, and the like; many of the disciplinary controls practiced within the employment relationship; hourly pay as such; and probably many others. These are general things, but every plant has specific conditions which go on day after day without provoking any response on the part of workers.

No one knows how workers come to regard previously acceptable conditions as suddenly unfavorable. Indeed, such recognition becomes all the more remarkable in the light of the pressures which militate against it. One need only read the literature of the nineteenth century to learn of the intellectual, religious, political, cultural and social arguments which were formulated in order to justify many of the prevailing industrial practices. *Mutatus mutandis*, much of the same apparatus is still employed for similar purposes today. But workers somehow manage to break through the received traditions as to what constitute acceptable working conditions and to generate responses to them. There are probably some principles of selectivity and ordering which determine the choices of employment conditions to which workers respond. But these principles as well as the mechanism producing their response remain to be discovered.

Awareness involves more than knowing that a hurt has been sustained. In these employment matters, it requires that the impact be acknowledged as an injury by the worker himself as well as by others to whom he might recount his experience. The notion that an experience is objectionable is not instinctive or natural. The category of hurt itself requires a consensus to make it felt. A process of social validation is implied in the rise of awareness on the part of a worker. Again, there are doubtless many employment experiences which are not acknowledged as such either by workers or the community at large.

Parts of this process of social validation can easily be observed in local unions. A worker describes, in the course of conversation -- or, more formally at a meeting -- some event or condition of his occupation or in his department. The telling is not a grievance, nor a complaint, nor even a protest. Indeed, the worker is perhaps not clear himself as to

the aim of his account. An observer can discern that he is seeking information and advice. Do others have similar conditions? Are such conditions wrong? Must they be accepted? Is there some rational basis for objecting to them, or will the speaker look ridiculous to workers as well as to the employer if he gives utterance to an objection about them? This kind of statement is made after the initial awareness has dawned on the worker, but it is a part of the process of consolidating his awareness into a justifiable objection. It occurs continuously in unions, both new and old, and it can be heard at almost any time from experienced as well as new members of a local. It blends indistinguishably into a further development: finding others with the same experience and constructing a common bond of interest with them. Such solidifications is not separable from the other part of the process; indeed, they probably occur together. Getting recognition means finding co-sufferers and allies, if possible.

This second state has a distinguishing mark which sets it off from other states of response. The workers' attention is directed solely towards their situation: to the employment activity or condition which causes them harm, and to the harmful impact upon themselves. They now know they are being hurt, and they can identify the proximate cause. But they have not yet looked beyond the immediate cause; indeed, the notion of a correctable source has yet to be entertained. Characteristically, they suffer uncomplainingly. An example of such a state of development can be found recorded in a Thompsonville side agreement. The agreement deals with irregular work and with protection for workers when the irregularity arises from certain causes. But, if it is caused by market conditions, it is to be accepted as "a hazard of the trade." The workers, as reflected in this agreement, are thoroughly aware of the adverse condition: irregular work arising from market conditions. But they do not see beyond it: they accept it, as described, uncomplainingly.

### **The decision *to limit***

This next state -- the third in this account -- is the discovery of the underlying decision *to limit* and its formulator. The sign of the discovery is the workers' protest, complaint or grievance (not, as explained earlier, an actual pronouncement of the words *to limit*). The grievance shows that they no longer accept their situation resignedly (as a hazard of the trade) but actively seek to put a stop to it. This means that they now see their situation as having been caused by a decision and that to remove the harm the effect of the decision must be lifted from themselves. To grieve means to recognize the origins of an injury or deprivation in a decision, and to address the decision maker as the responsible author of the injury who can modify the decision. The concept of *to limit* in its full implication accurately describes the state -- and understanding -- of the relationships involved in the act of producing grievance.

The decision *to limit* represents a state of decision relationships among various entities. The action, which it specifies, is a curtailment, a prohibition, a restraint against something. The decision first became perceptible in this study as a deprivation of additional hours of work: one or more workers desired more hours and were not given

them. The decision which originated this deprivation was identified as a *to limit*. Later, it was shown that the restraint or withholding action was the consequence of the decision, not the decision itself. The action imposed by *to limit* is a restraint from decision making with respect to some activity or condition. In the cases of the additional hours, the workers were deprived of deciding about them, not of the hours directly. The loss of the hours was the consequence of being prevented from decision-making. The action imposed by *to limit* is a curtailment of decision-making; but in any particular instance, it is the object of deprivation which may be more readily observable than the decision itself.

The state of decision relationship encompassed by the *to limit* also includes an executor and a formulator of the decision. The executor is the entity whose decision formulating is curtailed by the *to limit* -- who is deprived of the particular benefit which the privilege of formulating a decision might give him. The formulator of the *to limit* is the entity who imposes the restraint and the consequent deprivation.

Three different kinds of formulator were evident in the analyses of the individual cases. One was an aggregate of workers who deliberately formulated a *to limit* upon themselves, thereby refusing to formulate or execute any further decisions on the subject at issue. A strike is an example of a total, self-imposed decision *to limit*. The second kind of formulator was an individual or aggregate of workers who, by formulating some other decision (specifically, a *to designate* of which they were not the whole executor), imposed a *to limit* upon other workers who considered themselves claimants for the particular benefit (or more precisely, formulators of the *to designate* from which they were excluded). The third kind of formulator is an outside entity, a non-member of the decision system. The common case is the employer. The market or some other external condition might also be the apparent formulator of the *to limit*; however, these too act through the medium of the employer. In the process now under consideration, the formulator who might first become evident is the employer. This is reasonable since all terms and conditions of employment are limited to the employer's decisions.

The decision *to limit* reveals to the workers an actionable issue, but it does not afford them a thorough going solution to their problem: The fact that they have only progressed as far as the *to limit* means that they still lack two essential elements of a solution. They have not yet uncovered the decision which adversely affects them, nor have they identified its formulator. Instead, they perceive only the depriving effect of *to limit* and its immediate formulator the employer. They are thus hobbled in finding a solution. They cannot stop the employer from formulating a decision *to limit* because it is an essential part of this decision structure upon which they and their fellow workers depend and for which they have no alternative. They can only ask that he formulate it differently; that is, that he shift the unfavorable effects from themselves to other workers.

The discovery of this *to limit* -- with the employer as formulator -- brings the evolution of the workers response to an employment condition up to, but not into, the code generating process. A grievance erected upon this cannot produce a code. If the

employer yields to the grievance, the result can only shift the impact to other workers, leaving intact both the employer's and the workers' decision structure.

### **The Decision to designate**

At any point in this evolution, including the discovery of the *to limit*, it is possible for the workers to discontinue their efforts to remedy their situation, or to remain for an indefinite time at some state of response along the way. There is no indication that workers, once aware of an adverse condition, necessarily pursue it until it is corrected. Not even the discovery of the *to limit* compels the workers to go forward towards a solution of their problem, or to a retreat from it. Grievances are often lost or dropped.

Going forward to the code generating process requires one further analytical step. The workers must figure out that the decision *to limit* is actually a consequence of a decision *to designate*. Once they find the *to designate*, the code generating process is under way. This discovery for the workers marks the crossing of the point of no return. The *to designate*, together with its implications, provides the workers with a course of action and with a need for action. It reveals to them that their failure to act would be an illogical and self-destroying course of conduct. This follows from the two facts discovered along with the decision *to designate*.

First, the workers identify the formulators of the *to designate*. It is probable that they discover the formulators even before they figure out the decision. The formulators are visible beings, the beneficiaries of the very conditions about which the workers complain. They are observable first as beneficiaries; only later, as the workers' analysis progresses, are their actions and consequences understood as formulating a decision *to designate*.

Furthermore, the formulators of the *to designate* prove to be workers, themselves members of the workers' decision system. This notion is supported by the inferences shown in the individual cases. It is also necessary, on purely logical grounds, that the formulators be workers and not some outside entity. By belonging to the workforce, it is possible to explain how the aggrieved workers find out who formulates the decision: the formulators are visible to them and their actions are comprehensible -- they could easily exchange places with them. Moreover, the decision *to designate* exists only within the framework and perspectives of a workers' non-coercive decision system. It does not occur in other kinds of systems, particularly not in the employer's. Therefore, the formulator of the *to designate* can only be found within the workforce. Finally, the fact that the formulators are workers provides the aggrieved workers with both the object and means for remedial action. They can cause changes in decision making within their own system, by enacting the necessary regulations. Thus, by identifying the formulators of the *to designate*, the aggrieved workers produce for themselves a possible course of action.

Second, the discovery of the *to designate* reveals to the workers that they themselves are the coerced formulators of the decision. The *to designate* informs the

workers where their objectionable condition comes from. It comes from a decision which names the formulators of the next decision in the sequence, and it excludes them as designees. Further, the discovery shows the workers that they are also executors of the decision; that is, they are equally available for the designation, but they never receive it. And since executing a decision logically requires that the individual accept it and make it his own (else how execute it?), he must necessarily also formulate it, even though he may be coerced. The complaining workers thus find themselves implicated in formulating the *to designate*, hence in deciding the very conditions they are complaining about. As matters stand, they have no choice about the way they formulate their decision; they are coerced formulators. But coerced or not, this discovery makes the workers' position untenable from then on. So long as they acquiesce, they are implicated in creating their own troubles. To fail to act makes them henceforth responsible, at least in part, for the very conditions about which they seek relief. Further inaction would be an illogical and self-destructing course of conduct for the aggrieved workers.

More is involved in discovering the *to designate* than analyzing a decision and identifying its formulators and coerced formulators. These things are the intellectual achievements which signal the beginnings of code generating. But in addition, there are also social achievements at least as monumental. In a certain sense, the *to designate* and the identifications which accompany it are unreal, nonexistential things until they are adopted by the aggrieved workers as fact and as guides to their action. To get adopted is a work of persuasion and organizing. Not only must the new knowledge be discovered; the aggrieved workers have got to be convinced that it accurately reflects their situation and states their problem. Moreover, they must agree to solidarize as the entity which claims the right to formulate the *to designate*. As in the formation of any new social grouping, all this entails the forswearing of existing interests and the acceptance of new burdens and obligations.

It is perhaps wrong to separate the intellectual accomplishment of analyzing the decision from the social relational one of organizing the code generator into an acting entity. The separation is defensible only because it makes explaining easier. In reality, the two processes, the advancement of understanding and the formation of the code generator, progress together; they must be reckoned the same event. Finally, the process which is mirrored in the double achievement must be thought of as an interactive cycle, occurring and recurring constantly in relation to any given work experience, until the workers achieve the requisite understanding and organization. The start of code generating cannot be envisaged a formal, distinct event. It is a process of discovery and organization which goes on continuously up to the time the code is finally enacted. And sometimes it continues even afterwards, as is shown by *to permit* under structure 1.

### **The Code Generating Process**

From this point on, the code generating process follows a familiar routine. A new entity-laying claim to a new *to designate* now places itself upon the agenda of the workers' decision system. This may occur in any of a large number of ways. In the case of *to work*, the decision was only a potential issue, a kind of force newly thrown into the



growing field of similar forces. If the decision had materialized into an issue, instead of being settled before it became a real problem, it would probably have arisen in the form of a grievance or of a contract demand. In the case of *to allocate*, the issue was precipitated by its collision with other decisions. *To permit* under structure 1 emerged simply as an extension of the problems encountered by *to allocate*. Structure 2 gestated during the war period and was enacted by the local union in the most formal way possible, by a vote at a local union meeting. There are countless other possible ways in which the new entity may move -- ways defined by the procedure it employs, the forum to which it brings its issue, the conditions prevailing at the time, whether amicable or controversial, and many others. All these possible ways culminate in the same outcome: the entity comes forward with its particular demand and lays it before a proper unit of the local union.

This marks the next discernible step in the code generating process. Much of it may be observed in the visible workings of the local union. The union receives and must rule upon a concrete issue, presented in whatever form the particular demand takes -- a grievance, a resolution, a contract proposal, or some other way, and pertaining to some specific employment matter. From the viewpoint of decision making, the union's problem deals with the underlying *to designate*. It is confronted with a structural issue: who shall be the formulator of the decision? Sometimes there are no alternative contenders, and the union's task is simplified. Sometimes a conflict arises: two entities lay claim to the right to formulate the decision. The union, or whatever sub-unit has the problem, must act as the formulator of a decision *to designate*: it must name the formulator of the *to designate* in dispute. In naming the formulator, the union also institutes the new decision into its system of decisions.

The code generating process comes to a close, in respect to the particular *to designate*, when the local union assigns the formulating function to the decision's executor. This is what took place in the analyzed cases. It also took place in the whole system of allocation decisions, as the previous chapter demonstrated. The process terminates in this way because there is no other entity which can claim that it is the executor of the decision. Should another such entity emerge, as was the case under structure 1 of *to permit*, then the process is started anew by the entity claiming the right to formulate the decision. A kind of equilibrium is achieved, in respect to the given decision, whenever it is assigned to its executor and it can only be disturbed by the presence of some unremoved coercion.

## CHAPTER 14

### IMPLICATIONS

The limits set for this study have now been reached: to bring to light worker decision making on production. The study is in no sense a full treatment. It covers neither the breadth nor the depth of the phenomenon. It was sought, by evidence and analysis, to show that worker decision making exists, that it operates over a substantial and expanding range of decisions (but by no means all of them), and that it has a unique decision structure which evolves out of the occupational relations of workers. It now remains to consider the generality of these findings and to discuss, by way of concluding comment, what they seem to mean.

#### **The Generality of the Findings**

The reasons for confining the illustrative material to Thompsonville were stated in Chapter 1. It should by now be evident that the task of presenting the detailed materials necessary to the demonstration is quite large, and that any saving of explanatory overhead is beneficial. It may also be noted that representativeness in any simplistic sampling sense is not applicable to materials of this kind. Nevertheless, having exposed to view the microscopic details of an individual case, its applicability to other situations has to be examined.

In point of fact, while the illustrative materials are confined to Thompsonville, the actual evidence and insights are drawn from sources.

#### Chapters 2-5

The data of Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 cover the organizational structure and processes of the local union, the meeting as an example of the processes, collective bargaining agreements and some historical experience of the local union.

The structure of the local union is defined in its by-laws, which, under the constitution of the international union, are subject to the latter's supervision. As an organization, the local union has an apparatus which carries out four general classes of functions. These are collective bargaining with the employer, internal grievance procedures, extra-employment activities of the local such as elections, participation in community affairs, etc., and management of the operations of the local union. The organization structure consists of officers, executive boards, department chairmen and committeemen, appeals committee, auditors, and constituent bodies of occupational groups, departments and the total local union. A brief description of the union is given in the Appendix to Chapter 1.

This study could not have been produced on the basis of the Thompsonville experience alone. Observations of many other local unions, published reports about unions and industrial relations, and the theoretical literature of the relevant fields must be claimed as part of the corroborative background to this study.

The main argument for the generality of the findings is the representative and typical character of the Thompsonville local union. The macroscopic phenomena of Thompsonville -- the local union organization and activities, the collective bargaining apparatus, the terms and conditions of employment, and the like -- are similar to those of the countless other local unions in the United States. On this basis, the inference is made that the findings of this study are applicable to similar worker organizations elsewhere. A more detailed analysis of this similarity now follows.

The organizational structures of local unions are described in many studies and reports. (1) These disclose some variety in the details of structure. Some contain paid, full-time business agents and representatives; others, like Thompsonville, do not. Some separate the collective bargaining functions from the management of the local's affairs; others, like Thompsonville, combine all functions in a single set of officials. The evidence indicates that the Thompsonville structure conforms to the general pattern of local union organization in United States industrial plants; and its specific features fall within the prevailing range of variations of union locals.

What may appear distinctive in Local 2188 is not its general form or functions, but the degree of development manifest in its operations. Its constituent bodies meet and operate with great intensity. Its internal appeals mechanisms function continuously and with impressive continuity in their work. The problem dealt with by the union are, in the collective bargaining sense, very advanced and exhibit a wide range of interest and a great complexity of detail. But they are by no means the most advanced or varied which can be found in local unions.

These features do not differentiate Local 2188 qualitatively from other local unions in this or other industries. They pertain to issues which must be solved as part of the basic representative function of the union in collective bargaining. Local 2188 has evolved an effective, continuing operating process for handling these issues. It has created an apparatus for resolving internal differences among members and forging policies on new problems. Similar issues and problems may be found in any local union, subject to differences in the agreements under which they operate. Similar organizational processes occur in other locals, depending on variations in the specific procedures employed and the extent to which they are utilized. This, in part, is governed by the complexity and detail of the agreements which they must administer.

The data of Chapters 2-5 derive from a local union typical of others in its basic functions and operations. What is different in Local 2188 are not matters of basic organizational significance, but only of the degree to which the organization has evolved. Thompsonville is one point on an organizational continuum, not a different species of local union. Its own history discloses a development from the time when it functioned on a halting, tentative basis under a limited set of agreements, to the time of this study when it had a relative ornate organizational apparatus. Moreover, its organizational development continues as, bit by bit, new terms of employment are created and new processes are added to the local union. The meeting itself is an example of a new function added to the prior system of local union procedure.

Similarly, the other local unions are in a continual state of development, characterized by the same evolutionary processes. New terms of employment are added which require administration. These create the necessity for additional organizational processes both for handling the new terms and for dealing with members.

The meeting presented in Chapter 3, and used as the data for subsequent analysis, is an example of the internal activities of the local in respect to decision making. It is unique in the sense that it pertains to a problem specific in its time, personnel, and its application to plant matters. As a problem, however, it derived from an existing overtime agreement, and required handling under terms of the union's administrative function. The meeting was a prescribed means for handling this type of problem; for other kinds of problems there are other prescribed organizational channels. Apart from its particular specificity, the meeting exemplifies the kinds of decision making activities which go on inside Local 2188.

Similar meetings occur in other local unions. This is necessarily so, since the administration of agreements is an essential function of unions. The decision making process within any particular local may differ from the one disclosed in the meeting. The difference may pertain to the organizational method for dealing with the problem, or to the specific issue, or to the agreement under which the issue arises. But so long as a local union functions under an agreement which it must administer and interpret, and over whose implementation it must furnish surveillance on behalf of its members, it must give consideration to the detailed problems and issues which arise in day-to-day plant operation. Any union is inescapably placed in the position of the Thompsonville union, and must work out decisions to problems of work as they arise. It may elect to handle these problems more or less systematically than Local 2188; or it may operate more or less democratically; or it may solve the problems more or less effectively. In any case, simply by being a union, it faces similar problems.

Accordingly, it is claimed that Local 2188 is like other union locals in the United States. Its organizational structure, agreements, operations, as well as the overtime problem can be found, *mutatis mutandis*, in many other places. This similarity serves as the basis for inferring that the findings of Chapters 2-5 are not unique to Local 2188. To the contrary, they are considered to be characteristic -- either actually or potentially -- of almost any local union.

## **Chapters 7-13**

The data employed in Chapters 7-13 consist of collective bargaining agreements relating to overtime, the facts of local history relative to these agreements, and certain aspects of local union structure. The rest is analysis, interpretation and inference.

The several overtime agreements are by no means exclusively found in Local 2188, although they are also not universal. The right to refuse overtime exists in many

places. (2) The union's right to permit overtime is considerably rarer, but it can also be found in many companies. (3) The historical facts apply only to Local 2188, but they consist only of customary union organizational activities which took place at particular times. Apart from these specifically local events, there is nothing in the organizational materials which separates Local 2188 from many other local unions in the United States having the same kinds of overtime agreements.

Some of the findings of Chapters 7-13 are uniquely applicable to Local 2188 -- those pertaining to local history, and to decision structures and practices of the particular organizational forms of Local 2188. The general findings however as to the essentially noncoercive form of worker decision making and to the processes which bring it into being are regarded as characteristic of other local unions. One of the best single indices of such generality is the almost universal use of seniority as an element of workers' codes. Accordingly, the findings which are not an exclusive part of the Thompsonville experience are considered characteristic of the decision systems in other local unions.

The formal collective bargaining relationship out of which these agreements developed is set forth in clauses pertaining to recognition of the union, the establishment and scope of collective bargaining, and the many procedural clauses dealing with negotiation, grievance machinery, and arbitration. These clauses may be compared with those of other unionized plants in which collective bargaining occurs, and which are contained in published contracts and in various compendia of contract clauses. (4) Published studies and observers' reports describe collective bargaining practices in other situations. (5) Comparisons of contracts and bargaining practices establish that collective bargaining at Thompsonville corresponds to the prevailing methods in the United States, and that many of the individual procedural and recognition clauses may be duplicated almost to the letter in a wide variety of contracts from many different kinds of industries.

The structure of the agreements, including the contract clauses, supplementary letters, side agreements and the like can also be found in other plants. This structure of agreements reflects an equivalent structure of bargaining.

The substantive terms of employment contained in the agreements deal with matters of wages, hours and working conditions in this particular plant. A comparison of the individual clauses with agreements from other plants discloses similarities and differences. The similarities consist of the kinds of issues which are handled, such as hours, overtime, holidays, vacations, wages, etc., and the characteristic way of formulating agreements about these issues. Also, many of the detailed, substantive gains and benefits in the agreements are virtually identical.

Differences are of several kinds. Some occur because the clauses pertain to occupational conditions created by the unique and particular jobs of individual industries. Some clauses contain gains and benefits which exceed or are inferior to those of Thompsonville. Some clauses provide for conditions not yet agreed upon in Thompsonville, such as pensions, while other agreements have not achieved some provisions already effective in the subject plant. The differences occur therefore because

of differences in occupational setting, or because of different degrees of attainment and development in collective bargaining.

The similarities between the Thompsonville agreements and those of other unionized plants indicate the representativeness of Local 2188. To what extent do the differences impair this representativeness? Since the inquiry was concerned with the decision implications of the agreements, rather than a cataloging of the detailed regulation of production decisions by the agreements, the variations arising from causes indicated above are irrelevant to the findings of the inquiry. It would have been possible to conduct the present analysis using the published agreements of other companies without the loss of any of the findings. It was preferable to use the Thompsonville agreements in order to preserve the continuity in the inquiry, to show the derivation of each ensuing decision process, and to avoid the necessity of multiplying the material explaining production processes, plant, employer, union, and other details as to the setting of the agreements.

### **The Generality and Limits**

On the basis of the considerations advanced above, the generality of the findings in this study is defined as follows:

The findings which derive from the contract are considered applicable to production units in which the employer engages in free collective bargaining over the terms of employment with nondominated unions. These findings pertain primarily to the relationship of agreements to production decisions, and the significance of collective bargaining to decision making on production.

The basic findings of Chapters 2-13 -- the occurrence of worker decision making on production and the workers' decision system -- apply in general to nondominated unions of production workers. Since these findings consist of processes which are inherently dynamic in character, the degree to which any particular local union possesses these basic processes is a function of its state of development. The claim is made, however, that any local union of production workers, effectively functioning as a representative agency of its members, carries out workers' decision-making on production.

### **Some Implications of Worker Decision Making**

The substantive portion of this study is now considered finished. The existence of worker decision-making and its special features were demonstrated in earlier chapters, and generalized as far as permissible in the preceding section of this one. Vastly more remains to be studied than has thus far been done. The subject of worker decision-making needs to be explored in many places and at greater depth than this initial inquiry has been able to do. Nevertheless, given the results of this study, it is appropriate to look into some of the implications of worker decision making by way of concluding discussion. In the nature of the case, it must be speculative and exploratory, not definitive.

## **Decision Making: A Changing Function**

The employment relationship is the prevailing form of social organization of production. It came into being at the beginning of the present industrial epoch and made its way as the dominant form against other historical alternatives, such as slavery, feudalism, producers' cooperatives and forms of collective production, all of which were tried out at one time or another during the history of this country. Except for a few remaining "free" professions, self-employed trades and crafts and small, independent farming, the only way in which people can engage in gainful activity is by entering into employment.

The rise of the employer and the employment relationship is a correlate of the decline of individual decision making by workers. The industrial revolution and the division of labor are the specific processes by which the employer reduced the workers' decision making and extended his own over their job performance. The outcome of this development was the gradual reduction in the employer's dependence upon the workers, and a consequent increase in his decision making over all the terms and conditions of their work.

The employer came into being as the market integrator and provider of materials and outlets for the craftsmen's work. Gradually the merchant-capitalist collected his contracting workmen into single locations and provided them with materials, tools and equipment. From these beginnings of the factory system, the complex organization of contemporary production emerged. In this historical process, the employer's range of decision making expanded. As a contractor of time and performance, the employer-merchant decided less of the craftsman's activities than he did when the latter entered the factory. Once within the factory, the employer's role became increasingly more important in determining the performance of his employees.

The allocation of decision formulating has accordingly changed over the history of the employment relationship. Thus far, the change appears to be unidirectional: the employer's has extended while the workers' has reduced. Historical experience indicates, however, that the decision making function is not immutable nor a naturally ordained arrangement. On the contrary, it changes under the pressure of an extending decision maker, and it carries with it the total social framework supporting the decision system.

The employer's extension of his decision making over all of production brought in its train other changes which affect the decision system. Precisely by absorbing the workers' decision making through innovating technological changes, he transformed the workforce from independent skilled craftsmen into the employed industrial workers. By reducing the skill requirements of jobs, the workers became increasingly interchangeable with each other in the performance of routine occupational tasks. The barriers among workers created by private interests in skilled job rates and craft mysteries were gradually broken. The work force as an undifferentiated aggregate of employees, with common occupational interests and problems, was brought into being.

The transformation of workers' organizations from craft to enterprise to industrial unions reflect very closely the changing character of their occupational situation. As their decision interests became less individualized and less focused upon the protection of their immediate occupational advantages, their homogeneity as a group and their common occupational problems over a broad range of employment conditions became increasingly pronounced. The breadth of their organizational constituency became coextensive with the span of decision of their employer.

### **Decision Making: The Critical Function**

Decision making on production is the function which integrates the productive activities of a society. Its consummate effect is to organize the people into gainful activity and to determine the flow of goods and services and their allocation among the members of the society. By its act of creating the structure of occupations, the decision system has an impact upon, and is supported by, the total institutional, cultural, and social framework within which it operates. The ways in which people make their living and their participation in other aspects of life are molded by the prevailing structure of the decision system.

The western industrial world, for the past three centuries, has lived under the evolving employment relationship. When decision-making on production passed from the feudal hierarchy and the guildsmen into the hands of newly emerging occupations, the entrepreneurs and merchants, the nature of the production system was given new and revolutionary directions. The working arrangements and practices of people were gradually changed. New artifacts of production were introduced. New products were developed. The impetus of the capitalist employer was rooted in the acquisition of decision making over production, and his historically victorious conquest of the production system shaped the development of western society since his appearance on the scene. Adam Smith's illuminating account of the pin factory in the eighteenth century reveals the methods and the essential contribution, which the entrepreneur made to the production system.

The changing fortunes of nations and peoples, their political and social systems, their internal stabilities and upheavals, can be shown to correlate closely with the development of the decision relationships in their production systems. The twentieth century, heir to generations of life under the employment relationship, shows many attempts to architect various kinds of social and political systems which evolved within the framework of employment in various western countries. Socialism, fascism, state capitalism, and communism represent forms of political structures which seek to contain, or support, or give expression to the social and occupational interests which coalesce within the employment relationship. The vastness of modern production systems, their need for minute articulations both within and among countries, the restructuring of occupational requirements and the consequent changes in the working population derive ultimately from the development in the production units of society. The problems precipitated by these developments find their expression in the political and social programs put forward in the interests of occupational segments of the production system.



The adaptation of workers to the employment relationship has always been a restless one, despite the long history of apparent stability of the system itself. The evidence of this restlessness may be seen in the endless plans for modifying the workers' position. Political ideologies and parties have sought to abolish the employer, substituting for him some kind of state or national decision-making, or the direct executing of managerial functions by the workers themselves. These programs include socialism, communism, syndicalism and workers' control of industry. Another approach is contained in the measures which seek to introduce the workers into some form of sharing managerial functions. These include the schemes of labor-management cooperation, joint production committees and the like. A good deal of the recent studies in industrial psychology and sociology give support to the efforts to implicate workers in decision making within the context of the managerial process. Different from the political approach, these preserve the employer function, while affording the workers a say in their working activities.

Still another evidence of the restlessness of workers in the employment relationship is provided by the continuous history of trade union organization, both in the United States and elsewhere. The trade union has neither sought to eliminate the employer nor to share his managerial functions. Rather, it has pursued a course seeking to ameliorate the workers' position and to modify their relations with the employer. Of all the ways of dealing with the workers' situation, this one comes closest, in autonomy and organizational form, to expressing their problems and pursuing their objectives.

Within the trade union, worker decision making is a dynamic and vital process. As shown in previous chapters, it gives drive and shape to the principal activities of workers: the improvement of terms and conditions of employment. It is worker decision making which must be identified as the autonomous response of workers to the employment relationship. Different from other ways of reconciling workers to employment, worker decision making is their own effort to grapple with their role in production and society for centuries past. The critical significance of worker decision making lies precisely in its relevance to decision making on production. It may create a change in this central social function of vast and profound historical proportions.

### **Worker Decision Making and Unions**

Worker decision making on production occurs in clearest and strongest form in the trade union. It is not however identical with union organization, certainly as the organization now exists beyond the level of the place of employment.

The distinction between the trade union and the worker decision making can be expressed by the role which the unions play in contemporary society. As institutions, the unions assume the function of mediating between worker and employer decision making. In many ways, the legislation governing unionization, collective bargaining and union activities strengthen the unions' mediating role. The workers utilize their unions as agents by which to deal with the employer -- to present and make effective their decisions. The employer utilizes the union as the agent with which to "bargain" -- to

discuss, modify or to deny the workers' decisions. The mediating agent does not necessarily remain a messenger for either or both sides, nor does he act within the constraints imposed by the two decision systems. There is room in this situation for independent actions by the agent -- to make arrangements and accommodations between the two systems. In this process, the agent acquires a basis for his own decision making, and may evolve into a new source of coercion.

The relationship between the union and worker decision-making is not a simple one, nor can it be defined with ease. In part, the union organization is an extension of the same worker decision system described in previous chapters. In part too, it is separated from the workers' decision system and may exercise some kind of its own decision making, which would be, as shown earlier, coercive. Coercion occurs even within the plant level system, as already discovered. The character of the system, as of the trade union organization, depends upon whether the workers have access to the coercion and whether they can introduce a decision structure which terminates or at least diminishes it. There are great differences among unions in the accessibility of workers to their decision structures and in the pressures upon workers to discover and correct coercive decision making. It is therefore difficult to state clearly, at least on macroscopic evidence, the dividing line between worker decision making and the trade union. Worker decision making continues to exist and extend within the trade union. From the perspective of worker decision making, the trade union proves an hospitable environment.

### **The Potential of Worker Decision Making**

The implications of worker decision making both to the trade unions, the production system and society depend above all upon its own development. Will it extend, or will it whither, or will it be suppressed? What, in other words, lies ahead for worker decision making on production?

It is reasonable to expect that workers will continue to extend their decision system -- at least they will try. There is no evident abatement of the employment pressures or of the coercive decision making which would weaken the forces impelling them to extend their system. To the contrary, the evidence is that each successful extension strengthens their ability as well as the pressures to extend further. The process may thus be expected to go on, and its limit, short of total decision making on production, is simply not evident.

It is equally reasonable to expect that the workers' extension will not proceed without opposition and resistance. It occurs at every new step and may be counted on to continue and even to become stronger.

Historically the opposition to worker decision making has taken two forms. One is by the use of force to restrict or terminate it. It occurred in the early years of unionization through the use of the courts, private armies and the other anti-union devices well documented in the history of American labor organization. A far more serious form was used in the fascist and communist regimes. Both attempted to suppress precisely

those aspects of unionization most closely identified with worker decision making, and to encourage the control functions over workers which appear in mild form in the mediating role of contemporary unions. The use of the state as an agent for containing worker decision making has been amply tried. It can be seen in the efforts to enact legislation restraining the activities of unions, especially those impinging on management prerogatives.

The other method of containing worker decision making is the introduction of technological changes in production. It is of interest to observe that the factory system and the division of labor reduced the decision making craftsmen to industrial workers; the assembly line in manufacture coincided with the AFL's inability to modify its craft form and organize on an industrial basis; the contemporary introduction of automation occurs just as worker decision making has become strongly embedded in the industrial plants after just a few decades of experience with vigorous industrial unionism. This "peaceful" method of opposition has always taken the form of breaking up the actual decision making organization -- by modifying the jobs and plants or physically removing them to another location. It should also be noted that the rest of society has usually benefited in a material way from these measures through the increasing productivity which results from them.

The question of the future of worker decision making, barring the use of the state to suppress it, depends upon the ability of the workers themselves to remain organized and to extend their organization against the onslaught of automation and other technological change. There are reasons for choosing either side of this historical gamble. The vast potential of technological change can restructure the total occupational form of the society, turning all but a minority of occupations and people into collaborators of a coercive decision system. In this way the social basis of worker decision making can be effectively destroyed. Society may not like the social, aesthetic or moral consequences, but it will be amply rewarded in a material sense by the resulting affluence. On the other hand, the knowledge already gained of the values of noncoercive decision making may prove indestructible. This was the case in post-Nazi Germany. The trade unions reorganized immediately upon the downfall of the Nazi regime. Again, the introduction of technological change may not be fast enough to erase the experience of decision making. And its accumulated strength may in fact begin to shape the form and timing of technological change to conform to its requirements, which is just what the other decision maker, the employer, is doing.

These are the "inevitables" in the future of worker decision making -- the continuing extension and the opposition. As a conflict of opposing inevitables, there isn't much basis for deciding which will succeed. There are however some "willful" elements in the process, some possibility of options and choices which people may make. It is not at all clear whether they will be able to face and make these choices, which are inherently of a very long-range character, often obscured from view in the day-to-day choices confronting people. But they can easily be stated.

The notion of a noncoercive, nonalienating decision system is extremely attractive to people. An unending succession of utopias have been constructed on this theme. It accords moreover with deep felt elements of American culture, especially with the belief in democratizing as much of social life as possible. Apart from organizational difficulties and opposition, one factor has already made the notion visionary and unreal: it lacked practicality or even a clear method by which it might be realized in the complex modern production system. Now, directly within the system, the notion is turning into a reality, however limited at present. What was once visionary, utopian, unoperational and unrealistic is being given explicit and precise definition and is being put into practice. This fact alone possesses the potential of posing a new option to people -- an option of profound historical consequence.

### **Notes to Chapter 14**

1. See for example Leonard R. Sayles and George Strauss, *The Local Union: Its Place in The Industrial Plant* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953) and Jack Barbash, *Labor's Grass Roots, A Study of the Local Union* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961).
2. This is briefly referred to in Sumner H. Slichter, James J. Healy and E. Robert Livernash, *The Impact of Collective Bargaining on Management*
3. (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1960) p. 238 ff.
4. See Slichter, Healy and Livernash, *op. cit.*, pp. 238 ff. 671 and 673. Examples of clauses are given in Bulletin 908-18, United States Department of Labor, *Collective Bargaining Provisions, Hours of Work, Overtime Pay, Shift Provisions*, pp. 64 ff.
5. There are many published contracts. An older compendium may be seen in Bulletin 908 of the U.S. Department of Labor.
6. Slichter, Healy and Livernash, *op. cit.* provide a systematic review of practices. Individual cases may be seen in the older *Causes of Industrial Peace* series of the National Planning Association.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 9

### THE SECOND TO PERMIT

#### The Limitation of Decision Making

*To permit* was invoked, throughout its history, in the following kind of situation. An aggregate of workers would submit to its supervisor some demand or grievance. (One instance of such a demand--inherently not different from the general case--was the effort on the part of laggard occupations to secure an acceptable method of allocating overtime work.) The usual collective bargaining would then take place. In the situation now being considered, the supervisor's final offer would prove unsatisfactory to the workers. The aggregate would thereafter decide not to accept overtime work. In form, this was the same *to permit*, as described in Chapter 9. The setting, however, reveals that it was generated by entirely different forces than the sheer occurrence of partial or full overtime. The rise and subsequent history of *to permit* cannot be adequately explained without accounting for this second source of the decision.

#### The Second *To Permit*

So different, indeed, were the sources of the decision that the one now under examination produced, in effect, a second *to permit*. The difference between them emerges in the nature of the resulting decision. The second *to permit* had, as a continuing decision in the workers' structure, two distinctive properties. First, it was a unidirectional decision. It only forbade overtime work. Indeed, it was invoked only when a question arose about stopping overtime. If no such question arose, the decision itself would not be called into use. This unidirectional property derives from the fact that the decision had inherently nothing to do with overtime work as such. This will be apparent from a comparison with the first *to permit*. The sheer occurrence of partial or full overtime signaled the need for the first one. It was the logical and indeed necessary extension of decisions governing overtime. When invoked by a request for overtime, there was no prior presumption that the work should be prohibited. As a decision, it both permitted and prohibited overtime work, being determined by the particular circumstances surrounding the individual event. The second *to permit* was not triggered by overtime at all, but by some wholly extraneous event, which raised the presumptive question as to whether overtime should be stopped. It was a discrete decision, arising only when an unrelated event such as a denied demand would occur. In this context, its particular function was to curtail--not *to permit*--the working of overtime. And even if, on some particular occasion, the use of this second *to permit* did not result in a prohibition, it was the denied demand and not the immediately relevant conditions of the overtime which dictated the decision. Because this second *to permit* was unidirectional in the negative sense, the question arises: what did it seek to stop? Clearly, it stopped the action of performing the overtime work. But to stop the work, it had to stop the workers from receiving and executing the decision to work. Further still, since this decision was formulated by the same persons who executed it, their act of formulation had to be stopped. Thus, when the sequence of primary, action-determining decisions is isolated,

the specific function of this unidirectional *to permit* is reached: it terminated the formulation of the decision to work overtime.

The second property of this *to permit* was this: it was a surrogate decision for a total termination of work--or more precisely, of decision formulating. That this was the case will be evident from the following considerations. First, the occasion of the decision was exactly the kind in *which a stoppage would occur: a dispute about some denied demand*. The occasion had no relationship to overtime work or any particular effect created by it. Moreover, the withholding of overtime continued only so long as the denied demand was a point at issue. It was, in this sense, merely a substitute for a general stoppage. Second, the stoppage was limited to overtime for other necessary and pertinent reasons. A full curtailment of work was not possible because strikes were forbidden by the contract, and a particular group of workers could only risk a strike if they could cause a substantial shutdown of production. This could happen only if they themselves performed essential occupational functions, or if the underlying issue was of sufficiently general concern to other workers to enlist their support. But while a strike, for these reasons, was generally excluded, the aggrieved workers could utilize an available substitute. The decision to work gave them a legalistic basis for curtailing overtime. The significance of this second *to permit* can therefore be more sharply defined as a general termination of decision formulating by workers (although limited, for reasons stated, to formulating during the hours of overtime).

These two properties identify the decision inherent in the second *to permit*. Its ultimate effect was to establish a quota of hours for the members of the aggregate to which it applied. It was therefore a decision to limit, exactly like the ones encountered earlier in this analysis. But the decision to limit also has a more general definition, clearly apparent in the present context, and also present in the earlier examples. It is the decision which curtails the subsequent formulation of decisions by its recipients. Heretofore, it was always observed as the decision which fixed a quantitative limit to some occupational activity. But this limit was instituted through a decision process: it terminated the formulation of decisions governing the activity in question. The present *to permit* both fixed a quota and terminated the formulating function. Hence, its principal action, with respect to its immediate recipients, is identified as a decision *to limit*.

This decision *to limit* was a part of the workers' decision structure. Its formulator was an aggregate. Its recipients were the aggregate and its members. Its function was to suspend, for itself and its constituents, all further decision making (about overtime as a special case; or about anything in the general case). Decision-making could not be resumed until the aggregate rescinded its own decision *to limit*. Its use in the workers' decision structure was to impose a limitation upon decision-making.

This decision *to limit* was added to the structure in a manner already identified. Individual workers agreed not to decide their terminal decision to work. In so doing, they gave up rights which they possessed, and they created a formulating entity which would thenceforth rule upon their right to exercise their terminal decision. Further, the total

decision making capability of this entity rested upon the individual members: upon their agreement to abide by its decision, and upon their final right to refuse to work.

### **The Problem**

From the foregoing definition of the decision and the way in which it arose, the specific problems of inquiry can be formulated. Why was a decision *to limit* introduced into the workers' structure? How did workers come to assign this decision—with its necessary limitation upon their own decision-making—to the aggregate? How did the aggregate emerge as the recipient and formulator of the decision *to limit*? Or more generally, how did an unsuccessful collective bargaining experience give rise to the decision *to permit* overtime?

Three given conditions make an explanation attainable. They are: (1) the operating characteristics of worker decision making, as thus far known from the present inquiry; (2) the initiating event in the sequence which generated the decision, the demand formulated by the workers; and (3) the ultimate result, the decision *to permit* with its special characteristics as a decision *to limit*. An explanation will be derived in the next section. It will show the internal process through which this initiating event, passing through the workers' decision system, brought /the second *to permit*. When this internal process will have been presented, a final section will appraise the resulting theory of the second *to permit*.

### **The Structural Crisis and Its Solution**

The second *to permit*, will be shown, in this section, to have arisen in the following manner.

To formulate the original demand, an internal decision structure had to be developed. This structure was placed in jeopardy by the workers themselves as a consequence of the employer's denial of the demand. The danger was the most drastic and fundamental which any decision system can encounter: a refusal of its members to accept and execute its decisions. To protect itself, the system had to eliminate the refusal. It could do this only by curtailing all formulation of decisions, thereby submerging the refusal in a general termination of decision making. This total termination was impossible in the particular circumstances. The decision *to limit* embodied in the second *to permit*, was the best available approximation to an overall curtailment.

### **The Internal Structure**

What was the internal structure out of which a demand was produced? It must have contained two decisions. Each was a decision to designate. The formulator of the first was an aggregate of workers. It named the formulators of the second decision. The formulators of the second *to designate* were the individuals who initiated the substantive demand. The two decisions were sequentially linked: the aggregate, exercising its *to*

*designate*, named the formulators of the second one, who thereupon made their decision *to designate*.

These two *to designates* were the fundamental decisions, which, when formulated, produced the substantive demand. Defined as *to designate*, they are like the x's and y's in a mathematical expression. They can be replaced by any two specific decisions, such as *to allocate* and *to work*, which are sequentially linked and yield a unitary terminal occupational activity. Since no particular issue is now under examination, the structure is defined in these general terms. But even if a specific issue were being considered, these same two general decisions would inhere in them.

The internal structure governing any particular demand is not stated in these terms. Indeed, the structure is not even necessarily developed as an overt and conscious act. More than likely, the substantive issue was formulated and the structure was implicitly evolved in the process. The demand itself, however, could not have been developed without this structure having been created. It was a necessary part of raising and resolving the substantive issue.

This statement of the internal structure is inferred from the process by which demands are formulated. The process itself is well known. It is embodied in specific procedures and it corresponds to widely used patterns of demand formulation. The principal steps are as follows: Workers encounter some term of employment which they find unsatisfactory and they generate objections to it. They give expression to their complaint. They may even work out some alternative term of employment. They then submit their complaint or proposal to their aggregate or to their committeeman acting on its behalf. A demand which ultimately reaches the grievance machinery and the bargaining table is generated in this way. Within this sequence, the internal decision structure resides.

To extract the fundamental structure from this sequence, some transformations must be made in some of its elements. The procedure must be separated from the collective bargaining context in which the demand might have to be negotiated. When this separation is made, the demand itself takes the form of an internal decision, reached within the workers' system. The procedure is then an internal decision process from which a new structure is generated and a substantive decision is produced. The decision acquires the character of a demand, with special features thereafter attaching to it, because it might then have to be handled in the external bargaining process. By placing the process in this decision context, nothing is lost of the actual events and no distortions are imposed upon the sequence itself. The transformation facilitates the derivation of the two decisions *to designate*.

Before proceeding with the derivation, some statements must be made about the substantive demand. It must have had to deal with an issue which embraced only a small aggregate of workers. The largest possible size of this aggregate was probably the departmental unit of the local union. More likely, however, the actual issues in this formative period of *to permit* were confined to much smaller ones. The reason for this



limitation is the historical fact that *to permit* had its beginnings within small subunits of a department. However, for purposes of the analysis, the assumption will be made that the substantive issue was raised by individual workers, and therefore that it involved a terminal occupational activity. This will make the analysis somewhat easier without jeopardizing its generality. The same process can be applied to a broader decision involving aggregates of workers. No restraint need be placed upon the issues which might have arisen, nor upon the form which they took: they could have covered any terminal working condition and could have been raised as grievances or as a demand *de novo*. Within this framework, the analysis remains perfectly general.

What then are the decision implications of encountering and objecting to an unfavorable term of employment?

To the individual, the unfavorable term of employment takes the form of some activity or condition which attaches to his occupation. It is specified in a decision. The individual who carries out the occupational activity or condition is the recipient and executor of the decision. By finding the term of employment unfavorable, the individual concludes that he no longer wishes to carry out the decision. Since he is as yet unable to do anything about it, he identifies himself implicitly as a coerced formulator of the decision which he has to execute. From the viewpoint of the decision process, the discovery of an unfavorable term of employment and the raising of objections about it are tantamount to the emergence of the individual as a coerced formulator of the underlying decision.

### **What decision process underlies the formulation of a demand?**

The demand which the individual develops is an alternative decision. It specifies some other occupational activity or condition than the one currently required of the worker. Formulating it involves two analytically separable acts.

First, it involves drawing up a specification of the occupational activity or condition which is under question. This is essentially a problem solving function. It seeks to determine what alternative activity or condition will produce the needed productive result. The solution can come from any of a variety of sources, and for almost any productive problem, there is usually more than one possible alternative solution.

Second, it asserts the right of the individual to decide for himself whether or not he will execute any given decision governing the activity or condition in question. Both by objecting to the prevailing one and by figuring out an alternative, the individual worker disengages himself from compliantly accepting the given decision and exercises the right to decide that he will or will not carry out any other one. The individual thereby seeks to terminate his coerced position and to formulate his own decision about the particular subject.

It is the second of these two acts which endows the demand with the property of a decision. For by this act, the specification acquires its directive content and is put into

effect. Without it, the specification is just one of the alternative solutions to the operating problem.

In collective bargaining, the specification receives all the attention. This is indeed a necessary condition to reaching a settlement of the controversy. The bargaining issue must be formulated in the following way: does the occupational activity or condition embodied in the demand yield a productive result which satisfies the entities who want to determine the results? The decision part, while implicit, is not brought to the surface. It is assumed that the workers will execute the decision when it is settled. Moreover, the settlement can often and best be achieved by not raising the decision issue. By finding a mutually agreeable solution, both the employer and the workers do not intervene in each other's formulating function. For each has independently made the accepted decision.

Within the workers' decision system, however, the new departure which surrounds the formulation of a demand is the individual's newly asserted right to say whether or not he will continue to execute a decision to which he objects. This is simply the obverse of deciding whether he will execute a decision which he does want. Formulating a demand, -- an alternative specification--is an expression of this right, but it is not the fundamental part. In many instances, the question of what the actual specification should be is not a decision of which the individual worker is the sole recipient. Its recipients might be any larger unit of workers. Within the premises of the workers' system, therefore, the individual could not formulate an alternative specification without usurping the decision function of a larger entity. The fundamental part of the decision process inherent in formulating a demand is the individual's right to decide for himself whether or not he will execute any decision governing the particular subject. The specification embodied in the demand is entirely separable from the basic formulating right involved in the individual's action. The terminal decision governing the individual's occupational activity is embodied in his right to say yes or no to the particular decision.

What is the decision which is contained in this fundamental right? It is the decision *to designate*. The individual performs or refuses to perform the terminal activity by formulating his decision *to designate*. By formulating it, he names himself as a performer of the terminal activity. Having this decision, he is free from the coercion which imposed the unfavorable term of employment upon him. Without acquiring it, he cannot find relief from the unacceptable term of employment. Implicit therefore in formulating a demand is the individual's assertion of the right to decide his terminal decision *to designate*.

The second *to designate* was derived from the actions of the aggregate to which the initiators of the demand belonged. Returning to the world of observable events, the next step in the sequence took place when the individual workers submitted their demand to the aggregate or to their committeeman. They did so for the explicit purpose of having it negotiated with the employer. The aggregate, or the committeeman acting on its behalf, accepted the demand and transmitted it to the employer for bargaining. Within this procedure, the aggregate had only one fundamental internal decision to make. It was a decision *to designate*. The way it was derived will now be set forth.

For what internal reason did the individuals have to submit their decision to anyone? And why to the aggregate?

The individuals could not institute their decisions. If they could have, they would presumably have done so without bringing any other entity into the procedure. In many instances, individuals do institute their own decisions without securing any outside approval or acquiescence. The issue was such, in this kind of situation that they apparently could not act on their own initiative. Realistically, to do so would entail adverse consequences. From the viewpoint of the decision process, they were still the recipients of the employer's decisions. They could not individually disengage themselves from being the coerced formulators of the employer's decisions.

Why couldn't they? Because they were dependent, for their productive employment, upon a complex system of decisions. The terminal ones which they had to execute were only the final elements in a total system of decisions, many of which had larger units of recipients than the individual worker. They could only disengage themselves from the coerced formulation of terminal decisions and still remain within their complex social system of production in one of two ways: either by formulating their terminal decisions and those which preceded them, or by fitting their terminal decisions into a system which allowed them to be the uncoerced formulators. The first alternative was tantamount to becoming an employer, usurping in the process their present employer's function. The second meant adapting their decision to the only available alternative, the system being evolved by the workers themselves. While the need for protection against disciplinary action was the immediate reason for seeking outside help, it was subordinate to the decision structure of the production system as a whole. In no sense could the individuals simply disengage their terminal decisions and continue to function in their production system. They had to work under a far wider range than their own terminal decisions. Hence, they had to find a decision system which would accommodate their formulating functions.

They turned to the aggregate because it was the only available system which would be hospitable to their decision making objectives. In any kind of system, they would have to adapt their activities to the requirements of other formulating entities. Only in the workers' system could they acquire, without suffering limitations or paying a price, the formulating function over terminal decisions. This was because of the system's special premise: that the executors of a decision are its proper formulators. This system was already in existence and they were participants in it in many other ways. The aggregate was the immediate entity to which they could bring their newly evolved terminal decision.

What internal function did the aggregate have to perform, upon receiving the demand?

From the perspective of collective bargaining, the aggregate's only function was to receive the demand and bargain with the employer. It was a bargaining unit and it

served a clearing, receiving, transmitting and bargaining function. The same perspective might also accord to the aggregate a screening duty: to determine whether the demand had merit, and was bargainable, and whether it had any prospect of success. If it failed on any of these accounts, the aggregate might or might not be able to refuse the demand and decline to transmit it for bargaining to the employer. The aggregate's role in the collective bargaining process is primarily to act as a formal representative who carries on the negotiations, on the workers' behalf, with the employer. The screening function also endows it with some measures of control (and coercion) over the individuals.

From the perspective of a decision system, however, the aggregate's role takes on quite a different significance. Its internal obligation, within the procedures of the system, consisted in determining whether or not the demand conformed with other decisions of the system and whether or not it imparted any adverse effects to other members. If the demand failed on any of these accounts, the aggregate could refuse to act. Otherwise, the aggregate had no alternative but to advance it. Within these overt and conscious internal functions, what fundamental decision confronted the aggregate?

It had only one decision to make. Was the individual the unitary executor of the decision he sought to formulate? If the answer was yes, the aggregate had no other course but to designate the individual as the formulator. The questions as to whether the demand violated other rules or harmed other members of the system reduce to this sole problem. If the demand conflicted with a rule, the underlying issue could only be: does the rule itself coerce the individual into formulating a terminal decision? The same test applies to adverse effects upon others which may arise from the demand. The system cannot pass judgment upon the substance of a decision. To do so, it would arrogate to itself the formulating function. It can only resolve the problem as to whether the formulator is also the sole recipient and executor of the decision he seeks to make. Upon receiving the demand, the only fundamental internal question posed to the aggregate was whether it was formulated by its executors. Its solution to this question is a decision *to designate*. It either assigns or withholds the formulating function from the initiating individuals.

The internal structure which accompanied the formulation of the demand consisted of these two decisions *to designate*. Both in its form and by its manner of development, it corresponds to the previous two overtime decisions, *to allocate* and *to work*. When the demand was processed through the aggregate, it not only had a specific proposal to submit to the employer. It had completed an internal modification of decision structure, with all the attendant rearrangements of procedure and interior structure. The demand itself was one decision produced by the new structure. Its ultimate implementation was important, not only because it might confer some new material gain or benefit to its proponents, but because it would bring to a conclusion the complex internal processes which generated the internal decision structure.

## The Structural Crisis

The next events in this unfolding story produced a crisis inside the workers' decision system. The crisis consisted of a breakdown in the internal decision process. Specifically, it took place within the structure which was developed in connection with the substantive demand, as just described. The origin and nature of this crisis will be set forth.

The next events occurred after the collective bargaining was concluded. The aggregate had submitted its demand to the supervisor. Negotiations ensued. The supervisor's final offer was unacceptable. (Otherwise, this particular sequence would have ended happily.) The workers left the bargaining table without achieving the gain they sought nor any satisfactory substitute for it. At this juncture, there is a hiatus in the story. For the next known incident was the aggregate's refusal to allow overtime. What took place between the unsuccessful collective bargaining and the no overtime rule?

At least two happenings can be immediately inferred, and from these the interior process leading up to the crisis will be analytically derived. First, the workers neither dropped their demand nor instituted it by unilateral action. Second, the aggregate tabled the issue. It neither withdrew it, nor did it process it to a successful conclusion. Thus, even though bargaining had terminated, the demand was still very much alive among the workers. These inferences are based upon the necessities of the known events, and upon the usual patterns of action, by workers and their unions, in this kind of situation.

The following analytical steps will now be taken. First, the place and manner of impact of the supervisor's denial will be located. Thereafter, the consequences of this impact will be analyzed. Together, these will explain, by a reconstruction of the internal processes, what must have taken place within the system and how it all happened. When concluded, the internal crisis will become evident.

Where did the supervisor's denial impinge?

Clearly, it impinged in many places. The workers who initially proposed the demand must have been disappointed, for they were denied some gain or benefit which they sought. Accordingly, relations between the supervisor and his employees may have worsened. In the same vein, the workers' relations with the aggregate, the union or the committeeman may similarly have been affected, since their issue was not successfully prosecuted. The aggregate as an entity may have generated a renewed militancy against the supervisor because it was unable to win its point. These were potentially real impacts of the denial and they may have influenced the ultimate result. But none of them was a process capable of generating the decision *to permit*.

The process which actually generated it was the workers' decision system. The question raised above must therefore be focused upon this system. How did the denial impinge upon it?

The system means the structure of decisions which produced the demand. These were the two *to designate*. It cannot mean anything else, for these were the only internal apparatus which related to the demand and the denial. The system, in this sense, must be sharply differentiated from the motives, disappointments and patterns of behavior of its individual members. No matter how keen or forceful these may have been, they could only activate the system if they had some way of finding expression within its procedures, and if such expression affected the system itself. With respect to the issue at hand, the system consisted only of these two decisions *to designate*. The impact therefore must be sought in these decisions.

The supervisor's denial had no direct effect upon the aggregate's decision *to designate*. It did not specify any activity or condition which the aggregate had to execute instead of its own decision. It did not direct the aggregate to cease making its decision *to designate* or to change its particular content. It dealt solely with a terminal condition of employment. This absence of direct effect can be made fully evident by considering an exactly opposite case. Suppose the employer had agreed to the substantive demand. Would this have implied that he accepted the aggregate's decision *to designate*? Not at all. The aggregate's function in this instance applied to an internal, anterior decision, not to any terminal action. The employer's denial contained no specification one way or the other about this internal structure.

The case is different, however, in regard to the other decision *to designate*. The initiators had named themselves the formulators of this terminal decision *to designate*. The supervisor's denial superimposed itself upon this one. He required that the initiators execute his, not their own decision. This directive action was itself a decision *to designate*; the supervisor named himself instead of the initiators as the formulator of the terminal action. The denial impinged directly upon the system by setting aside the individual's decision *to designate*.

A crisis, produced wholly from within the system, then arose. The individuals, refusing to relinquish their demand, continued to press the aggregate for further action. The aggregate, having already been unsuccessful in the negotiations, could not satisfy the demands of its members. This way of describing the crisis indicates the forces, which were operative within the system, but it does not adequately portray the precise elements of the crisis. To achieve an exact statement, it afforded the system a means of withstanding the impact of the crisis, and of meeting the problems which arose internally.

To establish the relevance of this *to permit* to the internal crisis, it is first necessary to identify the exact problem which confronted the system at this juncture.

The internal problem was not: how can the demand be obtained? While this was the overall objective of the individuals and the aggregate, it was no longer the critical issue. It could not be obtained; if it could have, there would have been no internal crisis. The crisis arose out of this fact and had to be dealt with separately. Restated in decision terms, the problem did not consist in finding a way to implement the two *to designate*. This was demonstrably impossible under the circumstances.

The critical internal problem was: how can the decision *to limit* be eliminated? This was the essence of the structural crisis. Both the individuals and the aggregate were confronted with this fact. Neither entity could allow this decision to stand, for it jeopardized the decision system itself. A way had to be found to get rid of it. But how?

There was only one available way. It was to terminate all decision making by the system, by individuals as well as larger entities, and thereby include also this decision *to limit*. This was the only way because the decision *to limit* could not be stopped by itself. This could only happen by executing the two *to designate*s. Since this was impossible, these forces must be analyzed in the language of the decision process.

By refusing to relinquish their demand, the individuals identified themselves as coerced formulators of their decision *to designate*. This, however, was a violation of the system's internal structure, for it had already designated the individual workers (in this case and presumably in all ensuing ones of the same kind) as the formulators of the decision at issue. By continuing to act as coerced formulators, therefore, the individuals rejected and refused to execute the aggregate's decision. Their refusal, as a consequence, embodied a new internal decision. It was a decision *to limit* imposed upon the aggregate. It arose because the individuals terminated the aggregate's formulating function in respect to its decision *to designate*.

Summarized, the crisis had these elements. The two *to designate*s failed to be executed, thereby threatening the internal structure with destruction. In their stead, a new decision *to limit* was instituted by the individuals against their aggregate.

### **Resolution of the Crisis**

It will now be shown that the decision *to permit* provided a means--the only available one in the circumstance--for resolving the internal structural crisis. This *to permit*, it will be remembered, was a decision *to limit*. In this form, the only alternative was to terminate all decision making. The logical consequence of this internal impasse was a strike, which is the workers' way of stopping all decision formulating. There are countless instances in which strikes have occurred in these circumstances. While they occur presumably over unresolved disputes about demands, the suggestion is advanced here that they arise from the internal need, depicted in this discussion, to terminate all internal decision making as a means of overcoming a decision *to limit* within the system. In the present context, simply as a necessary consequence of the structural problem, the only possible way of coping with the decision *to limit* was by superimposing a superior one.

Under the particular circumstances of this issue, a strike was not possible. The reasons were given earlier in this discussion. The workers discovered a substitute for it. They made a superior decision *to limit* which governed all formulating functions during potential hours of work, which were not covered by the no strike clause: the hours of overtime. The second *to permit* served this distinctive purpose.

## **The Theory of the Second To Permit An Appraisal**

The explanation just concluded has several distinguishing characteristics. As a theory of the rise and use of the second *to permit*, it is based upon a reconstruction of the decision structure which processed the workers' substantive demand. In this theory, *to permit* is an internal decision. It is evoked by the internal needs of the system--the need to overcome the decision *to limit* imposed by the individuals upon their aggregate. Even more noticeable, the theory does not utilize, for explaining the decision, some of its apparently salient characteristics. It does not use the economic effects of curtailing overtime, nor their coercive impact upon the employer. It excludes, as an objective of the decision, the effort to wrest any concessions in respect to the denied demand. Quite to the contrary, this explanation confines *to permit* its origins, determinants, and effects--to the internal decision making process.

Does such a theory adequately account for the decision?

To appraise the theory, it will be examined in respect to two fundamental conditions which govern the use and implementation of the decision to permit overtime. The first condition pertains to the function of the decision. When workers curtailed overtime, what consequences did they take into account and seek to attain? The second concerns the immediate circumstances which impelled them to invoke the decision. What events made them formulate it, both when they stopped the overtime and later when they again permitted it to occur? To both questions, the theory provides its answers and, as suggested above, eschews others. The appraisal will consist in determining whether the theory furnishes an uncontradicted explanation of the decision, and at the same time, a more efficient one than any others which are presently available.

### **The Function of the Decision**

What was *to permit* supposed to achieve?

Some of the informants, in the present inquiry, had a ready answer. It was supposed to put pressure upon the employer to grant the concessions which they sought. This explanation coincides with a very general and widely held theory about organized workers in relation to the employer. In this theory, the function of *to permit* was to coerce the employer to adopt the desired line of conduct.

The coercive function ascribed to *permit* rests upon two basic theoretical propositions. The first is a model of the consequences of the decision and their impact. In this model, the decision, by its economic effect upon the employer, confronts him with a choice of economic alternatives: to suffer the cost of no overtime or the cost of granting the concession. The employer, according to the model, would be forced by this inescapable choice to select the one which optimized the position of the enterprise. The



distinguishing features of this model are its utilization of the economic consequences of the decision and their impact upon the employer. These consequences and the response, which they compel the employer to make, are wholly dissociated from any decision-making process or relationship. They operate impersonally by imposing objective conditions to which the employer must adjust in the interest of optimizing the performance of the enterprise. The second of the two propositions upon which the coercive function rests is that these economic consequences for the employer were capable of determining the decisions of the workers' system.

The analysis which will now be undertaken seeks to establish three conclusions about the function of the decision. First, it will show that the economic consequences of *to permit* could not have been a determining factor in the workers' formulation of the decision. Second, it will demonstrate that the significant effects upon the employer which evoked the choice between no overtime and the concession were those which governed his decision-making functions. Third, it will be argued that this choice was not a determinant of the workers' decision. The ultimate result of this analysis will be that the more efficient of the two theories of the second *to permit* is the one which was developed in the preceding section.

What were the economic consequences of withholding overtime?

Its direct economic consequences occurred in two places. The first was the enterprise. By withholding man-hours, the decision forced a reduction in the scale of operations of the enterprise below the level which provided it with the optimum relationship between its costs and anticipated revenues. The enterprise itself sustained the economic effects of no overtime. Any losses arising from this decision were registered on its accounts. Its cost structure had to be adjusted to the new conditions imposed by the choice between the two alternatives.

Adhering strictly to the direct economic consequences of *to permit*, the employer--meaning the individuals in management who had to decide about the demand--were unaffected. Clearly, they did not have to pay out any of the extra costs or receive a lower net revenue from operations. Their individual incomes presumably continued to accrue from the enterprise during the period of the curtailment. It is therefore entirely proper to assert that they, as individuals, were not at all affected by the direct economic consequences of *to permit*.

The second area of economic effect was the same workers who made the decision. By refusing to work overtime--or to work at all, in the case of a strike--the workers cut themselves off from man-hours of work, and at premium rates. This blunt reality is often evaded by the heuristic argument that the workers presumably would gain more from obtaining their demand than they lose by not working. There are two fundamental weaknesses in this argument. The first is that the workers who might gain from the concession are not necessarily the same as those who take part in the curtailment; they may in fact be only a small part of the participating workers. Second, if the gains and losses are calculated in straightforward economic or monetary terms, the argument

becomes sensible only by extending the gains over a long period of time. Newspaper editorials frequently observe, during a protracted strike, that the workers will have to receive substantial gains for a long time if they are to make up the losses they incurred in wages. The plain logic in this evaluation is incontestable, and it is known by workers, too. Strictly from an economic calculus, they are the most direct sufferers from the economic consequences of their own decision.

There are also many secondary economic effects from the decision *to permit*, of which two will be identified. The employer, comprising the individuals who make up the management, sustained only a derivative effect from the curtailment. Its occurrence, together with all the other related factors in the situation, might reflect adversely upon their performance as managers. In this sense, any given individual might conceivably suffer some unfavorable personal consequences. But these are not a necessary outcome of the workers actions. Nor does this outcome, when it occurs, arise directly from the economic effects upon the enterprise. There is an intervening process which is of controlling importance and which will be considered shortly among the non-economic effects of *to permit*.

The secondary sufferers from the indirect economic effects are again the workers themselves. To the degree that their decision adversely affected the economic position of the enterprise, they too were hurt by it. This might not have been an immediately perceptible outcome of their decision. But it cannot be denied that the ability of an enterprise to furnish employment, pay wages and grant wage increases depends upon the relationship of its costs to its revenues. Whether the workers like to acknowledge this factor or not, it is an undeniable characteristic of industrial enterprise. They cannot escape these indirect consequences to themselves which accrue from their decisions. This does not mean that every such curtailment causes a worsening of the firm's position, or that in the long run, through offsetting actions, it might not come out better off. All that is intended in these observations is to assert that workers sustained possible adverse economic consequences as one of the derivative effects of their decision *to permit*.

From this analysis, the conclusion is drawn that the workers could not have formulated *to permit*, as a recurrent part of their decision structure, on the basis of its economic effects upon the employer. Individuals among them might have argued for this basis of the decision. Indeed, the argument might have proved convincing to a majority among those who had to reach a decision. But despite this, the economic effects upon the employer could not serve as a rational, viable and systematic basis upon which the system could continue to decide *to permit*. The reasons for this conclusion are drawn strictly from the results of the preceding analysis.

First, purely as an economic undertaking, the decision would not produce a secure net gain for the workers. Their losses, as the most direct sufferers from the curtailment could easily exceed the worth of their gains within any reasonable period of calculating a balance. In some cases, the losers among the workers would even be different individuals from those who gained by the concession. Therefore, a decision on this basis would make little economic sense. Second, the critical knowledge, which would be

required to take such an economic gamble, would necessarily not be available to the workers. The success of the strategy depended upon the exact way in which the curtailment affected the balance between costs and revenues. It might have no effect at all, or it might be insufficient to justify the granting of their demand. As a strategy, the decision on this basis would have no calculable prospect of success. Third, if the controversy is defined as an economic contest between the workers and the individuals empowered to choose between the concession and no overtime, it was an unequal one greatly to the disadvantage of the workers. For the individual management officials had greater resources and suffered no direct personal losses, while the workers cut themselves off from their source of income. In a war of economic attrition, the advantages clearly rest with the employer.

This conclusion and the arguments upon which it is based have a narrow and sharply defined range of application. They deal only with the economic implications of *to permit* as they affected the employer. Within these limits, the assertion is made that the workers could not have decided *to permit* on a systematic and continuing basis as a coercive strategy against the employer.

### **The Impact on Decision Making**

*To permit* affected the employer primarily in relation to his decision making function. It was pointed out above that the employer sustained indirect economic effects from the decision because it might reflect adversely upon the performance of management. How would this adverse reflection arise? The economic argument contends that it would arise because the cost structure of the enterprise would worsen under the impact of the workers' curtailment of overtime or their demand. It is at least questionable as to whether this is the source of the judgment about the employer's performance. For one thing, cost impacts within the interior of a firm are not easy to locate. For another, even when located, they cannot necessarily be ascribed to the performance of any single member of management, especially where managerial responsibilities are highly subdivided as in modern industry. For still another, even when they are located and assigned to a particular individual, cost effects which arise from actions of the work force cannot altogether be blamed upon him, because to a large extent, they may be out of his control. These assertions do not deny that an adverse judgment might arise from cost considerations; they merely hold that the reflection upon performance will be of varying degrees of indistinctness. From the viewpoint of managerial performance, there is a more direct basis of judgment arising from the workers' demand and the decision *to permit*.

A supervisor who cannot obtain overtime from his employees gives evidence of being unable to exercise the control and leadership required by the enterprise. To the supervisor, this is the immediate impact of *to permit*, for it forms a direct basis upon which his competence can be evaluated. It is more critical, too, to the enterprise than the cost impacts of *to permit*, because the continuing operation of the enterprise depends wholly upon the ability of its management to obtain from the employees their participation in production. An adverse Judgment about the individual supervisor is not a

necessary result of this kind of situation. There may be recognition among his superiors that the determining ingredients were beyond his control, or that he had to act as he did in defense of his own managerial function. There are also many internal protective devices which would prevent an adverse judgment being made against the supervisor. All that needs to be inferred is that *to permit* affects the employer most clearly and directly in the very act which it set out to accomplish--the curtailment of overtime work.

Why is this so critical?

Because it affects the decision making function of the employer. The failure of the supervisor to obtain the overtime means that his employees do not accept and execute his decisions. This is a repudiation of his basic function, the one for which he is hired, retained, compensated and promoted within the enterprise. When the employees cease accepting and executing the employer's decisions, his decision making function in the enterprise is no longer effective. The curtailment of overtime had a critical impact upon the employer because, in its own way, it placed his decision system in jeopardy. Further to this, in a certain sense the individual supervisor's security against an adverse judgment about himself depends upon bringing the employer's decision system to this state of jeopardy. If his incompetence can be blamed for the curtailment of overtime, he alone will suffer the indirect consequences of *to permit*. If, however, he can demonstrate that his actions were a bastion of the employer's system, protecting it from the encroachments of the workforce, the same event can be interpreted in his favor. The inner dynamics of the employer's function impel the individual manager to draw the dispute with his employees to the limits of the decision making function.

The direct effects of *to permit* upon the employer are identified by its impact upon the decision making function. In this domain, rather than in its economic consequences, the decision compelled an immediate occupational response on the part of the employer. It did so because it terminated the sole content of the employer's occupation, decision making.

Was this then the function of *to permit*, to coerce the employer by terminating his decision-making?

The issue posed by this question turns upon the final element in defining the function of *to permit*. The effects upon the employer, as just described, were precisely the consequences which arose from the decision--a termination of the formulating function. The final problem, as suggested in the question, is this: Was the decision motivated by its effects upon the employer's or the workers decision making? The difference between the two theories under examination resolves ultimately into this one issue. The coercive theory holds that it was formulated with respect to its effects upon the employer. The decision theory claims that it was determined by its internal effects.

There are three reasons for the conclusion that the function was wholly internal. The first is a methodical reason. If the two theories were, on all other grounds, equally tenable, then the internal one would be preferable because it requires the fewer number of

assumptions. Even though it appears to be the more complicated of the two, it is, from the viewpoint of the underlying hypotheses, the simpler. It does not require any assumptions as to the workers' knowledge, perception, concern for, or objectives in any sphere outside their immediate occupational organization and the forces and pressures which they experience there. The coercive theory, on the contrary, requires assumptions about all these things, and in addition, about the employer function. To explain the decision *to permit*, it is not necessary to import anything into the workers' system other than the operating conditions of the system itself. Therefore, as a theory, it is preferable to the coercive theory on strictly methodological grounds.

The second reason is analytical. The internal theory makes *to permit* a necessary outcome of the process which produced the decision. It ascribes to the decision a functional, logical role within the process which produced it. Given the process itself, the decision satisfied its requirements. The coercive theory, on the other hand, lacks a coherent process explaining its formulation within the system. Moreover, it contradicts one of the premises of the system as set forth in earlier analysis. The system was shown to extend and operate by assigning the function of formulating decisions to the recipients. The process by which this takes place excludes a pursuit of the employer's functions. The employer is affected only as a by-product of the workers' development of their own decision structure, not as the target of their extension process. The coercive theory is rejected therefore because it involves a deep-rooted contradiction of the way in which the workers' decision system operates. On these analytical grounds, the decision theory provides a coherent explanation of the function of *to permit*.

The third reason favoring the internal function of *to permit* stems from very practical grounds. The actual formulation of the decision was governed by internal considerations. These pertain to the immediate events which compelled the workers to decide to curtail overtime. The elaboration of this reason will be given in the section immediately following.

### **The Immediate Circumstances of the Decision**

When the procedure for appraising the theory was set forth earlier in this section, the second of the two matters to be analyzed was identified as the circumstances which impelled the workers to formulate the decision. These circumstances related to the two times in which it had to be formulated: when the curtailment was first imposed, and later when it was lifted. The decision theory claims that it was governed by the occurrence and liquidation of the internal crisis; specifically, by the imposition and ultimate removal of the individual's decision *to limit* against the aggregate. The coercive theory, ascribing to the decision an external function, locates the causal factor in the employer's action; specifically, in the denial of the demand and in its ultimate concession. The practical problems surrounding the application of the decision reduces therefore to a single question. What produced *to permit*, the employer's actions or the decision *to limit*?

The assertion that the employer's action did not produce the decision is based upon the sequence of events which led up to it. Between the denial of the demand and

the formulation of *to permit*, there existed a wholly internal, autonomous and optional act on the part of the individual workers. They could have acceded to the employer's denial, or they could have informed the aggregate that they no longer wished to prosecute the issue. If either of these had taken place, *to permit* would not have arisen. Further, the only basis upon which the decision could have been taken was the voluntary and self-determined option of the individuals not to accept the denial, and their insistence to the aggregate that the demand be pressed further. The denial was a necessary condition for the decision, but it was not sufficient. In the same sense, the original demand was a necessary condition for the employer's denial, but it was not sufficient to determine the employer's decision to refuse it. The chain of such necessary conditions extends back to infinity. This chain could have stopped at the point of the initiators of the demand. Theirs was both the necessary and sufficient condition to produce the decision *to permit*.

Nor did the subsequent lifting of the curtailment depend upon a concession by the employer. The individuals could have withdrawn their demand, thereby relieving the aggregate of the need for prosecuting it further. Or the aggregate itself, for other internal reasons, could have revoked the curtailment. The concession would also have removed the need for stopping the overtime, but it was only one among many other possible events which could have produced the same result without the concession having been made. The concession, this time, was a sufficient but not a necessary condition for the removal of *to permit*.

The case against the employer's actions as a determinant of *to permit* is based upon the conclusion that they were not both necessary and sufficient conditions for the workers' decision. The denial was a necessary but insufficient cause of the curtailment, while the concession was sufficient but not necessary to its liquidation. Within these two limitations, the workers' decisions about overtime could have been made both with or without reference to the employer's treatment of their demand. This however leaves a very wide gap in the process which interrelates the employer's actions with the workers' decisions. This gap in the process is filled by the decision theory.

The claim that the structural crisis produced the decision is based upon the inference that the system had to liquidate this crisis as the price of its survival. The analysis showed that a crisis was precipitated when the individual members of the system formulated de facto a decision *to limit* against the aggregate. The voluntary and optional acts of the individuals, as described above, were the ones which produced the crisis, and which later could have liquidated it. The only question, which can be raised about this claim, is: was the crisis of controlling importance to the system and to its consequent actions?

The importance of such a crisis resides, in general, in one consequence. It raises the question of the adherence of the workers to their system of decision-making. Not only was this question raised, a destructive answer was already being put into effect. The individuals had a choice: whose decision *to designate* should they accept and execute? By accepting the employer's, they disengaged themselves from their own system. The importance of this action to the system is derived from generalizations about the decision

making process of this and other systems. A decision system can only survive so long as its decisions are accepted and executed. This was more critically true, in the present instance, of the workers, than of the employer's system, for two reasons. First, the employer had a much larger range of decisions upon which the workers were still dependent; his total decision function was therefore not jeopardized by the disengagement of an additional terminal decision. Second, the workers' system as a whole cannot survive unless it receives the continuous, voluntary adherence of its members. The refusal of the members to accept and execute the decisions of the aggregate jeopardized the survival of the system.

Could such a threat arise from a single issue? And could any particular issue put the system in jeopardy? Any specific issue which produced the sequence of actions resulting in a curtailment of overtime can only be judged as critical to the system. Otherwise, for an entirely different set of internal reasons, the members and the aggregate would find themselves easily persuaded not to press the decision any further. The crisis could arise and yield the ultimate result only if it called into question the effectiveness of the system. There are doubtless many cases where workers withdraw their decisions, and therefore the curtailment of overtime does not occur. The question as to what kind of issue will produce such a crisis cannot be answered. It is however probable that the issue itself is not the determinant of the crisis. More likely, it is the exigencies of the system itself, the claims of its members, and the internally generated needs for implementing some particular decision which determines whether a structural crisis will arise.

## **Summary**

The second *to permit* was developed by the workers' system as an instrument for terminating its internal decision making function. The foregoing analysis set forth the process by which the decision was produced. This process is a general one, applicable to the variety of circumstances under which the decision was made and to its recurrent use in the history of *to permit*. The appraisal just concluded subsequent has shown that the process and the decision were internal, governed by forces and problems within the system, and fulfilling the requirements of the internal decision structure.