

MANAGEMENT AND THE WORKER

The two large circles demarcate the two cliques, A and B. There were three individuals, I_3 , W_6 , and S_2 , who were clearly outside either clique.¹ The line around W_4 has been made to intersect that of clique B to indicate his partial participation in it. The instability of W_2 's position is indicated by the broken circle around his number.

That the members of clique A regarded themselves as superior to clique B was indicated in many ways. Clique A did or refrained from doing certain things which were done by clique B. They did not trade jobs nearly so much, and on the whole they did not enter into the controversies about the windows. Clique A engaged in games of chance, whereas clique B engaged more often in "binging." Both groups purchased candy from the Club store, but purchases were made separately and neither clique shared with the other. Clique A bought chocolate candy in small quantities, whereas clique B bought a less expensive kind in such large quantities that W_6 one time became ill from eating too much. Clique A argued more and indulged in less noise and horseplay than clique B. The members of clique A felt that their conversations were on a higher plane than those which went on in clique B; as W_4 said, "We talk about things of some importance."

¹ Perhaps a word of caution is necessary here. When it is said that this group was divided into two cliques and that certain people were outside either clique, it does not mean that there was no solidarity between the two cliques or between the cliques and the outsiders. There is always the danger, in examining small groups intensively, of overemphasizing differentiating factors. Internal solidarity thus appears to be lacking. That this group, as a whole, did have very strong sentiments in common has already been shown in discussing their attitudes toward output and will be brought out more clearly in the next chapters. It should also be said that position in the group is not so static as one might assume from this diagram. Had the study continued longer, membership in the cliques might have shifted. Also, if the group had been larger, or if the group had been allowed to remain in the regular department, it is quite probable that the people who appear to be outsiders here would have formed cliques with others who had similar sentiments.

2 THE WORKER, 1939

CHAPTER XXII

SOCIAL CONTROL OF WORK BEHAVIOR

THE PURPOSE of this and the next chapter will be to consider the many unanswered questions raised in the preceding chapters, questions which could not be discussed adequately until all the data had been presented. It is necessary for clarity to keep separate two points of view. Any group can be regarded: (1) as a collectivity in and by itself, with certain internal functions; and (2) as a unit in a wider organization, with certain external functions. In other words, a group can be considered either from the point of view of its "internal function" or from the point of view of its "external function." These distinctions are useful in that they allow one to confine attention to one body of data at a time and to proceed in an orderly fashion.

In this chapter, the observation group will be considered from the point of view of its internal function. It has been shown that the fourteen men were organized into two cliques. Two questions can now be asked: (1) What factors determined clique membership? (2) What was the function of this clique structure for its members?

In the following chapter the group will be considered from the point of view of its external function. The questions are: (1) What external factors gave rise to the situation described in the observation room? (2) How did this type of informal organization function in relation to the total company organization?

The Group's Internal Organization and Spatial Relations

In examining the way the fourteen men in the observation room were grouped together, the first suggestion that comes to mind is that perhaps their formation into cliques simply resulted from spatial relations. It will be well, therefore, to consider this as a possible explanation at the outset. The spatial relations of the men were roughly as indicated in Figure 45. An accurate picture of the spacing of the work positions assigned to the wiremen may be obtained by turning back to Figure 34. Three explanations might be offered from this point of view: (1) The soldering unit was the social unit. (2) The inspection unit was the social unit. (3) Mere spatial proximity was the deciding factor. Each of these will be considered in turn.

The operators were divided into soldering units, each of which consisted of three wiremen and one solderman. There were three such units in the observation room. They are shown in Figure 45 by the three rectangles. Several factors make plausible the explanation that the soldering unit was the social unit. One is the fact that some of the operators spoke of the soldering unit as being the "natural" unit. The very nature of their work might tend to draw the people in each unit together, for it was necessary that the three wiremen arrange their work so as not to delay the solderman, and vice versa. Furthermore, the solderman was constantly circulating among the people within his unit and could carry conversation from one to another. It is apparent that from a technical standpoint the soldering unit should have been the social unit, and theoretically there was every reason to believe that it might be.

Looking now at Figure 45, it will be seen that the men did in fact tend to organize in this way. Clique A centered around soldering unit A, and clique B consisted of soldering unit C. But soldering unit B did not form a separate clique. This unit disrupted: W_4 was assimilated into clique A and W_6 tended to gravitate toward clique B, leaving W_8 and S_2 outside either clique. In order to hold, therefore, this interpretation must provide a plausible explanation for the disruption of soldering unit B.

Such an explanation might be based on the sociology of numerical relations. The argument might run as follows: Each unit consisted of four members, but in unit B the solderman, S_2 , was so handicapped by his speech difficulty that his effectiveness as a social being was virtually zero. In other words, it might be argued that unit B, from a sociological standpoint, consisted of three members instead of four. Now it is claimed by some sociologists that triadic relations are exceptionally unstable.¹ The tendency is for a pair to separate out in opposition to the third member. This, then, might be one explanation for the instability of soldering unit B. It does not, however, account for the fact that instead of forming a pair, W_4 gravitated toward clique A and W_6 gravitated toward clique B. It is not, therefore, an entirely satisfactory explanation.

Let us next consider the plausibility of the second hypothesis, that the inspection unit was the social unit. The two inspectors in the room divided the inspection work equally between them. I_1 inspected the work of W_1 , W_2 , W_3 , W_4 , S_1 , and half of that of W_5 and S_2 . I_3 inspected the other half of the work of W_5 and S_2 and all that of W_6 .

¹ Spykman, N. J., op. cit., pp. 133-135.

W_1 , W_6 , W_8 , and S_4 . The two people not completely within an inspection unit were W_5 and S_2 , whose work was divided between the two inspectors. According to this theory, soldering unit B disrupted because part of it was in one inspection unit and part of it in the other. W_4 was assimilated in clique A because he was in I_1 's inspection unit and W_6 gravitated toward clique B because he was in I_3 's inspection unit. W_5 and S_2 were excluded from both cliques because the division of their work between I_1 and I_3 placed them half in and half out of each inspection unit. This explanation, however, fails to account for the exclusion of W_2 from clique A and of I_3 from clique B. Beyond these two exceptions it does provide a fairly good explanation.

The third suggestion to be considered is that membership in either clique depended upon whether or not the operators happened to be working in adjacent positions. The members of each clique were in fact spatially contiguous. This, for example, would account for W_6 's tendency to participate in clique B instead of in clique A. It would also explain why W_4 was included in clique A. It does not, however, provide a satisfactory explanation for the exclusion of W_2 , W_5 , or I_3 . Neither does it explain why the dividing line between the two cliques occurred where it did.

All the above explanations — there may be others — are based upon spatial relations. The difficulty with them is that they do not take into account the nature of the individual's participation. For example, it may be true that triadic relations are very unstable, but that does not explain why a certain two of the three people concerned form a pair in opposition to the third. In dealing with small groups such particularities are very important and cannot be ignored. Furthermore, and of chief importance, the concept of spatial relations fails to get at the underlying uniformities in the behavior of the members of the group.

Although not a satisfactory explanation of clique membership, the spatial situation was a significant factor in connection with the relation between the two cliques. Clique A was in the front of the room and clique B was in the back of the room. Thus the spacing of the cliques suggested the superior-subordinate relation which in fact existed between the two cliques.

The Relation between Position in the Group and Occupation

One of the significant points brought out in the preceding chapter was the fact that the members of the observation group were socially stratified on the basis of occupation. Their ranking, from top to bottom, was: inspector, connector wireman, selector wireman, solder-

man, and trucker. The second point brought out in that chapter was that instead of forming occupational cliques, as one would have expected, their association was as represented in Figure 45. The cliques actually formed tended to cut across occupational lines. In Chapter XXI these two observations were merely stated as findings, and no attempt was made to show the relation of the one to the other. Let us therefore begin this analysis by attempting to see how occupational stratification was related to clique membership.

Examining the internal organization of the group from this point of view, it will be seen that there was some correspondence between occupation and position in the group. This undoubtedly accounted for the position held by the trucker. He was relegated to the most subordinate position in the room, not because of any personal characteristic but simply because he was a trucker. This, incidentally, suggests the strength of the sentiments attaching to jobs. This same factor accounted, in part at least, for membership in cliques A and B. There were no selector wiremen in clique A. The three selector wiremen who were in the room were shunted off by themselves. An internal solidarity developed among them and they formed the nucleus of clique B. It seemed probable, therefore, that occupation was one of the factors entering into the determination of position in the group.

At this point an objection might be raised. If occupational status precluded the possibility of a selector wireman's becoming a member of clique A, how does it happen that S_1 , whose occupational status was even lower than that of a selector wireman, became a member of that clique? The answer lies in the fact that the soldermen were subordinated to the wiremen in a way quite different from that in which the selector wiremen were subordinated to the connector wiremen. The soldermen served the wiremen, but there was no such relation between the two classes of wiremen. The position of connector wireman was in no sense jeopardized by the inclusion of S_1 in clique A. He was included not as an equal but as a subordinate whose position was well defined and accepted. He not only traded jobs with connector wiremen when asked, but he also got their lunches and tried to get good wire for them when requested to do so. In other words, S_1 's behavior was in accord with the sentiments of the connector wiremen with respect to the occupational position he held, and he was therefore acceptable to them. Selector wiremen could not be included in clique A without destroying the social value of the connector wiring job, that is, placing it on a par with selector wiring. It might be added that although the inclusion of S_1 in clique A did not affect the prestige of connector

wiring, it did have an effect upon S_1 's standing as a solderman. It very definitely elevated him above the other two soldermen in the room and gave him an informal status approximately equal to that of the selector wiremen. This was indicated in two different ways. In the first place, he demonstrated his superiority to S_4 by passing the job of getting lunches for the group on to him, by asking him to file his irons, and by telling him that he was an inferior solderman. In the second place, his equality with the selector wiremen was suggested by the fact that he was very friendly with W_7 and spent a good deal of his spare time mingling with clique B. It may be concluded from this that the social standing of the soldermen was determined in large part by the status of the wiremen whom they served.

Was there any relation between the informal position of the inspectors in the group and their occupation? At first glance it would seem not. I_1 became a member of clique A and the other inspector, I_3 , was eventually ousted from the department. Yet this apparent contradiction is explainable in terms of the attitudes of the operators toward the job of inspection. Among themselves the operators desired occupational differentiation, but their attitude toward the inspectors was quite different. They acted as though they wanted to reduce the social distance between themselves and the inspectors. This attitude was probably attributable to the fact that the inspectors were outsiders and were superordinate to them.

The relation between inspector and operator was fundamentally one of antagonism or opposition. The inspector could, if he chose, exercise considerable power over the operators. By marking up a large number of defects he could ruin a solderman's quality rating, and by being too meticulous in his inspecting he could become a source of irritation to wiremen and soldermen alike. The operators, of course, were well aware of the fact that an unfriendly inspector could make things difficult for them. What they wanted was a man who would work along with them and keep their interests as well as his own in mind.

The positions assigned to I_1 and I_3 in the group can only be explained by examining their overt behavior in relation to the sentiments of the operators. Entries in the observer's record indicate that nearly everything I_1 did served to lessen the social distance between himself and the operators. He, in effect, relinquished the status which his job conferred upon him and became one of the group. He conducted himself as one of them, entering into their games, arguments, and informal activities. His behavior, in other words, was in accord with the senti-

ments of the operators. This was brought out clearly by the fact that he sometimes called their attention to defects without charging them against them. This was something no inspector was supposed to do. By resorting to this practice at the risk of penalty, I_1 showed the operators that he shared their sentiments. Many of his other activities, such as siding with them against his colleague, I_3 , and keeping them informed about what was going on outside the department, also served to integrate him with the group. The strength of the position he achieved is indicated by the fact that he could absent himself from the room without fear of being charged with daywork.

On the other hand, I_3 's behavior served to increase rather than decrease the natural antagonism of the operators. In his conduct he constantly emphasized the fact that he was an inspector. He tended to remain aloof from the group. When he did participate in its activities, he usually did so in the role of one possessing superior knowledge. The facts that he was older than the others, that he was better educated than they, and that he was of a different nationality were no doubt contributory factors. If he had tried to identify himself with the group, he would probably have found it more difficult than I_1 did. But his personal characteristics were not an insurmountable obstacle; they assumed significance largely through the fact that he was an inspector. Had he been a wireman, it is quite certain that he would have been treated differently. It follows from this that the position of the inspectors was determined by the relation of their behavior to the sentiments the group held with respect to the inspection job. I_1 's behavior was in accord with those sentiments and he was regarded favorably; I_3 's behavior was not in accord with those sentiments and he was ousted by means of the social process previously described.

It may be concluded that occupational status was one of the important factors entering into the determination of the individual's position in the group. The trucker did not belong to either clique. The selector wiremen belonged to clique B but not to clique A. It is doubtful if a selector wireman could have become a bona fide member of clique A because these cliques apparently functioned, in part, to emphasize the difference between connector and selector wiremen. That occupation was only one factor is shown by the fact that all the connector wiremen were not included in clique A. Some other factor must have accounted for the exclusion of the outsiders. Let us, therefore, turn to output and investigate its bearing upon position in the group.

The Relation between Position in the Group and Output

At the end of Chapter XVIII, certain puzzling questions were raised concerning the output of this group. These questions were of the following order: Why did W_3 and W_6 report less output than they produced, and why did they claim less daywork than they were entitled to? Why did W_2 , who ranked higher in output than W_3 or W_6 , report more output than he produced, and why did he claim more daywork than he was entitled to? Finally, what accounted for the relative ranking of these operators in average hourly output? If these differences in rank were not related to differences in capacity to perform, as measured by tests of intelligence and dexterity, what were they related to? More particularly, why did W_7 , W_8 , and W_9 , who ranked relatively high in the aptitude tests, continue to produce at a low level even though they were thereby lowering their own earnings and those of their associates?

In answering these questions, considerable reference will be made to differences in the performance of the various wiremen. Figure 46 has been constructed to facilitate comparisons and also to show the relation between performance and position in the group. The internal organization of the group is shown at the top of the diagram. At the bottom of the diagram, directly under each wireman's number, is shown the relative size of (1) his average hourly output, (2) the difference between his reported and actual outputs, and (3) the amount of daywork allowance claimed. The geometric figures are drawn in proportion to the size of each person's rating. The broken circles under W_3 and W_6 indicate that their actual output exceeded their reported output.

In considering the output of the members of the group it is necessary, first of all, to recall their general attitude toward output. It has been shown that the official "bogy" meant nothing to the operators. In its stead they had an informal standard of a day's work which functioned for the group as a norm of conduct, as a social code. They felt that it was wrong to exceed this standard.

W_3 and W_6 in refraining from reporting all the work they produced were expressing their adherence to this code. Both of these men were good workers and both of them liked to work. Occasionally they produced too much, but instead of reporting all their output, which would have affected their standing in the group, they refrained from doing so. The fact that they claimed less daywork than they could have is explainable in the same terms. If they had claimed the daywork they

were entitled to, they would have raised their reported average hourly output too high. Their adherence to the group standard also accounts for their remarkably constant output rate. As can be seen in Figure

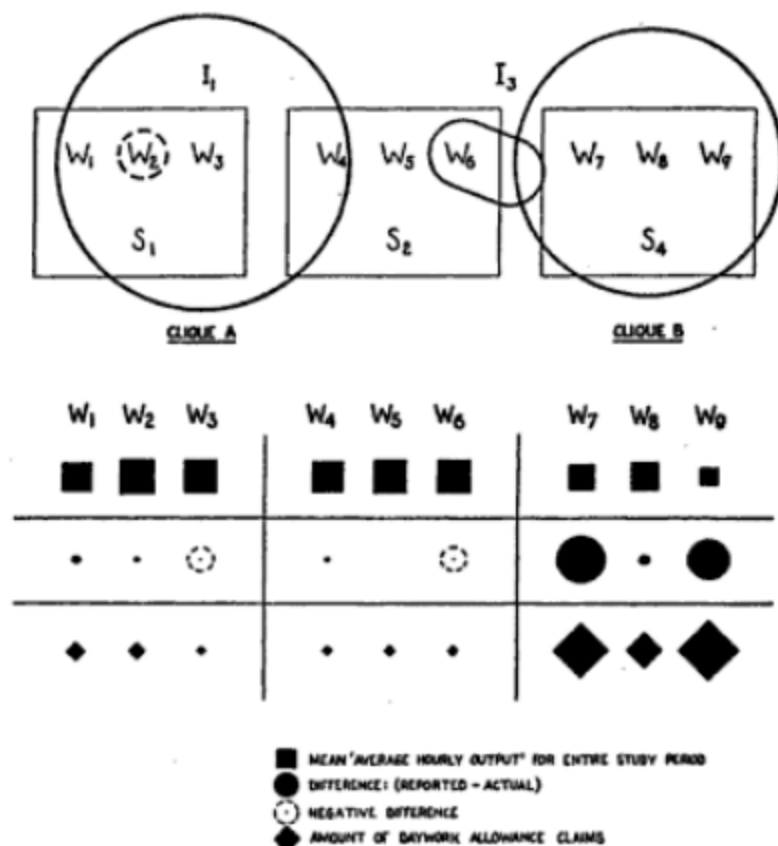


FIGURE 46

THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF THE GROUP AND OUTPUT
BANK WIRING OBSERVATION ROOM

36, both of these men kept their reported output rate almost exactly on the line representing the day's work.

But here an apparent contradiction arises. Why, it might be asked, if these two men were so mindful of the group's sentiments regarding output, did they not occupy the same position in the group? W_3 was a member of clique A and was the best-liked person in the group,

whereas W_6 was excluded from clique A and tended to associate with clique B. Unlike W_3 , W_6 was subjected to sarcasm and ridicule and given such nicknames as "Runt" and "Shrimp." This was in spite of the fact that he conformed to the output standards of the group and helped more people than anyone else in the group. What, then, accounts for this apparent contradiction? The answer is that output, like occupational status, was not the only determinant of position in the group. One of the things which made W_6 objectionable to clique A was his irrepressible tendency to "horse around." Moreover, he had no compunctions about telling another person what he thought of him. Of still more importance, however, was his striving for leadership of the group. This was an honor no one was willing to confer upon him; yet he persisted in attempting to achieve it. The result was that he became a constant source of irritation. W_6 , in other words, conformed to the group's sentiments attaching to output but violated those attaching to personal conduct. This was reflected in the position assigned him in the group, which was by no means an unfavorable one. He got along with everyone fairly well. It is quite likely that his adherence to the group's rules of output served to sustain him in the eyes of his associates. The sentiments he violated were much weaker than those attaching to output.

Let us next examine the relation between W_2 's position in the group and his output. W_2 , as interviews with him indicated, was not the type of person to conform to another's wishes. He was hard, enigmatic, self-reliant, and entered very little into relations with other people. In the observation room he tended to isolate himself, and his attitude toward his associates was one of mild contempt. This found expression in his output. By keeping his output high, he was expressing his disregard for the sentiments of the group. He knew he was doing something the others disliked and commented on it in his interviews. "They don't like me to turn out so much," he said, "but I turn it out anyway." He seemed to get a certain satisfaction from doing so. W_2 's high output, then, which was consistently above the group's standard, was a means by which he expressed his antagonism toward his associates. They reciprocated by excluding him from clique A. Social isolation was the only measure at their command for bringing pressure to bear upon a member of the wiring group. But, unfortunately for them, it did not work as they wished it to in the case of W_2 .

The above explanation accounts not only for W_2 's high output but also for the fact that, unlike W_3 or W_6 , he reported more output than he produced and claimed a good deal of daywork. The net effect of

this was to boost his reported output even higher than it should have been, thus doing even more violence to the group's standard.

Let us next examine the wiremen in clique B to see if their output was related to the position they held in the group's informal organization. Clique B was looked down upon by clique A. The actual average hourly output rates of the members, as shown in Figure 46, were lower than the output rate of any other operator. W_7 and W_8 ranked unusually low. For this group, therefore, there was a direct correspondence between rate of output and informal standing in the group.

The same general relation held for other aspects of their performance. They tended to report more unearned output than the other wiremen. W_7 claimed more unearned output than anyone else, with W_8 a close second; W_9 ranked third. W_8 's relatively good rating in this respect must be interpreted in the light of the fact that he spent a great deal of time soldering. It was less necessary for him to pad his figures in order to make a good showing because he could always use soldering as an excuse. W_7 , W_8 , and W_9 also claimed a great deal more daywork than any of the other wiremen. W_9 claimed an average of over 2 minutes lost time per hour. W_7 and W_8 each claimed an average of more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ minutes per hour. The most claimed by any other wireman was about 1 minute per hour. But these three not only claimed more lost time, the character of their claims differed also. Table XXIX shows that of the 160 claims entered by these three men, 64 were charged against their solderman and inspector. The members of clique A never once blamed a solderman or inspector for delaying them.

It may be concluded that the various performance records for the members of clique B were reflecting their position in the group. There was a clear-cut relation between their social standing and their output. But, it may be asked, did their low output determine their position in the group, or did their position in the group determine their output? The answer is that the relation worked both ways; position in the group influenced output, and output influenced position in the group. In other words, these two factors were in a relation of mutual dependence. Let us attempt to show more clearly just how this was so.

The selector wiremen, being differentiated from the connector wiremen, banded together and achieved a certain amount of solidarity among themselves. This internal solidarity resulted in increased opposition to those people who were not members of their group. Some such process usually occurs when a group becomes unified. The very process of unification entails a drawing away from those who are not members of the group. The entity retains or increases its unity by

opposing other entities. In the case of the selector wiremen, opposition was expressed toward those occupational groups who stood in a relation of superordination to them; to those groups, in other words, in comparison with whom they were subordinated. These were the inspection group, represented in their case by I_8 , and the connector wiremen. Their inspector, I_8 , experienced the most forceful and the most personal expression of their opposition, and he eventually had to be removed from the room. The medium through which they expressed opposition to the inspector was daywork allowance claims, but with respect to the connector wiremen there was no such medium at their disposal. However, they could express their opposition to connector wiremen indirectly through output, and that is what they did. By keeping their output low, they not only lowered the earnings of the connector wiremen but at the same time they themselves managed to draw a wage quite out of proportion to their own contributions. They were, to use one of their own expressions, "chiseling" the other wiremen. This was, of course, resented particularly by W_2 , W_3 , and W_6 . The bona fide members of clique A may have been equally annoyed, but they said nothing about it. W_2 , W_3 , and W_6 , however, time and again tried to get clique B to raise their output. For the most part, their tactics were indirect. Frequently they traded jobs with S_4 and while in that position heckled the wiremen. They bragged that they could solder for a dozen men like W_9 . Sometimes they finished their soldering very quickly and then made elaborate gestures of enforced idleness. At other times they subjected the members of clique B to direct personal criticism. The interesting thing about these tactics was that they served to subordinate clique B still further and as a result to strengthen their internal solidarity still more. So, instead of increasing their output, the members of clique B kept it low, thus "getting back" at those who were displaying their superiority.

*The Relation of Employee to Supervision as a Determinant of
Position in the Group*

So far, all the operators except W_8 have been considered. He was the most disliked person in the group. Was this because he violated the output standard of the group? The answer is no. His output only rarely exceeded the standard of a day's work, and on the whole he conformed to this norm just as well as W_3 or W_6 . Furthermore, he conformed to the group's practice of reporting more or less daywork and more or less output than he should have. In this area his conduct, from the standpoint of the group, was satisfactory. But in his relations

with the foreman his conduct was anything but satisfactory. The operators, on the whole, were decidedly apprehensive of the higher supervisors in the department, partly because of the authority vested in them, and partly because much of their own conduct was contrary to the rules of management. It was an interesting fact that nearly all the activities by means of which the operators related themselves to one another, all their social activities in other words, were "wrong." They were contrary to the rules of management. Therefore, it was important that these activities be concealed from the foreman. To act as informer was an unpardonable breach of conduct. Yet this is what W_6 did, and his action explains the group's opposition to him. By "squealing" he violated a very strong sentiment intimately connected with the relation of subordinate to superior. Here, then, is still another factor which entered into the determination of the individual's position in the group's internal organization.

Determinants of Clique Membership

From the foregoing analysis it is apparent that this group of operators held certain definite ideas as to the way in which an individual should conduct himself. These sentiments, which were connected chiefly with occupation, output, and supervision, may be summarized as follows:

- (1) You should not turn out too much work. If you do, you are a "rate-buster."
- (2) You should not turn out too little work. If you do, you are a "chiseler."
- (3) You should not tell a supervisor anything that will react to the detriment of an associate. If you do, you are a "squealer."
- (4) You should not attempt to maintain social distance or act officious. If you are an inspector, for example, you should not act like one.

It may be concluded that the individual's position in the group was in large part determined by the extent to which his behavior was in accord with these sentiments. The members of clique A, the people who held the most favored position in the group, conformed to the group's rules of behavior in all respects. Members of clique B conformed to rules (1), (3), and (4). Indeed, they attached more importance to these rules than anyone else. This is easily understood because the higher the output of their associates, the more unfavorable their own output appeared. "Squealing" was more objectionable to them

than to the others because more of their actions were wrong from the standpoint of management. Finally, they resented any show of superiority more than the others did because they were in the most subordinate position.

The Function of the Group's Internal Organization

The social organization of the bank wiremen performed a twofold function: (1) to protect the group from internal indiscretions, and (2) to protect it from outside interference. The same mechanism sometimes served to fulfill both functions.

The mechanisms by which internal control was exercised were varied. Perhaps the most important were sarcasm, "binging," and ridicule. Through such devices pressure was brought to bear upon those individuals who deviated too much from the group's norm of acceptable conduct. From this point of view, it will be seen that the great variety of activities ordinarily labeled "restriction of output" represent attempts at social control and discipline and as such are important integrating processes. In addition to overt methods, clique membership itself may be looked upon as an instrument of control. Those persons whose behavior was most reprehensible to clique A were excluded from it. They were, in a sense, socially ostracized. This is one of the universal social processes by means of which a group chastises and brings pressure to bear upon those who transgress its codes.

The operators attempted to protect themselves from outside interference by bringing into line those outsiders, supervisors and inspectors, who stood in a position of being able to interfere in their affairs. The chief mechanism by which they attempted to control these people was that of daywork allowance claims. The manner in which this weapon was brought into play against I_3 shows how formidable it could be. The operators did not use this weapon against I_1 or the group chief because they did not have to; both of these people submitted to group control. I_3 , however, refused to be assimilated, and they helped to bring about his removal by charging him with excessive amounts of daywork. This was the most effective device at their command. Interestingly enough, it was a device provided them by their wage incentive plan. The mechanism by which they sought to protect themselves from management was the maintenance of uniform output records, which could be accomplished by reporting more or less output than they produced and by claiming daywork.

It can be seen, therefore, that nearly all the activities of this group may be looked upon as methods of controlling the behavior of its

MANAGEMENT AND THE WORKER

...bers. The men had elaborated, spontaneously and quite unconsciously, an intricate social organization around their collective beliefs and sentiments. The question as to what gave rise to those sentiments and beliefs, whether they arose from actual or potential threats to their security, as the operators claimed, is an important one and will be dealt with at length in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXIII

FORMAL VS. INFORMAL ORGANIZATION

SO FAR it has been shown that the members of the Bank Wiring Observation Room group possessed an intricate social organization in terms of which much of their conduct was determined. Restriction of output was the chief outer manifestation of this complex of interhuman relations. Let us now turn from the particularities of the bank wiring situation to a consideration of the relation of the group as an entity to the wider company organization of which it was a part.

The problem to be considered in this chapter can best be defined in terms of the external function of the bank wiremen's organization. It has been shown that the internal function of this organization was to control and regulate the behavior of its members. Externally, however, it functioned as a protective mechanism. It served to protect the group from outside interference by manifesting a strong resistance to change, or threat of change, in conditions of work and personal relations. This resistance to change not only was reflected in all the wiremen's tactics to keep output constant but also was implied in all the reasons they gave in justification of their actions. Had it been explicitly stated, their behavior could be said to have been guided by the following rule: "Let us behave in such a way as to give management the least opportunity of interfering with us." There is no doubt that the most pronounced over-all characteristic of the interhuman activities described was their peculiarly protective or resistive quality. The problem, therefore, becomes that of discovering those external factors which gave rise to this resistance.

When stated in these terms, a number of answers to this problem are immediately suggested. Perhaps the wiremen were apprehensive of the investigators. Did not the study situation itself encourage the type of behavior observed? Or were not the operators simply attempting to stave off the effects of the depression, which were becoming noticeable within the factory at that time? Or, finally, were they not, in restricting their output, simply attempting to protect their economic interests? Inasmuch as any of these possibilities might have accounted for the situation, they must be considered at the outset.