GROUP FORMATION
Theoretical and Empirical Approaches

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Within sociology, much time and energy has been devoted to discussion of groups, group cultures, and the conditions necessary for the formation of groups. At the same time, many studies of occupations have been conducted in which the influence of these conditions has been either downgraded or ignored, but the occupation has still been dealt with as a "group." The present study is interested in determining whether there are important limiting conditions on the formation of groups, as the theorists would have us believe. Are there, in other words, invariant conditions without whose machinations no group can form?

In the following discussion, we will first examine some theories of social groups in order to discover any invariant, necessary properties. We will then take these properties and see if we can locate them in studies of occupational groups. Next, we will examine the results of an empirical study of truck drivers—an occupation lacking all the "theoretically" necessary group properties, yet still a group. Finally, we will make some suggestions concerning the theories of groups.

GROUPS

We will deal here with two aspects of groups: the conditions under which groups come into being (i.e., those "things" determining the existence of groups), and the consequences of the limiting conditions on other aspects of groups. In other words, not only do we want to discover what aspects of groups are important in their formation, but also what these aspects do to influence other concomitants of group life.

In a general discussion of groups, it is always possible to marshal myriad definitions to prove one's point. Starting with Ibn Khaldun and moving through the development of sociology to the present day, a theorist could plot the development of the concept of "group." Rather than attempt such a historical development here, we have chosen, instead, to present only a limited number of definitions and then to present what we see as the commonalities of the definitions.

One of the least complex definitions of a group is presented by Broom and Selznik (1968: 30; italics in original), who indicate that the term group "refers to any collection of persons who are *bound* together by a distinctive set of social relations." This definition would allow almost any continuing entity to be made into a group, although it does specify that there must be this notion of permanence and also that there must be some notion of boundaries which distinguish what is group from what is nongroup.

The discussion by Broom and Selznik brings up an additional important point. Within the general category labeled "group" there are many types: (1) membership and nonmembership groups (compare Merton and Kitt, 1950); (2) positive or negative reference groups (Merton and Kitt, 1950); (3) normative or comparison groups (Kelley, 1952); (4) formal or informal groups (Sherif and Sherif, 1964); (5) primary or secondary groups (Cooley, 1968: 120); and so on. When one is speaking of "group," it is obviously important to

specify what type of group one is discussing, especially when one is discussing the occupational group.

Returning to the definitions of groups, Olmstead (1959: 21) indicates that a group is "a plurality of individuals who are in contact with one another, who take one another into account, and who are aware of some significant commonality." The important point here is that group members take into account a commonality present among them all. For Olmstead (1959: 21), it is the recognition of similarity and also the interaction that distinguishes a group from a nongroup. Until commonality becomes recognized by the members of the group, the entity is not a group and is only a "category," a "type," or a "class."

Homans (1950: 1) goes a step beyond Olmstead in his definition of a group as "a number of persons who communicate with one another often over a span of time, and who are few enough so that each person is able to communicate with all the others, not at secondhand, through other people, but face-to-face." For Homans, then, it is important that a group be small enough so that all the members are able to interact with each other. Olsen (1968: 89) also seems to be arguing for smallness as a property of groups when he states, "a group is a social organization whose members know and identify with each other personally as individuals."

One type of group that is often discussed is the primary group, which is

characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. They [groups] are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideas of the individual. The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a "we"; it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which "we" is the natural expression. One lives in the feeling of the whole and finds the chief aims of his will in that feeling [Cooley, 1968: 23].

Merton also discusses the definition of membership in the group and shows how one may define himself as a member. At the same time, he points out that it is just as important for the other group members to define the person as a member.

> To the extent that these three criteria—enduring and morally established forms of social interaction, self-definition as a member, and the same definition by others—are fully met, those involved in the sustained interaction are clearly identifiable as comprising groups [Merton, 1957: 286].

On the subject of groups also, Merton (1957: 310-326) includes in his discussion a list of twenty-six "provisional group-properties." He has included what he feels are the important properties of all groups and organizations, taken from other sociological writings and studies. As the list stands, it is similar (but more in-depth) than what is being suggested here.

All the definitions mentioned here seem to be arguing that certain properties must be present (in some specified quantity) before a group can form. These definitions suggest that there are prerequisites to primary group structure complete with face-to-face interaction, a degree of permanence, a small number of persons, and a close physical association between the members (on this subject, see Cooley, 1967: 156-158). In other words, only if the right mix of conditions is present, will the nongroup become a group.

Yablonsky (1959) would argue, of course, that it is possible to have something other than group or nongroup. He found that delinquent gangs could not be classified in the traditional manner, and consequently, Yablonsky (1959: 109) coined the term "near group,"

> characterized by some of the following factors: (1) diffuse role definition, (2) limited cohesion, (3) impermanence, (4) minimal consensus of norms, (5) shifting membership, (6) disturbed

leadership, and (7) limited definition of membership expectations. These factors characterize the near-group's "normal" structure.

The near-group, then, is seen as a midpoint on the continuum from nongroup to group. While for present purposes we can agree that there is probably a continuum from something that is not a group to something that is a group, whether the near-group is actually the midpoint or not is open to conjecture. Somewhere along the line from mob to group, all things composed of persons can be placed. As will be suggested below, there can never, it seems, be any hard and fast rule for deciding whether a collection of persons (or "thing") is a group or not. Factors other than simply the theoretical conditions must also be present.

The question of the limiting conditions on primary groups has been dealt with by Litwak and his associates in a number of articles (see Fellin and Litwak, 1963; Litwak and Figueira, 1968). Although the articles have dealt with structural change of primary groups combined with unchanging functions, they are relevant here. For example, Fellin and Litwak (1963: 376) argue that

> the negative effects of mobility can be vitiated by speeding up the process by which strangers are socialized into the group. Even though the person has a shorter time span in the group, he may, because of the speedy processes of integration, have the same social span as those in groups with a more stable population.

The authors further point to attributes of individuals that help in this rapid integration: (1) training for integration; (2) reference orientations; (3) discussion of problems with others; and (4) attitudes toward change. On the group's side, other attributes are important: (1) positive group norms for integrating strangers; (2) avoidance of competition between significant primary groups; and (3) use of localized voluntary associations (Fellin and Litwak, 1963: 365). Thus, in times

of change, the primary group has to adapt to rapidly changing membership rosters or both group and individual will perish.

In a later article, Litwak and Szelenyi came closer to dealing with occupational primary groups. The authors indicated that rapid indoctrination into a group could partially make up for short tenure. The means for accepting newcomers were basically those enunciated in the earlier article. At the same time, the authors indicated that certain occupations were structured to best accept certain types of changes—e.g., the professional in large-scale bureaucratic organizations, on the theory that norms could be developed to accept newcomers and to adapt to change as good in and of itself.

However, as will be developed below, the professional in the organization does not present the ideal model for the examination of the alteration of the primary group structure. A better test of such a theory would be, for example, a group where membership turnover was total at the end of each group meeting.

It is as important to note the influence of the limiting conditions on other aspects of groups as it is to recognize their existence. Not only do the limiting conditions have an important influence on the *initial* development of the group, they are also seen to influence

(1) the development of consensus among the members (Newcomb, 1965; Gross, 1956; Hare, 1962),

(2) the development of the members' self-images (Cooley, 1956; Mead, 1934),

(3) the development of a group culture (Shibutani, 1961), and

(4) the ways in which the members act when not in the presence of the group but with other (nongroup) people.

At the same time, we must note the very close interrelationship of all these aspects with each other and with the limiting

conditions. For example, consensus cannot occur without some form of communication but communication is a part of the culture. Without a set of self-images, there can be no group because there must be the "generalized other" from which to get the image of self. This generalized other is formed from the group culture, since that is where the generalized requirements of membership are formed. There is, then, a sort of "interlocking directorate" of aspects of groups: somehow, at least for the theorists, the aspects must be present in order for a group to exist.

Before closing this section, a word is necessary on the influence of space or distance on the formation of groups. The articles by Sommer (1967, 1959), Hall (1966, 1959), and others lead back to the basic problems of under what conditions groups form, and how close, physically, a number of persons have to be before a group is viable. Although we are still not certain, it appears that there is no set and inviolable distance. *Physical* distance alone is not the only factor of importance, of course: "Distances which separate individuals are not merely spatial, they are psychical" (Park and Burgess, 1921: 164).

Although distances seem to be important for the formation and continued functioning of groups, Festinger et al. (1968: 268) argue that little attention has "been focused on the relations between ecological factors and the formation of friendships and face-to-face groups." Festinger et al. (1968: 269-270) also indicate that "in relating physical structure to the formation of friendships, it is necessary to distinguish between two ecological factors, (1) physical distance, and (2) positional relationships and features of design we may call functional distance." They (Festinger et al., 1968: 276) conclude that "if one accepts the definition of a group as a number of interacting and sociometrically connected people, it follows that these ecological factors determine not only specific friendships, but the composition of groups within these communities as well." There appear to be a number of

distance factors operating in the formation and continued existence of groups (physical, psychological, social, and so on). At the same time, it appears safe to argue that the majority of the groups discussed here (and in the definitions mentioned above) argue that a minimum of physical separation is necessary for interaction over a period of time. Some separation is possible but it would be best if the group members were able to interact in a face-to-face manner as often as possible.

We are suggesting that the general literature on groups, conditions under which groups form, and the limiting conditions on further or continued existence suggests that four basic conditions are necessary: distance between members should be small; the number of members should be small; the group should be relatively permanent; and the interaction should be face-to-face as much as possible. In addition, we are also showing how these conditions influence other aspects of groups, among which are self-image, consensus, in-group interactions, interactions with nongroup members, and the development of group cultures. In the following section, we will show how these aspects of groups have been used in the area of occupational sociology.

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

The study of occupational groups differs somewhat from the theoretical analyses of groups and group structures. For the occupational sociologist, it is often necessary to modify the traditional, logically sound stands taken by the theorist in order to describe what happens in real life, where many theories do not work. Consequently, it is often the case that some aspects of a group (as traditionally defined) may be downgraded or ignored when a study is done of an *occupational* group. It is possible, for example, that an occupational group might be found whose major aspects are:

TABLE 1
OCCUPATIONAL GROUP FORMATION AND THE INFLUENCE
OF THE THEORETICALLY IMPORTANT LIMITING
CONDITIONS[a]

Type of Group[b]	Theoretically Important Limiting Conditions				
	Small Distance	High Permanence	High Face-to-Face	Small Size	Formed Group
Ideal	+	+	+	+	+
Printers	±	+	+	±	+
Gypsum workers					
miners	+	−	−	+	+
surface	+	+	+	+	−
Police	−	+	−	+	+
Auto workers					
assembly line	+	+	+	+	−
utility	−	−	+	±	−
Railroaders	−	−	±	±	+

a. The sources for the information used here are cited in the text.
b. Although the original sources indicate both on and off the job occupational groups, the data used here are restricted to workers while they are on the job.

little distance, high numbers, high permanence, and high face-to-face interactions. The investigator could make the case for the "groupness" even with the alteration of the "normal" pattern in that it does not have small numbers. Table 1 presents the ideal conditions necessary for group formation along with conditions discussed in a number of studies (to be detailed below). As has been suggested, and as can be seen from the table, even the presence of all conditions does not guarantee group formation.

In this section, we will briefly review some studies of occupations where the traditional aspects of groups were questioned (often implicitly) and where the investigators still found a feeling of groupness in the occupation or, conversely, where all properties were present but groupness was not. It is important to note that, just as we previously concentrated on certain selected definitions and descriptions of groups, so

here we will deal with selected studies of occupational groups.[1]

THE COMMUNICATION WORKER

The best example of the formation of a group because of the ideal conditions was the study of the bank wiring observation room done by Roethlisberger and Dixon (1939: 387), which pointed out that (1) the group formed among men who had been placed in a special room; (2) it was formed with a relatively small number of men—fourteen, plus supervision (1939: 402); (3) the distance between the men while on the job was small (1939: 403); (4) the group showed a large amount of permanence during the course of the study (1939: 405). As has been well documented since, the group was a strong one, with a well-developed culture, a well-developed set of norms, and a strong influence on the self-image of the members. This group is the classic example; it has all the necessary preconditions, and it becomes a group. Some occupations discussed below were not quite so lucky.

THE TYPOGRAPHERS UNION

One study to use the occupational community to describe relationships among members of an occupation is the study of union democracy. Lipset et al. (1956: 143) studied the International Typographers Union and found that

> two unique factors, apart from status and craft pride continue to provide the mortar to keep the occupational community to-gether. These are the conditions under which men secure and maintain employment in a print shop, and the fact that a large proportion of printers work at nights [sic].

The authors appear to feel that the printers' union is a holdover from the days of the guilds, and this is the reason for the strong sense of community (Lipset et al., 1956: 34).

In terms of the above conditions for formation of groups, it can be suggested that the printers probably have little distance between themselves *in the shop,* but the local studied is the largest in the International Union; similarly, the number of workers is small for the individual shops while high for the local area, and there is a high degree of face-to-face interaction among the members. At the same time, we should reiterate that the authors indicated other factors as important: the substitute system for gaining employment and the night work that printers engage in. The occupational community of the printers' union tends to develop (at least in the larger version) not *because of* the conditions of group formation posited by the theorists, but possibly in spite of them. The means for securing jobs and the fact of shift (and particularly night shift) work causes the development of an occupational community among the printers. It is, further, the development of this occupational community among the printers while on the job that influences the social relationships among printers off the job.

THE GYPSUM MINE

Another occupation in which a strong group feeling is observed is that of the gypsum miner. Gouldner (1954: 136) describes the differences between the miners and the surface workers: "It has been noted that miners were members of stronger and more solidary informal groups, and that the greater cohesion of the miners was, in part, traceable to their distinctive working arrangements, and their more hazardous conditions of work." At the same time, the informal organization and solidarity among the miners was used by them to blunt management's attempts to manage (Gouldner, 1954: 150). The differences in the amount of social cohesion in the two groups—miners and surfacemen—is interesting in light of the theoretical discussion above.

In terms of the aspects of groups, the miners show little

distance between themselves while at work (Gouldner, 1954:
133); there is a medium degree of permanence due to the
high absenteeism rates among the miners (1954: 141-145);
the size of the group is relatively small, the norm being the
seven-man work groups (1954: 133); and, finally, the amount
of face-to-face interaction while on the job is small due to the
darkness and noise (1954: 106). The surfacemen, on the
other hand, present almost the ideal picture of a "bunch" of
people who work together and who should form a close-knit
association: the distance between workers is small at least for
members of each work team (1954: 131); the size of the
work teams is usually small, numbering on the average four
men to a team (1954: 133); there is a high degree of
permanence (1954: 38-39); and, finally, there is opportunity
for a good deal of face-to-face interaction on the job (1954:
132).

Yet it was the miners who developed the informal social
cohesion, while the surfacemen did not. Gouldner points out
that there was intensive informal group solidarity expressed
through nicknames miners had for each other; the things they
liked most about working in the mine were the men they
worked with; miners helped each other when one was sick or
injured; miners often went out drinking together, and so on.
The surface workers, on the other hand, seemed to be in
constant competition with each other. When they were asked
what they did not like about the job, the surfacemen
indicated they did not like the " 'suckholes,' that is, people
who defer to and seek approval from a superior by carrying
tales" (1954: 130). Gouldner (1954: 131) also states that
"fear of the 'suckhole' indicates that the informal group on
the surface was encountering difficulties in extracting con-
formity from its members," and notes (1954: 140) that there
were

> tense relations between supervisors and workers, and the low
> degree of informal solidarity and readiness to squeal among
> surface workers. Most relevantly, however, there was the sugges-

tion that energetic and cooperative work efforts on the surface were not even brought about by an emergency situation.

Not even emergencies could get the workers on the surface to work together in anything approaching harmony.

THE POLICE

Another occupation that develops strong member identifications and what could be seen as strong group ties is that of the police. According to Niederhoffer (1967: 21), the police seem interested in becoming professional organizations. In order to accomplish this move into the professional ranks, the police are often required to resort to indoctrination of the newcomer into the ways (culture) of the occupation. By inducing the new member to play by the new rules (of professionalism), the occupation may be upgraded.

From the studies by Neiderhoffer and those by Westley (1956, 1953), we can suggest that the police forces studied do have a relatively high permanence (at least after the first few years, during which the less-committed officers drop out); members do not really have little distance between them (except possibly in the morning or when they take breaks during the day); the size is not small (if one looks at "police" in general, but it is relatively small at each precinct house); and, finally, there can be little face-to-face interaction except at specified times. At the same time, the group seems well developed enough to consistently induce its members to break the law they are sworn to uphold (Westley, 1956, 1953). The group is strong, in other words, even though all aspects for the forming of groups are not present in the degree necessary for the theorists. It appears further that the factor of overriding importance for the formation of groups among the police is the collective feeling that they face a hostile world and that they must all "stick together."

THE AUTO INDUSTRY

Automobile workers are in a nearly perfect position to form traditional occupational groups, but the majority seem not to. As Walker and Guest (1952: 77) point out, "For many of the workers, there was little of what the social psychologist would call 'in-group awareness.' "

The majority of workers work in close proximity with others, even if they do not perform in a team capacity (Walker and Guest, 1952: 70-71). The size of the work groups was most frequently from two to five men (1952: 67). Although permanence was not directly discussed, the work force at the plant studied appears stable (1952: 91). Finally, the authors (1952: ch. 5) indicate that it is relatively easy to interact with persons nearby on the assembly line and almost impossible to interact with those further away simply because a worker has no opportunity to do so. We can suggest that, for assembly-line workers, there is little distance, small size, high permanence, and high face-to-face interaction—all with little in-group awareness.

For the majority of the workers in the automobile plant, then, even ideal conditions under which groups can form are not enough to cause them to evelop group awareness or informal social groups with fellow workers, while other workers do feel what can be called a high degree of group awareness and that they are members of an occupational group even though many of them do *not* seem to fit the conditions. Rather than being members in the traditional sense, they are "loners" or utility men, who wander from place to place on the line. For them, there is high distance (if taken in a total sense); there is little permanence (they are on the move all the time); the size need not be small; and there is a high degree of face-to-face contact. Yet, it appears that the variability of the work allows the utility men to develop in other areas; they consequently feel somewhat more free than their fellows who do the same job all day long. The utility men can use their talents to cultivate friendships along the line (Walker and Guest, 1952: 77-78).

THE RAILROADS

Although Cottrell (1940) does not discuss the actual size of the railroaders' union, railroaders, like the police, can be divided into large categories in terms of the company as a whole and small groupings in terms of any single local area. Distance can be great, both on and off duty, at least among railroaders in similar jobs: How many engineers will be needed, for example, at a small division point? Even on a single train, crew members may be separated by many cars and only two of the six or eight men in the crew may be together at any one time. In terms of permanence, Cottrell (1940: 59) points out that "the place relationships of railroaders are always in flux." Finally, in terms of face-to-face interaction on the job, Cottrell (1940: 14) indicates the importance of being "taught the ropes" by the older members of the occupation. Further, the men work in *relative* proximity to one another and at layover points, they may well interact on a more in-depth level. That is, train workers off duty at a layover point cannot necessarily be said to perform in extraoccupational ways.

The conditions, therefore, under which groups of railroaders form are: relatively large size; relatively great distance between practitioners; little permanence; and little real opportunity for face-to-face interaction except after work or while at layover points. At the same time, railroaders have well-developed occupational social groups; a well-developed culture, as evidenced by their argot (Cottrell, 1940: ch. 7) and the universal dependence on time (1940: 69); and great feelings of consensus among the members of the occupation (1940: 4-5):

> A man is in degrees and by degrees a railroader. Only when his habits are reduced to those typical of the norm, and his values are squared with those of his intimates, is he one of the craft. On many issues he may differ vitally with his fellows and still be accepted; but on some he must conform or be an outcast. To

the degree that he participates in the world outside of railroading and retains attitudes, habits, and values derived from other occupational groups, he fails to qualify as a real railroader.

The railroader is also imbued with a unique self-image, as Cottrell notes (1940: 108-109):

In some degree the railroader takes on the character of the Jew. He is in, but not part of so many groups. The warm feeling of fellowship engineered by speaking a common language not shared by outsiders is in part a reaction to the cold reception accorded by those same "gentiles". The more the railroader struggles for status as a railroader the more he emphasizes the differences between him and his neighbors.

Rather than interact with others, railroaders come to see themselves as belonging to an important social grouping of their peers, an interesting fact in light of the immense social stratification within the occupation (1940: 110). In other words, the fact that a person is a railroader is possibly more important than the fact that he is an engineer, a fireman, or a conductor.

The above analyses of both the theoretical properties of groups and the findings of studies of groups suggest that the two types of approaches differ in what they require. The theorists see the need for certain common properties in "things" before they can be labeled groups. The studies of the occupations have shown that some of the "things" with all the necessary conditions present are not groups and other "things" with none (or few) of the conditions present are groups in every sense of the word.

STUDY OF GROUP PROPERTIES

In order to better analyze the necessity for the limiting conditions, we will examine an occupation that lacks all the aspects of a group as we have outlined it here. The

population to be studied has a very large size; there is a great deal of distance between the practitioners during most of their time on the job; there is little real permanence to the interaction patterns that are set up; and, finally, there is little real face-to-face interaction possible during most of the day. Not only should there be no group, but, according to theorists, this category of persons should show none of the traditional concomitants of groups: there should be no group-aided self-image, little interaction between members, a complete lack of any group culture (or occupational culture), and little or no consensus among the members of the occupation.

The *truck driver* does not have members who are close together in space; the total membership of the occupation is large (the largest single occupational category in the 1960 census); the occupation lacks permanence in on-the-job meetings; the interaction is necessarily not primarily face-to-face, since a driver is usually alone in his truck for the greater part of the day. Since all the limiting conditions are not met, we will ask if it is possible for the occupation to show high consensus among members, a developed culture, intense interaction, job satisfaction, and so on?

The data for the present study were gathered in the spring and summer of 1969 from a random sample of 150 union truck drivers in the New York Metropolitan area.[2] In addition, data were gathered from extensive participant-observation combined with extensive in-depth interviews. The drivers responded to a mail questionnaire of approximately six pages, with roughly 300 items. In addition to the socioeconomic questions, the instrument attempted to identify the type of driver the respondent was, the way he viewed the occupation as a whole, what he felt about his job, how he saw himself, and how he felt others saw him.

The self-image (or consensus) items for this study were adapted from Guernsey (1965) and required the respondent to rank eight items in terms of (1) how he thought they

applied to him; (2) how he thought others who did the same type of driving (as he did) would think they applied to him; and (3) how he thought others who did different types of driving (from his type) would think they applied to him. As can be seen from Table 2, consensus correlations are highest between the respondent's beliefs of the attitudes of those who do the same and who do different types of driving.[3] Note the consistent increase in correlation (in all but one category) as one moves horizontally across the table. Drivers seem less certain about how *they* agree (or disagree) among themselves than they are about agreement for all drivers taken together.

The drivers' general statements seem to agree with the finding of the statistics. The drivers do not make the distinctions we asked them to make when they think of truck drivers: truck drivers see themselves, and others in the

TABLE 2

CONSENSUS CORRELATIONS BETWEEN RESPONDENTS AND DRIVERS WHO DO SAME AND DIFFERENT TYPES OF DRIVING, BY CATEGORIES OF DRIVERS

Categories of Drivers	Resp-Same	Resp-Diff	Same-Diff
Types of driving			
Over-the-road	.1904	.7105	.9272
Local only	.5552	.6210	.0387
Both	.6284	.7979	.9583
Route driven			
Between states	.6915	.7270	.9626
In one state	.5146	.6227	.7710
Both	.8111	.7375	.9794
Truck driven			
Tractor-trailer	.6120	.6769	.7352
Straight truck	.6104	.6284	.9623
Both	.8820	.6776	.9665
Size of company			
Large	.6418	.7551	.9877
Medium	.7125	.6192	.9063
Small	.5783	.6494	.9844

occupation, as truck drivers first. If they bother to make any further distinctions, they may differentiate between city driver and road (over-the-road) driver, but that is as far as it goes. This finding was not expected: on the basis of the previous theories, we would have expected that truck drivers would be more apt to show high consensus with drivers in their own types of specialties rather than with the occupation as a whole. The amount of interaction, the smaller size, and the permanence all should have combined to cause higher consensus in the subgroups. Here we find a result similar to that of Cottrell—the occupation is more important than the subgroup.

Subgroups of truck drivers also show no consistent patterns in terms of lack of job satisfaction, anomia, or dislike for the union. There is, in other words, no one part of the sample that has a corner on the market of general dissatisfaction. In addition, the sample as a whole manifests a surprising amount of job satisfaction, as measured by the scale developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951), which requires the respondent to agree or disagree with 18 items about his job. In the present sample, 52 respondents scored less than the minimum needed for job satisfaction. However, only 12 of these low scorers (8% of the total) showed a total lack of job satisfaction. These 12 drivers are distributed through the occupation—they are not all of a single type.

It is interesting that there is also no variation between the truck drivers in terms of anomia. Using Srole's (1956) short scale, there was no significant difference found no matter how the drivers were classified. Further, out of the entire sample, only 11% could even be classified as anomic. The remaining drivers (n = 133) were, at the most, mildly anomic. Again, we can suggest an amazing amount of consensus among members of the occupation: the drivers are not placed in such a position that they feel they are against the world and that they can do nothing.

Of 146 drivers for whom we could compute a score on a

"union like-dislike" scale of 5 items, only 37 drivers showed that they were even partially anti-union, and of these, 7 were completely anti-union. The remaining 109 drivers were, at least partially, pro-union. Once again, it is important to note that there was no consistent difference in the types of drivers who are anti-union. This latter finding is another (albeit roundabout) indication of the amount of consensus felt by the drivers.

It was also argued by the theories mentioned above that the absence of the conditions for groups would mean that a group culture would not form. However, within the occupation of the truck driver, there is a highly developed occupational culture. Further, within the general rubric of occupational culture, there is a well-developed occupational language that is not always verbal. The nonverbal language has developed out of the need to communicate between vehicles moving at high speeds on highways. The flashing of lights, the waving of hands, and so on, although not always unambiguously clear even to the drivers, do indicate to them that the other driver wants to tell them something, and recipients usually are able to figure out what the message means. The spoken language, or jargon, is also complex and deals with subjects that the drivers meet every day, people with whom they interact, and both animate and inanimate objects that are important to them (see Runcie, 1971b). As Cottrell (1940: 100) has indicated, not everyone in an occupation will have heard every word, but members can usually figure out a rough meaning for a word they do not know from the context of the sentence.

In addition to the language, there is a humor that belongs to the truck driver, although at present this feature of the occupational culture is not well developed. Further, there is also a truck drivers' music, which has been developed by the commercial music industry. While the drivers themselves have had no direct hand in its development, they buy (or at least listen to) the music, and there is little doubt that, if they did

not, the industry would find another subject for its songs. Just as it is possible to categorize the themes of the occupational jargon, so it is possible to ategorize the music. Within the music oriented to the truck drivers, we find (1) categories related to why drivers drive trucks; (2) the problems drivers face; and (3) truck drivers' women, all indications of a developed cultural milieu.

Finally, it is suggested that, in the informal gatherings of truck drivers, it makes little difference to the participants what type of driver a person is. As long as a person can "play the game," he is welcome at any gathering. There are probably a number of reasons for such an occurrence, in addition to the overwhelming consensus among all members of the occupation. For example, unlike members of other occupational groups, the truck driver has a greater tendency to see a driver from another company than one from his own in the course of a day: 89.2% of the drivers indicate they meet drivers from other companies in the course of a day, compared to 42.6% who meet drivers from their own company. At the truck stops, the restaurants, and the truck garages, truck drivers do get together and there seems little segregation by type of driving done or by type of company. One rarely finds a table for a local and a table or set of tables for the road drivers. Should a member of one subgroup of drivers move into a conversation, he is usually welcomed. One reason for the groupness of the total occupation may be that truck drivers are in a position to meet strangers constantly in the course of a day. There is, in other words, structured into the occupational role the chance of meetings. Being involved with strangers becomes a routine. As Simmel (1950: 402-408) points out, a stranger can be either a group or nongroup member. That is, we are able to include a stranger into a group if we please. The inclusion becomes much easier if, as Fellin and Litwak (1963) suggest, the inclusion of strangers becomes a norm of the occupation. To this built-in proneness to chance meeting, we can add a type

of "consciousness of kind" that the truck drivers seem to possess. Truck drivers (like others in certain social roles— homosexuals, traveling salesmen, and so on) have an uncanny knack for picking each other out of a crowd. Although the talent did not always work perfectly, we were amazed at the accuracy of the drivers' choices of eating partners, without hesitation or indecision. The drivers simply entered a restaurant, walked to a place, and sat down, usually next to another driver.

Once the personalities involved have met each other, they are able to engage in intense interaction with all others involved, all the while having the expectation of never seeing the others again. There are a number of factors at work in the interaction process. In addition to those mentioned directly above, we can add the lack of differentiation within the occupation and the constant mobility of the drivers—a transiency—that allows them to expect the unexpected and to be alert for others in a similar position. There is the developed culture, which also includes the places where truck drivers can expect to meet each other—that is, the common meeting grounds defined by the culture. All these aspects of the truck drivers' occupation give them the unique ability to interact, based only on their status as truck drivers.

Returning to the conditions under which groups are said to form, we can again indicate that the numbers of truck drivers are not small, the drivers are not always close together, the interactions are not always (or even primarily) face-to-face, and the drivers—when they do get into face-to-face inter- action—may never see each other again. At the same time, the occupation presents to the outside world what appears to be a close occupational group. Although the interactions may be brief, they are as intense, personal, and as "primary" as any we have seen. Again, the intensity of the interactions is not diminished by the fact that drivers may not see each other again or that there are large numbers of drivers. Finally, the lack of opportunities for interaction simply means that, when

the opportunities present themselves, they will be taken advantage of to the utmost.

SUMMARY

We have indicated that many theorists of groups and occupational groups in the past have indicated that certain factors must be present before a group can form: there must be small distance between the members, few members to interact with, a permanence of membership, and, finally, primarily face-to-face interaction. We have also shown how many discussions of occupational groups have modified the discussion of the limiting conditions to take account of pecularities found in particular occupations. The study of truck drivers was undertaken to show that one can still locate something that acts like a group even when *none* of the conditions under which groups are said to form exists.

It will be necessary to modify the formational theories to take into account the inconsistencies that have been shown to exist. In addition, it is suggested that other occupations—traveling salesmen, sailors, railroad men, and so on—should also be studied to see if they manifest group-like characteristics when the theories argue they should not. Additional examination of traditional theoretical approaches is necessary to determine if they should be discarded or merely altered to fit the real situations of the occupational world.

NOTES

1. Before beginning the discussion, a word or two is necessary concerning the "occupational community" dealt with by Blauner (1964: 113-114), who points to the fact that those in an occupational community (1) socialize more with persons in their own line of work and (2) talk shop in their off-hours.

The physical propinquity on the job is seen to carry over into nonwork hours and is also seen as the main cause of the occupational community. However, if the attractions are strong enough, lack of propinquity will not deter the interested

parties from getting together (witness all those couples where the partners originally come from different parts of the country). The point here is that the occupational community and the occupational group are for all intents and purposes the same.

2. It is possible that the use of only union truck drivers limits what we can say about "truck drivers." For slightly different results in a study of truck drivers, see Flittie and Nelson (1968), who probably did not study union truck drivers. For a more detailed methodological discussion see Runcie (1971a).

3. In this table, the distributions of responses for any item in the self-image scale were averaged and then Pearsonian correlations were computed. Such a correlational measure is allowed since the data became continuous on the computation of the averages. For this measure, I am grateful to Harry Frank of the Psychology Department at the University of Michigan (Flint).

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