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LIBRARY STAFF AND TRADE UNIONISM:
A STUDY OF ATTITUDES AND INFLUENCES

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Philosophy from the University of Durham

by

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ABSTRACT

The work context and the pattern and history of trade union representation in librarianship are explored. The literature on trade unionism and professionalism is reviewed with special reference to trade unionism and professionalism in library work. Twenty-four hypotheses are developed, concerning the reasons for library trade unionism, its character and its effects on libraries, and similar features in relation to professionalism. These hypotheses are reviewed in the light of an interview survey conducted in four polytechnic libraries. Among other conclusions, it is asserted that the high density of trade union membership and of membership of The Library Association is due mainly to environmental factors such as employer recognition rather than personal or job-related factors, that both unionism and professionalism have only modest effects on the staff and on the library, and that staff are aware of more potential incompatibility between trade union membership and professionalism than was expected. The library staff regard both their union and their professional association in much the same way: they want both bodies to be moderate and apolitical, and to concentrate on and be effective in relation to salaries, status and working conditions. (None of this work has previously been submitted for any other degree.)

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

ABBREVIATIONS

AESD	Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen
ALA	Associate of The Library Association
APT	Association of Polytechnic Teachers
ASLIB	Aslib (original acronym has become legal title; the phrase "The Association for Information Management" is now used as an explanatory subtitle)
ASTMS	Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff
AUT	Association of University Teachers
BEC	Business Education Council
BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
CAWU	Clerical and Administrative Workers Union (now known as APEX - Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff)
CODOT	Classification of Occupations and Directory of Occupational Titles
COHSE	Confederation of Health Service Employees
CPSA	Civil and Public Services Association
CSU	Civil Service Union
DES	Department of Education and Science
FUMPO	Federated Union of Managerial and Professional Officers
IIS	Institute of Information Scientists
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
IPCS	Institution of Professional Civil Servants
JCC	Joint Consultative Committee (of NALGO including representatives of professional bodies such as The LA)
JICNARS	Joint Industry Committee for National Readership Surveys

LA	The Library Association
NALGO	National and Local Government Officers Association
NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NJC	National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Staffs
NUGMW	National Union of General and Municipal Workers (now known as GMBATU - General Municipal, Boilermakers' and Allied Trades' Union)
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
OPCS	Office of Population Censuses and Surveys
RCA	Railway Clerks Association (now known as TSSA - Transport Salaried Staffs' Association)
TGWU	Transport and General Workers' Union
TUC	Trades Union Congress
VCSA	Victoria Colleges Staff Association

Terms

Associateship of the Library Association: standard professional qualification for librarians. Now usually obtained by adding several years approved training and experience to possession of a degree or diploma in librarianship obtained by full-time study; previously obtained by part-time study and passing Library Association examinations.

Clerical post: post intended for a Library Assistant or clerical support staff

Librarian: member of library staff responsible for all or part of the library service.

Library Assistant: member of library staff whose main duties include issuing and shelving books, stamping, labelling and recording receipt of new stock, and various clerical duties.

Library literature: the journals, books etc. focussing on librarianship, as distinct from those centred on trade unions and industrial relations. (The two fields seem only rarely to have met.)

Professional Librarian: Librarian holding a recognised professional qualification in librarianship

Professional post: post intended for a Professional Librarian

Introduction

The focus of this study is the nature of the trade unionism of library staff in the early 1980s and its effects on industrial relations in libraries. The aims of the study are:

- 1) to characterise that trade unionism and the attitudes and influences associated with it
- 2) to indicate how the current situation may be managed in the individual library by both the library manager and the staff.

The study was initially prompted by the apparently growing impact of trade unionism on the day-to-day management of libraries during the 1970s, indicated at the extreme by some examples of industrial action (see, for example, Maidment (1976), Marsh (1980)). This action, while modest in scale, was nevertheless novel for library staff in the UK.

The new climate seemed to puzzle library staff almost as much as their chief librarians. It was on the face of things clearly at odds with a traditional high commitment to a service ethic and with the autocratic paternalism which had traditionally characterised the management of libraries. The commitment was expressed, for example, in an acceptance of evening and Saturday work as part of the normal working



week. The paternalistic style of management was reflected in a Chief Librarian's letter to the Library Association Record:

"In the pre-organization era when industrial action was not as fashionable as it is today, many chief librarians, working alone, achieved a great deal." (Sykes, 1974).

Trade union militancy was also not reflected in the character of informal staff room conversations about trade unions in general, where views antagonistic to trade unions were still prominently represented.

It seemed likely that explanation would be assisted by placing what was happening in libraries in the broader context of the climate of trade unionism and industrial relations in society at large, by drawing on analyses of the trade unionism of other occupational groups and by applying the theoretical structures which had been developed elsewhere.

A further dimension of interest was added by the election in 1979 of a Conservative Government committed to reform and restraint of trade unions.

From the point of view of students of trade unionism and industrial relations, library staff fall within the "white-collar" sector which has attracted much interest since the mid-1960s. As an occupational group library staff exhibit an interesting combination of apparently high levels of union membership with a position at the 'moderate' end of the spectrum of militancy. A further factor is the presence

of a professional association, The Library Association (LA), which includes in its activities some which are the normal province of a trade union (eg blacklisting posts) and which has a long history of informal and formal 'negotiation' with trade unions on behalf of the union's library members. Also, library staff are an occupational group which has been very little studied from an industrial relations perspective, as will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The dissertation begins in Chapter One with an outline of the nature of work in libraries and the character of libraries as organisations, together with a summary of research on the work attitudes of library staff. Chapter Two describes the pattern and history of trade union representation. Chapter Three draws out from the literature on trade unionism relevant information, theories and hypotheses. Chapter Four assembles existing information on the professionalism of library staff and describes the main professional bodies active in the field.

The methodology for the field study is explained in Chapter Five. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight present and discuss the results under the three headings of the staff and their jobs, trade unionism, and professionalism.

In Chapter Nine conclusions are drawn.

Chapter 1

The Library Work Context

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a picture of library staff and library work, against which the relevance to the library context of research into trade unionism in other occupations can be assessed, and against which can be placed a more detailed study of library trade unionism.

The Size Of The Workforce

The Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981 gives a total figure of 52,000 persons including part-time staff (Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982, p.2). The authors estimate (*ibid.*, p.8) that the 1981 DES Census, like those for 1972 (Department of Education and Science, 1972) and 1976 (Department of Education and Science, 1976), "may underestimate the total number of library staff in academic and special libraries by at least five per cent". If the underestimation for these groups were five per cent, this would bring the overall total to around 55,000.

The 1981 General Census, in the 10% sample analysis

(Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1984, p.100-101), classifies 2715 people as employed in the category "Librarians, information officers". It is suggested (ibid, p.ix) that sample estimates for the whole population may be made by multiplying the figures by ten. We may therefore conclude that the total equivalent population of librarians and information workers as defined in the Census is of the order of 27,000.

Library Assistants are not categorised separately from "other clerical staff". If we make the untested assumptions that the General Census classification "Librarians, information workers" equates to the DES Census "staff occupying qualified posts" and that the proportion of library assistants to professionals (see Table 1.2 below) is similar also, then we could hazard that the General Census would have found some 40,000 Library Assistants, suggesting a total occupational population of some 67,000.

In fact the General Census category containing librarians is somewhat broader. It is defined as covering:

"Persons organising and controlling library services, collecting and disseminating information. Government service intelligence officers are included" (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1980, p.xxxii).

The phrases "information officer" and "disseminating information", taken outside the context of library and information units, can be used with a variety of meanings many of which have little to do with library work. It therefore seems likely that the figure of around 55,000 based on the DES Census is not too far from the mark as a

measure of library and information work.

Routh (1980, p.16-17) charts the rise in the number of librarians between 1921 and 1971 as portrayed in Census figures. In 1921, when librarians were first identified as a separate occupational group, there were 2,000. By 1931 there were 7,000. In 1951 there were 16,000. The 1961-1971 Censuses did not distinguish librarians as a separate group. The DES Censuses for 1972, 1976 and 1981 report respectively 16,991, 17,786 and 18,057 posts for qualified librarians (Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982, p.3).

The overall average annual growth rate between 1921 and the early 1970's was about 500 posts per year. Since the mid 1970's this rate of growth has slowed. For the whole occupation, including library assistants, Table 1.1 shows how the number of staff recorded in the DES Censuses grew from 46,000 in 1972 by 16% to 53,000 in 1976 and then fell back slightly to 52,000 in 1981, leaving a net gain for the decade of some 14%.

The occupation is therefore relatively small. Allowing for the broader group encompassed within the category "librarians, information officers" in the 1981 General Census classification, the 10% sample from the 1981 General Census contained as many "statutory inspectors" - public health, weights and measures etc. - (2504) as librarians, twice as many lawyers (5393) and four or five times as many

Table 1.1 Staff employed in library and information work
1972-1981

	1972	1976	1981
Full-time	35,365	38,849	37,901
Part-time	10,317	14,275	14,096
Total	45,682	53,124	51,997
(Part-time as a percentage of Total)	(23%)	(27%)	(27%)
Total Full-time equivalent	39,440	44,604	43,644
	Change 1972-76	Change 1976-81	Change 1972-81
Full-time	+ 9.9%	- 2.4%	+ 7.2%
Part-time	+38.4%	- 1.3%	+36.6%
Total	+16.3%	- 2.1%	+13.8%
Total full-time equivalent	+13.1%	- 2.2%	+10.7%

Sources: Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries. Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981. Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982. p.3.

Statistics derived from this source.

higher education lecturers (11,600). Professional librarians would form less than 0.1% of the total working population of 2,540,559 analysed in the 10% sample. If we allow for library assistants proportionately to the DES Census figures

(see Table 1.2), the total occupational population would be less than 0.25% of the total working population.

Table 1.2 Percentage of full-time equivalent staff occupying posts for qualified staff, 1972-1981

	1972	1976	1981
Public library	34%	33%	34%
Academic library	54%	48%	47%
Special library	48%	46%	51%
ALL	41%	39%	40%

Source: Derived from: Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries. Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981. Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982. p.3.

Characteristics of the Workforce

Of the full-time equivalent staff total of 44,000 shown in the DES Census, 40% were filling posts for qualified librarians - i.e. posts for persons holding a professional qualification in librarianship or information work (Table 1.2). In 1981 81% of the holders of full-time posts for qualified staff had a professional qualification, 10% had a degree but no professional qualification and 9% had no formal qualification at all (Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982, p.10). The percentage of staff with a degree and a professional qualification has been steadily increasing: between 1976 and

1981, for example, it rose by eight percentage points (ibid, p.5).

There is a high proportion of women. Routh (1980, p.16-17) shows how the Censuses report a growth in the proportion of women librarians from 50% in 1921 to nearly 70% in 1951. In the 1981 DES Census women form 60% of the professional staff and nearly nine-tenths of the other staff (Table 1.3). However surveys have repeatedly shown that men monopolise the most senior posts (for a summary see Moore and Kempson (1985b, p.149-152)).

Table 1.1 shows that around a quarter of the staff are part-time. 94% of the part-time posts are for clerical staff and 70% of part-time posts are for clerical staff in public libraries (Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982, p.3).

The occupation also has a preponderance of young people. In 1981 59% of males and 72% of females in posts for qualified staff were under 40 (ibid, p.5). This source does not give information on the age profile of the library assistants. Sergean found in 1974 that 59% of all staff were under 35 (Sergean, 1976, p.48). Kaye (1979), in surveying trade union members in one public library, found that nearly half were under 30 and only 20% were over 44 (Kaye, 1979, p.52). It seems likely that the clerical staff are as young as or younger than the professional staff.

Table 1.3 Library and Information Staff, 1981, by Sex

	Male		Female		Total Number
	Number	%	Number	%	
QUALIFIED POSTS					
Public library	3165	37.7%	5241	62.3%	8406
Academic library	1676	42.1%	2307	57.9%	3983
National library	326	52.1%	300	47.9%	626
Special library	1839	37.9%	3009	62.1%	4848
ALL QUALIFIED POSTS	7146	39.6%	10911	60.4%	18057
CLERICAL POSTS					
Public library	2160	9.8%	19993	90.2%	22153
Academic library	638	10.4%	5484	89.6%	6122
National library	550	40.1%	823	59.9%	1373
Special library	863	20.5%	3352	79.5%	4215
ALL CLERICAL POSTS	4248	12.5%	29692	87.5%	33940

Source: Derived from: Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries. Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981. Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982. p.10.

Turnover and Wastage

The 1981 DES Census reports that in the year from 1 April 1980 to 31 March 1981 turnover for qualified staff posts was 10%, with appointments almost exactly equalling wastage (Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts

and Libraries, 1982, p.2). At 31 March 1981 4.4% of full-time posts (1679) were vacant. The vacant posts comprised 659 (3.8%) professional posts and 1020 (5.0%) clerical posts (ibid, p.6). If the difference in turnover between professional and clerical posts is similar, this suggests an annual turnover of nearer 15% for clerical staff. No figures are available from this source for part-time staff. The ratio of vacancies to turnover also suggests a number of frozen posts and/or very slow filling of vacancies.

Moore and Kempson (1985a, p.2-3) suggest that in 1981 there were about 3,400 unemployed professional librarians, some 15% of a total available workforce of 22,000.

The Organisations Which Employ Library Staff

The figures presented above mask some marked differences in the work situation in the different types of organisation in which library staff are employed. Table 1.4 shows that more than half of all jobs in library and information work are provided in public libraries, with one-fifth in academic libraries (libraries of institutions of higher and further education) and just over one-fifth in other types of library. Over the period 1972-1981 the number of staff in academic libraries expanded markedly more than in other types of library, with an increase of 27% compared with a net increase of only 7% for public and special

Table 1.4 Number of full-time equivalent library and information staff employed in various types of libraries, 1972-1981

	1972		1976		1981	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Public library	22837	57.9%	26347	59.1%	24522	56.2%
Academic library	6787	17.2%	7897	17.7%	8644	19.8%
Special library	9504	24.1%	9987	22.4%	10219	23.4%
Library school	312	0.8%	373	0.8%	259	0.6%
TOTAL	39440		44604		43644	

Sources: Department of Education and Science. Census of staff in librarianship and information work in the United Kingdom 1972. [Department of Education and Science, 1975.] p.7.

Department of Education and Science. Census of staff in librarianship and information work in the United Kingdom 1976. [Department of Education and Science, 1978.] p.12.

Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries. Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981. Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982. p.9.

Statistics derived from these.

libraries (Table 1.5). It is also notable that the academic libraries continued to sustain significant growth between 1976 and 1981, against the general economic trend and when public libraries were losing ground and the special library field was growing very slowly.

Table 1.5 Change in the percentage of full-time equivalent library and information staff employed in various types of libraries, 1972-1981

	1972-1976	1976-1981	1972-1981
Public library	+15.4%	-6.9%	+ 7.4%
Academic library	+16.4%	+9.5%	+27.4%
Special library	+ 5.1%	+2.3%	+ 7.5%

Source: Statistics derived from Table 1.4 above.

Within these broad categories there are further differences in trends of employment in different types of organisation. Table 1.6 shows that in the academic group it is the non-university establishments which have grown fastest, due to the growth of the polytechnics and to the increasing library provision in further education colleges. Table 1.7 shows that the overall 7% increase in employment in special libraries conceals totally opposite trends. Some previously well-established sectors of librarianship - industrial and commercial libraries in the private sector and public corporations - have decreased in size while national libraries have made substantial gains and new areas such as specialised library and information units in local government and school library services have made dramatic gains. Within special libraries as a group the loss of jobs in industry and commerce has been compensated for by the growth in government employment.

Table 1.6 Number of full-time equivalent library and information staff employed in academic libraries, 1972-1981

	1972	1976	1981
University and University College	3737	4152	4285
Polytechnic and Scottish Central Institution	720	1336	1689
Other college	2330	2409	2671
TOTAL ACADEMIC	6787	7897	8644

	Percentage Change		
	1972-1976	1976-1981	1972-1981
University and University College	+11.1%	+3.2%	+14.7%
Polytechnic, Scottish Central Institution and Other College*	+22.8%	+16.4%	+43.0%
TOTAL ACADEMIC	+16.4%	+9.5%	+27.4%

Sources: As for Table 1.4 and statistics derived from there.

Note: Because of rounding numbers do not all sum exactly to totals.

* In 1972 the Scottish Central Institutions were classified with 'Other Colleges' instead of Polytechnics. For this reason the percentage change for these two categories is conflated.

Table 1.7 Number of full-time equivalent library and information staff employed in types of special library, 1972-1981

	1972**	1976	1981
Local government	172	333	340
Government agency	2318	2452	2458
National library	1531	1773	1887
Public corporation	711	848	555
Private business	3362	2727	2898
Learned and professional society	599	625	637
Research or trade association	573	514	534
School library	*	540	626
Other	204	174	285
TOTAL SPECIAL	9468	9986	10219

	Percentage Change**		
	1972-1976	1976-1981	1972-1981
Local government	+93.6%	+2.1%	+97.7%
Government agency	+5.8%	+0.2%	+6.0%
National library	+15.8%	+6.4%	+23.3%
Public corporation	+19.3%	-65.4%	-21.9%
Private business	-18.9%	+6.3%	-13.8%
Learned and professional society	+4.3%	+1.2%	+6.3%
Research or trade association	-10.3%	+3.9%	-6.8%
School library	n/a	+15.9%	n/a
Other	-14.7%	+63.8%	+39.7%
TOTAL SPECIAL	+5.5%	+2.3%	+7.9%

For notes and sources see next page.

Note: Because of rounding numbers may not sum exactly to totals.

* not separately recorded in 1972

** based on original 1972 Census figures, the summary figures for which differ in detail from the summary figures for 1972 quoted in the 1976 and 1981 reports. The DES Statistics Branch reports (January 1986) that "the information for 1972 and 1976 is no longer on file". It is therefore not possible to reconcile the two sets of figures. Hence 1972-based percentages are slightly different from those in Table 1.5.

Sources: Department of Education and Science. Census of staff in librarianship and information work in the United Kingdom 1972. [Department of Education and Science, 1975.] p.7.

Department of Education and Science. Census of staff in librarianship and information work in the United Kingdom 1976. [Department of Education and Science, 1978.] p.12.

Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries. Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981. Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982. p.9.

Statistics derived from there.

Earlier tables also illustrate marked differences in staffing patterns between different types of library. Table 1.2 shows a much lower proportion of qualified staff in public libraries - a reflection of the higher proportion of their business which is represented by straightforward lending of books as against other aspects of information provision. This table also shows a modest trend in academic libraries to reduce the previously very high proportion of qualified posts. Special libraries retain a high proportion of qualified posts. National libraries are notable for the high proportion of men employed (Table 1.3).

Another approach to the library work context for which the DES Censuses of staff in library and information work provide data is the number of organizations employing library and information staff and the size of the work units. Table 1.8 gives a breakdown of the number of organizations responding positively to the DES questionnaires in 1972, 1976 and 1981. Given the efforts made to make the Census representative (see for example Department of Education and Science, 1972, p.1) it seems likely that the results are comparable year to year and reasonably representative.

The number of separate organizations declined by nearly a quarter from 3,700 to 2,900 over the period. The decline of 300 or two-thirds in the number of public libraries is largely due to local government reorganization in 1974. The decline of 180 or one-fifth in academic libraries is mostly due to college mergers. Likewise the decline in the number of national libraries is primarily due to the bringing together of separate institutions to form the British Library in 1973. Private business libraries declined by 300 or one-quarter. This may be due in part to mergers, but also reflects the abolition of many industrial libraries as part of industrial cutbacks. A net increase of 120 in Government agency libraries broadly compensated for reductions in the numbers of all other types of special library.

Table 1.8 Number of organisations employing library or information staff, 1972-1981

	1972*	1976	1981	Change 1972-1981
PUBLIC LIBRARY	473	167	156	-67.0%
University or Univ. college	241	194	195	-19.1%
Polytechnic or Scottish Central Institution	46	41	42	- 8.7%
Other college	698	632	565	-19.1%
ALL ACADEMIC	985	867	802	-18.6%
Local government	55	55	29	-47.3%
Government agency	514	691	638	+24.1%
National library	15	4	5	-66.7%
Public corporation	106	120	105	- 0.9%
Private business	1182	1038	880	-25.5%
Learned or prof_ essional society	189	202	132	-30.2%
Research or trade association	122	86	101	-17.2%
Other	80	74	88	+10.0%
ALL SPECIAL*	2263	2270	1978	-12.6%
LIBRARY SCHOOL	16	15	12	-25.0%
TOTAL	3737	3319	2948	-21.1%

For notes and sources see next page.

Notes: To a small extent these figures may reflect variations in response rate to the questionnaire (e.g. the number of library schools did not diminish between 1976 and 1981) but in general it is believed that the figures are reasonably undistorted.

* based on original 1972 Census figures which differ from the figures for 1972 quoted in the 1976 and 1981 reports. See Notes to Table 1.7 for an explanation.

Sources: Department of Education and Science. Census of staff in librarianship and information work in the United Kingdom 1972. [Department of Education and Science, 1975.] p.7.

Department of Education and Science. Census of staff in librarianship and information work in the United Kingdom 1976. [Department of Education and Science, 1978.] p.10-11.

Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries. Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981. Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982. p.9.

Statistics derived from these.

The Size of Library Work Units

Putting together the statistics for numbers of staff and numbers of units, as in Table 1.9, it is clear that there has been a polarization between a small number of large library systems, which employ around 80% of all library staff, and a large number of small units employing the remainder. Sergean analysed the 1972 DES Census returns and found that 31% of all units and 44% of special units employed only one person and that only 17% of libraries employed more than 10 staff (Sergean, 1976, Appendix II and III, p.42-43). Since the public and academic library mergers removed mainly middle-sized units, it is likely that

Table 1.9 Average number of full-time equivalent library and information staff employed in various types of library system, 1972-1981

	1972	1976	1981
PUBLIC	48.4	157.8	157.2
University and university coll.	15.5	21.4	21.9
Polytechnic and Scottish Central Institution	15.6	32.6	40.2
Other college	3.3	3.8	4.7
ALL ACADEMIC	6.9	9.1	10.8
National library	102.1	443.3	377.4
ALL SPECIAL (excl. National)	3.5	3.6	4.2

Sources: Derived from:

Department of Education and Science. Census of staff in librarianship and information work in the United Kingdom 1972. [Department of Education and Science, 1975.] p.7.

Department of Education and Science. Census of staff in librarianship and information work in the United Kingdom 1976. [Department of Education and Science, 1978.] p.12.

Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries. Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981. Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982. p.9.

this polarity will, if anything, have been widened since 1972.

It should be remembered that even the small units are usually part of larger (often very large) organisations and

that by contrast many of the staff in the larger public and academic library systems actually work wholly or largely in small branches with between 2 and 10 staff. There is nevertheless a cultural difference between working in a library system which is large enough to develop its own independent customs and practices (perhaps where there are more than 30 staff) and being part of a small library which is socially and culturally likely to reflect the organisational climate of the parent organisation more strongly and to depend more on external contact for support of a professional kind. On this criterion virtually all the polytechnic libraries fall in the 'large' category.

The Nature of Library Work

The traditional and primary role of a library is to collect, store and organise ready for use a collection of books and other materials which will support the objectives of the sponsoring body or parent organisation. At the simplest level the library staff stock the shelves with the books which higher authority has determined shall be provided and control use of them. At this level librarianship is, indeed, as a former University Deputy Librarian used to say, "nothing more than a complicated clerical operation". However, in most contexts the library staff will undertake a wider role. This includes:

- * planning and organising the library service

- * selecting the books to be provided on the basis of knowledge of present and likely future use

- * providing various aids to the use of the particular library (catalogues, printed and audio-visual guides)

- * advising users on sources to meet their needs

- * teaching users how to tap the vast and sophisticated pool of literature outside the particular library

- * actively promoting the library to potential users

- * selecting and repackaging information for those who are too busy, too expensive or ill-equipped to do it for themselves

- * creating sources of material to supplement that which is published

- * contributing in non-specialist ways to the general policy-making, management and operation of the parent organisation.

Recent Changes in Library Work

Libraries have made considerable use of computers. From the early 1970's most large library systems were using a computerised system to help carry out some of the basic "housekeeping" functions of acquisitions, cataloguing and issuing, long before "information technology" (or new technology agreements) were fashionable. The advent of cheap, powerful microcomputer systems brings similar possibilities within the grasp of small to medium size libraries, too. Libraries have also been using inter-library computer networks since the 1960's. One US network, called OCLC, now has over 3000 libraries in many countries contributing to and drawing from a common database.

The same data management and networking capabilities of computer and telecommunications systems are slowly affecting the physical publication and distribution of knowledge and information. The Encyclopaedia Britannica and equivalents are now available on remote computer databases or on compact disk. There are those who foresee within the next ten or fifteen years a growing role for the "paperless" or "electronic" library (see for example Licklider (1965), Lancaster (1978), Dowlin (1984)). It is accepted that all librarians need to have knowledge of how to use computers and so all professional training courses include it (see for example Day and Kemp, 1984) and most schools of librarianship have been renamed schools of information studies/science and librarianship. The possible effects of

computerisation on staff attitudes are explored in Chapter Three.

There has also been a growing trend for libraries to become less passive organisations and to seek out more actively new services which they can appropriately and usefully provide to their target communities. In academic libraries the development of a structure of subject specialist librarians with both professional and specialist subject knowledge has allowed libraries to play the sort of extended role described above (see Harris (1974) and Winkworth (1979) for examples). In public libraries subject specialism has been employed in major libraries and in branch libraries a more proactive movement known as "community librarianship" (see Jordan and Whalley (1977) for example) which moves away from the delivery of a standard "package" of materials to varying the stock to meet the researched needs of the particular community (eg heavy provision of ethnic or local interest materials) has influenced the character of library work. Special libraries have tended always to take a more active role in the selection and packaging of information, as reflected in the establishment of a separate professional organisation, ASLIB, in the 1930's and a tendency to use terms such as "information officer" in preference to the conventional term "librarian". However, with change in more traditional libraries it is now very difficult satisfactorily to define a general difference between the meaning of the terms in a librarianship context. In special libraries in recent years

development has been most marked in the creation of in-house computer systems and the use of on-line searching facilities, which are now features of all types of libraries.

In the 1980's there has also been a growing trend for librarians to be employed in information-related work outside formal libraries or information units _ in publishing, in communications, in research, in management information systems, for example (see Slater, 1984). An analysis of the employment of its members by the mainstream professional body, The Library Association (LA), in 1985, typifies the current situation. Table 1.10 shows the type of employment of UK members of the LA.

Table 1.10 Library Association members employed in the United Kingdom by sector of employment, 1985

	percentage of total
public library	48%
academic library	21%
other	30%

Source: Library Association. Report of the Futures Working Party. Library Association, 1985. p.6.

The report of the LA Futures Working Party succinctly summarises all these trends:

* traditional library services are increasingly regarded in a wider context as part of total information, leisure, educational or community provision.

* technological and social changes have revolutionized the process by which information and ideas

are created and provided and the context in which services are offered.

* many librarians now require and are acquiring a range of skills far wider than those traditionally associated with our profession.

* people from other disciplines are now working to provide library and information services alongside conventional librarians.

* a small but significant proportion of the membership is employed outside mainstream librarianship.

* patterns in education are changing

* the social perception of the value of information has changed, partly due to the ways in which information is handled and not least due to its increased marketing as a commercial product" (Library Association, 1985a, p.2)

The Working Party goes on in a footnote to provide a useful definition of "information":

"We wish to emphasize that when we refer to information we use it in a broad sense meaning data, facts, ideas, opinions and cultural values conveyed through a variety of media ranging from the traditional printed forms, including books and various audio-visual media to electronic processes" (ibid.).

Libraries as Organisations

The role and purpose discussed above determine a number of characteristics of libraries as organisations and hence of the work context of the staff.

Firstly, the library is almost always a service department of a larger organisation or community. This is self-evidently true of the special library supporting the activities of a commercial firm and of the university or college library supporting the academic activities of its

parent institution. For the public or great national library there is not the same obvious relationship to one particular larger purpose. However, public funding means that the library is accountable in much the same way to the representatives of the community and that organisationally the library will be part of central or local government, and must in part reflect the broader organisational climate of a governmental department. There are very few free-standing, self-supporting libraries which are at liberty to determine their own purposes and organisational modes of operation.

Secondly, this subordinate role of libraries has consequences, inter alia, for the industrial relations situation. Most library staff are employed by large organisations which determine salary grades and general conditions of service, even where the library itself is a small unit.

Thirdly, the service nature of the occupation has also resulted in traditions of spreading a normal weekly total of hours worked across extended opening hours. No longer do public library staff work until seven, eight or nine o'clock each evening and all day every Saturday, receiving in return breaks of several hours in between split duties in order to keep the total hours worked within the standard weekly total. But evening and Saturday duties without overtime payment are still incorporated in the working conditions of many library staff. The long opening hours and a pattern of demand in public and academic libraries which brings much of

the trade outside the standard Monday-Friday nine-til-five office week have led to the high proportion of part-time staff.

Fourthly, the service nature of the occupation also means that many staff are tied to covering particular service points for a large proportion of their working hours.

These conditions have implications for participation in union activities.

The Work of Library Staff

The actual work in a library is a mixture of front of house dealing with the customers and behind the scenes running the systems for cataloguing, borrowing etc. on which the effective functioning of the library depends. This mixture, the predominance of small operating units (even within larger libraries) and the long opening hours mean that most library staff have perforce a varied, generalist set of duties. Only in very large libraries is complete specialisation possible, and even then the backroom staff often take a share of the "unsocial" hours working on a rota basis.

Variety of another sort is reflected in a mixture of physical, intellectual and social work. Dealing with books

in large numbers is heavy and dirty work. Most clerical tasks in a library, however mundane, require total accuracy. And being able to deal with people is a large part of the daily work of most library staff.

One other characteristic is the short duration of the individual tasks which make up the day's work. Issuing books to one reader is likely only to take a minute or two at most. A survey of enquiries received in Newcastle Polytechnic Library (McDowell, 1985, p.9) showed that about half of enquiries took less than one minute to answer and less than 15% took more than five minutes. It rarely takes longer than half an hour to catalogue and classify a book for addition to stock. Observation shows that there are relatively few tasks of a lengthy nature, but boredom from repeating the same short task many times a day is alleviated by the variety of tasks which any member of staff is likely to be called upon to carry out during a week and by the contact with people. This finding was confirmed by Sergean (1976).

A further factor is the variation in duties between libraries. Even staff at a similar grade in the same sort of library may have very different duties in the light of the changing circumstances summarised in the report of the Library Association Futures Working Party referred to above. Thus a joint employer-union working party set up to recommend a new grading structure for professional library staff in local authority libraries could find very few

points of commonality in the work done by professional librarians in six different library authorities:

"The range of duties undertaken at different levels varied according to the structure, and philosophy, of the library management...Staff with similar job titles and grades performed different functions in different authorities..." (National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Staffs, 1983, p.3).

Attitudes to work

A useful picture of the way library staff perceive and respond to their work is provided by the reports of a major survey of job characteristics and staffing needs of library and information work which was undertaken between 1972 and 1976 (Sergean, 1976; Sergean, McKay and Corkill, 1976). The Sheffield Manpower Project, as it was known, used as its sampling frame the returns for the 1972 DES Census referred to above. Questionnaires were sent to all staff in a stratified sample of organisational units and a 68% response rate from individual job-holders yielded 1,012 completed questionnaires, each describing a particular post and job-holder. Since, as the author comments, "the sample returns reflect the distribution in the wider population to a very satisfactory degree, and provide a sound basis for generalizations about library and information units and their staff" (Sergean, 1976, p.4), the results offer a helpful source of information about the attitudes of library staff to their work.

The library staff are depicted as seeing their work as

offering considerable freedom from close supervision but with less responsibility for others, involving a large amount of dealing with people, being quite physically demanding, with a strong element of variety, a fast tempo of work and generally short span of attention for each task. There is considerable contrast between the popular image of libraries as gentle havens of quiet, suitable for employing persons of a nervous disposition, and the perceptions of the staff themselves.

One factor which Sergean noted which has become even more important since his survey is the use of computers in libraries.

Perhaps like most organisations prior to the 1970's, libraries were traditionally very hierarchical, authoritarian organisations. The expectation was that a member of staff at any level, having once had a task explained, would get on with it with little further supervision. This approach is reflected in the perceptions of the library staff surveyed by Sergean. He reports that "less than 2% of posts have a purely planning and/or supervisory emphasis" and that "almost two-thirds of posts are purely practitioner" (Sergean, 1976, p.11).

A corollary of such a mode of management is that communication is kept to a minimum and lack of communication is one of the most frequent criticisms of their job reported by many staff (Sergean, 1976, p.19). Stewart (1982) came to

similar conclusions. Sergean asked staff to identify "best" and "worst" features of their work. He summarises his results as follows:

"If one uses these comments as a general measure of how librarians and information specialists regard their chosen field, then their overall attitude is favourable, without being overwhelmingly so. Positive comments outweigh negative by 57% to 43%. The strength of attitudes in different organizational groupings is fairly similar. The majority of best features, over 80% for each organizational grouping, are those which are intrinsic to the work itself. (Factors associated with working conditions and terms and conditions of employment account for only 8.7% and 6.9% of favourable comments respectively.) Prominent among these intrinsic or work-centred factors are variety, involvement with people, a sense of service and social worth, intellectual satisfaction and the opportunity for personal development.

On the negative side work-centred factors contribute only half of the unfavourable comments, with a correspondingly increased emphasis upon unsatisfactory working conditions and terms and conditions of employment. Prominent worst features were work routine; the physical demands of work; difficulties of, and lack of involvement with, users; lack of status and the length and arrangement of working hours. Some organizational differences are apparent in the emphasis given to the different worst features. Comment upon the physical demands of the work and on the inconvenient arrangement of hours of work were particularly stressed in public units." (Sergean, 1976, p.27-28).

He also noted that part-time staff tended to be better motivated and better adapted to their work than full-time staff. However, overall Sergean concluded:

"In considering the types of behaviour and the kinds of adaptation needed, the workforce is seen to be relatively well-matched and well-adapted to these demands." (ibid, p.21)

and

"In considering jobholders' overall attitudes to work, job and 'profession', one notes a workforce that is generally satisfied and well-adjusted." (ibid, p.28).

Other research, which is conveniently summarised in an article by Moore and Kempson also confirms the overall

picture of a workforce who "are content with their jobs and gain satisfaction from intrinsic aspects of their jobs" (Moore and Kempson, 1985b, p.140).

Professionalism and staff structures

Moore and Kempson's two articles (1985a, 1985b) bring out indirectly another feature of the occupation: a preoccupation with professional status. Apart from the Sheffield Manpower Survey, almost all the 40 surveys and reports which they quote in their two articles are concerned solely or largely with the qualified or professional staff.

Until the 1960's professional qualifications were usually obtained by part-time study while working as an assistant in a library. In these circumstances the emphasis on professional status was not divisive, since becoming a professional was an avenue equally open, in principle at least, to every library assistant. There were usually staff in process of qualification in any unit and there was little need for a separate career structure for non-professional staff.

As full-time courses almost completely replaced part-time study and as graduate entry to professional posts became the norm, the overall effect was for the first time to divide entry to the occupation into two streams with clearly different expectations and opportunities. It was and is

open to any library assistant to give up her job and live on a student grant for three or four years in order to obtain the required qualification (and some quite long-serving staff eventually do so) but in general, apart from those who take up library assistant posts with the express intention of leaving to study for a professional qualification after a year or so, it has become rare for those who started as assistants to become professionally qualified, having once got used to a regular income and perhaps having acquired family responsibilities. Russell (1985) describes the history in more detail.

This change can produce some odd practical situations, with professionals who are inexperienced but highly qualified (sometimes first and higher degree plus professional qualification) in charge of assistants with many years experience, who know their customers much better and are likely to be a great deal better at handling a wide range of practical duties, but lack the broader perspective of the possible role of the library which a good professional has.

This situation has occurred in many occupations in recent years, given the increasing emphasis on graduate qualifications for professional staff (see for example (Roberts, Loveridge, Gennard et al., 1972, p.320). In others, such as law, it was long-established. But in law there were also well-established differences in role between the lawyer and the clerk, and few occupations offer quite

the same work situation as a library, where all the staff tend to share some of the same duties regardless of grade in order to cover the long hours of opening, and where it is correspondingly difficult to define role differences very clearly. This is shown up in the emphasis Sergean found on variety in the work of library staff (Sergean, 1976, p.6).

The dissatisfaction of the staff concerned was beginning to emerge even in 1974-75 when Sergean conducted his survey. While seventy-five percent of respondents answered "yes" to the question "On the whole, does your present work give you a chance to do the kind of things you are best at?":

"Attitude to work was less favourable for those in junior-graded posts (compared with seniors) and for practitioners only" (Sergean, McKay and Corkill, 1976, p.202).

The problems Sergean pointed to began to be faced only later in the seventies. And given the preoccupation with professional staff none of the later satisfaction surveys deal with the non-professionals. Only an occasional cri-de-coeur in the library literature (eg Taylor, 1981: "The lowest of the low: library assistants in public libraries") formally registers the problem.

There are positive possibilities in the new situation (see for example Major and Judd, 1979), and these are reflected in a growing trend to establish staff structures which separate more clearly the roles of the professional and clerical staff.

In North America the terms "paraprofessional" and "library technician" gained currency in the 1960's and 1970's as separate qualifications and career structures for clerical staff were established in libraries. In the UK the situation began to be faced only towards the end of the 1970's, when librarianship modules were designed for the BEC (now BTEC) qualification structure. The usual pattern has been to leave running the straightforward user services and clerical functions to the Assistants with the aim of giving professional staff more time to devote to purely professional work. Computerisation is often contributory. In computerisation the stages in any process have to be separated out in great detail and this tends to lead to an identification of the level of difficulty of the individual stages in a process which under a manual system were seen as one undivided whole which had all to be done by staff who were qualified to deal with the most difficult. However, even in the eighties there are still many library systems which have not yet devised a constructive solution to this situation, as Russell shows (Russell, 1985).

Not surprisingly, since these changes move the lower boundary of professional work upwards and therefore imply either taking on new roles by the professionals or the employment of proportionately fewer of them, this is a controversial process (see for example Winkworth (1980) and the ensuing contributions from Isaacs (1980), Bate (1980), Pearce (1980) and Shreeve (1980), and also Liddle (1982)).

Another aspect of the controversy is whether the whole process leads to deskilling and alienation as suggested by writers such as Braverman (1974) and Crompton and Jones (1984) in relation to other occupational contexts. This is discussed in Chapter Three.

Socioeconomic status

In terms of financial rewards and socioeconomic status, Sergean concluded in the early 1970s not so much that rewards were adequate (although overall he found little complaint) as that "this is a field where the prospective entrant is often warned that he will never make a fortune, and where at present he does not look to do so" (Sergean, 1976, p.20).

This is less true of public libraries, where Sergean found some evidence of dissatisfaction with salaries, and as reflected in the literature of dealings between librarians and NALGO (to be discussed in a later chapter), which indicates longstanding if mostly unenergetic dissatisfaction.

The Office of Population and Census Statistics classify librarians in Social Class II: Intermediate occupations (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1980). Within the Department of Employment "Classification

of Occupations and Directory of Occupational Titles (CODOT), librarians are classified under Group II "Professional and related occupations supporting management and administration" (Department of Employment, 1972). For the Census library assistants are classified in Social Class III: Non-manual skilled workers and in CODOT in Group VII "Clerical and related occupations". (Department of Employment, 1972; Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1980). The Joint Industry Committee for National Readership Surveys (JICNARS) market research classification places librarians in class B - Professional and library assistants in class C1 - clerical (Monk, 1985).

Table 1.11 Average gross weekly earnings of library staff and other groups, 1980

	Males	Females
National average	£124.50	£78.80
Professionals (NES Group II)	£167.70	£121.60
Librarians and information workers	£168.80	£121.30
All clerks (NES Group VII)	£103.50	£74.30
Record and library clerks	£91.20	£69.90

Sources: Department of Employment. New earnings survey, 1980, Tables 86 and 87.

Supplementary statistics provided by the Department of Employment, Statistics Division A2, Orphanage Road, Watford, Herts, WD1 1PJ.

Table 1.11 shows earnings of library staff in comparison with national average earnings in 1980, the

nearest date to the period when fieldwork for this study was carried out for which all the statistics shown are available. Tables 1.12 and 1.13 show salary comparisons over a longer period.

Table 1.12 Average gross weekly earnings of records and library clerks and of all clerks, as a percentage of national average earnings (full-time staff only) for the same sex, 1973-1984

	Percentage of Average Gross Weekly Earnings for Same Sex			
	Records and Library Clerks		All Clerks	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1973	79.5	92.6	83.8	97.0
1974	n/a	92.9	86.2	99.3
1975	81.7	93.0	85.7	93.9
1976	78.1	93.3	86.9	93.1
1977	79.3	93.9	85.5	93.9
1978	79.9	93.6	83.2	94.7
1979	77.1	93.0	82.5	95.2
1980	73.3	88.7	85.0	94.3
1981	76.0	89.4	85.0	92.7
1982	73.4	89.9	84.4	94.3
1983	74.3	89.7	84.8	93.4
1984	71.3	89.4	82.7	94.2

Source: Derived from Tables 86 and 87 in: Department of Employment. New earnings survey, 1973-1984.

The category "records and library clerks" is clearly broader than library assistants and the category "librarians and other information officers" is again defined to include government intelligence officers and may include a wide variety of types of information officer (Department of Employment, 1972, p.336-338 and p.46-48). Therefore it may

be that these average earnings levels are higher or lower than those of library staff as usually understood.

Table 1.13 Average gross weekly earnings of librarians and information officers and of all Group II professional staff as a percentage of national average earnings (full-time staff only) for the same sex, 1973-1984

	Percentage of Average Gross Weekly Earnings for Same Sex			
	Librarians*		All Group II Professionals	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1973	n/a	n/a	139.1	135.9
1974	n/a	n/a	139.4	162.5
1975	129.8	157.5	130.9	151.9
1976	127.9	n/a	130.6	144.8
1977	122.9	149.8	131.8	136.5
1978	118.6	n/a	131.8	150.2
1979	117.7	n/a	127.2	150.2
1980	135.6	153.9	134.7	154.3
1981	n/a	n/a	134.7	135.6
1982	n/a	148.7	136.6	150.0
1983	122.6	n/a	137.9	150.3
1984	128.7	n/a	140.7	152.8

Note: * Statistics for librarians, where available, are subject to relatively high standard error and should be used with caution. For years where no data is given the Department of Employment will not release figures either because the sample was too small or because the standard error was too high.

Source: Derived from Tables 86 and 87 in: Department of Employment. New earnings survey, 1973-1984 and from statistics supplied by the Department of Employment Statistics Division A2, Orphanage Road, Watford, Herts, WD1 1PJ.

However, within the limits of confidence appropriate for each year's statistics, the figures should provide an

approximate guide to changes in salary levels. Prior to 1973 there are no separate statistics for either group of library staff.

Female records and library clerks receive about 90% of average earnings for women and slightly below the average for all female clerks. Male records and library clerks earn 75% of national average earnings for their sex and roughly 90% of the average earnings of male clerks.

The average earnings of female clerks are slightly further below average earnings in 1984 than in 1973. For male clerks as a whole there was little change but male records and library clerks have lost ground since 1978.

Turning to professional staff, in 1980 female librarians earned approximately one and a half times average female earnings, while male librarians earned one-third more than average male earnings. Both sexes received average salaries for the socioeconomic group in which they are classified.

For the period 1973-1984 the statistics for librarians are rather incomplete (see notes to Table 1.13). The limited evidence would appear to suggest that female librarians generally maintained their position in the pay league, in relation both to the overall average and to other professionals. The relative position of male librarians appears to fluctuate: in 1975, 1976 and 1980 they are close

to the average for professionals; in other years they are up to 10% less well-paid than other male professionals and drop to less than one-fifth more than the national average. But there is no clear overall pattern over the period. The professional group as a whole lost ground between 1974 and 1979 but regained it between 1980 and 1984.

Table 1.14 Female average weekly gross earnings as a percentage of male earnings (full-time staff only), 1973-1984

Year	Percentage
1973	55.1
1974	56.4
1975	61.5
1976	64.3
1977	64.9
1978	63.3
1979	62.1
1980	63.3
1981	65.1
1982	64.1
1983	65.0
1984	65.5

Source: Derived from Tables 86 and 87 in: Department of Employment. New earnings survey, 1973-1984.

Underlying all these results is a trend between 1973 and 1977, revealed in Table 1.14, for average female earnings to rise from 55% to 65% of average male earnings, a proportion which has been maintained since. This was perhaps a consequence of the gradual implementation of the 1970 Equal Pay Act between 1970 and 1975 and of the policies followed in the early years of incomes policy, when in general the lower paid were less affected, and therefore

women in general, including female library staff, made some relative progress which has not been subsequently eroded.

Overall, with the exception of female professionals, all library staff appear to have a slightly lower relative economic position in the 1980's than they had enjoyed in the early 1970's, but the difference is only of the order of 2% to 10%. However, whether such a change is perceived may depend partly on changes in the real value of earnings (i.e. what they will buy).

Between 1974 and 1984 the annual average for the Retail Price Index rose from 108.5 to 351.8 (Employment Gazette, December 1985, p.S56) - an increase of 224%. Over the same period national average gross earnings rose from £47.70 to £178.80 for men (+275%) and from £26.90 to £117.20 for women (+336%) (New Earnings Survey, 1984). Therefore, for the population as a whole there was an increase in real earnings, although taxation changes will have affected the amount of benefit to individuals.

Tables 1.15 and 1.16 indicate the situation of the categories which include library staff. Between 1975 and 1980 their earnings rose slightly above the rate of inflation, except for the male clerks, who suffered a reduction in real income. Between 1980 and 1984 the male clerks recovered most of their lost ground while earnings of male librarians kept pace with inflation and female clerks made significant gains.

Table 1.15 Average gross weekly earnings of library staff compared with Retail Price Index annual averages, 1975-1984

Year	RPI Annual Average	Average gross weekly earnings			
		Librarians		Records and library clerks	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1975	108.5	£78.90	£58.90	£49.70	£34.80
1980	263.7	£168.80	£121.30	£91.20	£69.90
1984	351.8	£225.30	n/a	£127.40	£104.80

Sources: "Retail prices: general index of retail prices".
Employment Gazette, 93, December 1985, p.S56-S57.

New Earnings Survey, 1975, 1980 and 1984, Tables
86 and 87.

Statistics supplied by Department of Employment,
Statistics Division A2, Orphanage Road, Watford,
Herts WD1 1PJ.

Table 1.16 Percentage change in value of gross weekly earnings of library staff compared with Retail Price Index annual average, 1975-1984

Years	RPI Annual Average	Percentage Changes			
		Librarians		Records and library clerks	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
1975-80	+95.6%	+114.0%	+105.9%	+83.5%	+100.9%
1980-84	+33.4%	+33.5%	n/a	+39.7%	+49.9%
1975-84	+161.0%	+185.6%	n/a	+156.3%	+201.1%

Source: Derived from Table 1.15.

Over the whole period earnings of male clerks broadly kept pace with inflation. Other library staff, like the population at large, enjoyed a small increase in real earnings. At the very least, in terms of objective measures most library staff appear unlikely to have suffered any

significant reduction in real earnings, since there are very few male clerks in libraries.

Summary

There are then some 55,000 library staff in the UK. They form a small occupational group divided 40:60 between professional and clerical. There is a very high proportion of women but the most senior posts are held predominantly by men. The workforce is relatively young and also has a growing proportion of graduates with professional qualifications in senior posts. Half the workforce is employed in public libraries, 20% are employed in academic libraries and the remainder are scattered across a wide variety of work contexts. Over the ten years to 1981 the academic sector grew most strongly.

The staff are employed by around 3,000 organisations, a drop of 25% over ten years caused mostly by mergers in the public sector, but also by lost jobs in industry. On a day-to-day basis a majority of library workers are based in small physical units but 80% are employed in large library systems. Almost all the staff are part of larger organisations for salary and conditions of service purposes.

The role and function of libraries is changing, for a variety of reasons, including a less passive approach from librarians, computerisation and changing social attitudes to

the importance of information. The nature of the work and the small unit size result in variety being a major characteristic of the duties of most individuals, with commonly a mix of physical, intellectual and personal interaction work. Typically the work consists of a large number of short tasks.

In general the workforce is depicted as fairly satisfied and well-matched to the work to be done, though less so at lower levels. A preoccupation with professional status may correlate with financial rewards for most staff which tend to be below average for the socioeconomic groups to which they are usually classified. In the ten years to 1984 there was no major shift in the rewards relative to other occupations. For library staff at all levels there was a modest increase in real earnings.

Chapter 2

The Pattern and History of Trade Union Representation in Libraries

Introduction

The widely dispersed pattern of employment characteristic of library work was described in Chapter One. Reflecting this dispersion, the Library Association produces a series of leaflets stating recommended salaries and conditions of service for different groups of library staff: public library staff; university library staff (two sets of pay scales); polytechnic and college library staff; health service library staff; special library staff; civil service librarians; etc. (Library Association, 1985c). The leaflets make recommendations either in terms of standard pay scales where these exist (e.g. teaching, local government, civil service, etc) or in terms of recommended salary levels in relation to responsibilities (special libraries). Another consequence of this dispersed pattern of employment is that salaries and conditions of service for library staff are negotiated by a variety of unions with reference to a variety of dominant comparison groups.

Trade Union Representation: Public Libraries

The pattern of union representation is simplest in public

libraries. It is generally accepted that the National and Local Government Officers' Association (NALGO) is the recognised union for all grades of public library staff and that salaries and conditions of service for public library staff are negotiated through the national, regional and local machinery established between NALGO and the local authorities. Given that more than half of all library staff work in public libraries, the effectiveness of NALGO is of great interest to library staff. The professional body, The Library Association, puts considerable effort into its relationships with NALGO.

NALGO, which claims to be "the largest white-collar union in the world", needs little introduction. In December 1984 it had 766,000 members concentrated mainly in local government and public services. Its branch structure is employer-based and the union represents all grades of clerical, administrative, professional and technical staff, from chief officers downwards. Spoor (1967) and Volker (1966) are two of many sources which provide more information.

Dove (1970) and Maidment (1976) relate the history of relationships between NALGO and its library members. For several years from 1911 NALGO and The Library Association shared headquarters accommodation (Dove, 1970, p.73). However, individual library staff, working in libraries which were open for long hours and, in some areas, sited up to 50 miles from the County Hall, often found it difficult to participate in NALGO branch activities and therefore to achieve any remedy for the especially poor salaries and working conditions which

applied to local government library staff. This was often the result of the legal limitation up till 1919 that an authority was not allowed to spend any more than the product of a penny rate on its library service (Maidment, 1976, p.143-145).

Maidment comments that "it was not until 1946 that library staff were effectively covered by recognized conditions of service negotiated by NALGO" (ibid., p.146).

Despite the conditions of service success of 1946, from the 1950s until the end of the 1970s relationships between library staff and NALGO were scarcely cordial, as librarians laid at the door of NALGO much of the blame for what were seen as continued poor salary gradings, even in comparison with other local government officers. Thus Dove is fiercely critical of the first grading prescription for librarians in public libraries, which was negotiated by NALGO in 1950/51 and which was limited to laying down a minimum grading for a chartered librarian in charge of a branch or department, with no guidance for the grading of more senior or more junior posts:

"Have you ever heard of a Town Clerk's salary being settled by the salary of his chief committee clerk, a Borough Engineer by his engineering assistant, or a Borough Treasurer by the rating clerk?" (Dove, 1970, p.74)

and quotes a librarian writing to the NALGO journal, "Public Service", for February 1957, as asking "why an architectural assistant and an engineering assistant should get the same salary as a County Librarian" (Dove, 1970, p.75).

Again in 1959 The Library Association Council attacked NALGO furiously for agreeing to a Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers which excluded Chief Librarians (ibid.,

p.75). But at the same time NALGO was pressing for improved gradings for librarians and achieved some success in 1959 and throughout the early 1960's, even if there were difficulties in persuading all authorities to abide by the prescriptions (ibid., p.78).

There was further discord in 1966, when NALGO agreed to a new "Librarians' Scale" which had a lower entry point than the scale it succeeded, and to a two-tier trainee grade in which librarians were included in the lower tier (ibid., p.79-80). Pressure for a higher nationally agreed basic grade for librarians continued throughout the 1970's but opposition from the employers prevented any improvement. NALGO was more successful in negotiating improved service conditions such as 'unsocial hours' payments and improvements in the superannuation scheme (Haslam, 1977, p.253).

In 1979 NALGO recommended a change of approach on the gradings issue. The union advised seeking to have the national prescription for librarians deleted altogether, thereby allowing more scope for local negotiation. Local government library staff were not convinced, and a ballot showed a large majority in favour of continuing to try to negotiate an improved grade nationally. In 1983 a job evaluation exercise in six authorities concluded that the duties carried out were so variable that no new national prescription was possible (see Chapter One). It was understood that in the light of this result the employers also were willing to accept deletion of the national prescription. The Library Association conducted a

second ballot of those of its members who were employed in local government in 1984. This time there was a majority in favour of abolishing the national grading prescription for librarians and this was agreed with the employers shortly after.

Views of NALGO and Consideration of Alternatives

This brief history illustrates the problems and tensions confronted by a union such as NALGO in trying to represent a wide variety of occupations in a sector like local government where there is very little in common between the various activities except that they are administered through the local government system. It is also possible to see the advantages for the employers in having the different occupational groups represented by one union: to a considerable extent it is the union rather than the employer which has to grapple with the problems of comparability between unlike occupations.

There are also a number of pointers to the attitudes and expectations of the library staff towards their trade union. Both Dove and Haslam refer on several occasions to the inactivity of library staff in the union. For instance Dove points out that no librarian has ever been President of NALGO (Dove, 1970, p.73), that of the 370 persons who served on the NALGO National Executive Committee between 1918 and 1969 only eight were librarians (ibid., p.74), and that in 1958 out of 1,345 NALGO branches only 11 had librarian secretaries (ibid.,

p.75). Following the disappointments of the 1960's library staff seem to have taken more interest in union activities, with encouragement from The Library Association. It is reported that between 25 and 40 library staff attended the NALGO annual conference as branch delegates each year from 1978 onwards (Library Association, 1978 for example). In addition the abolition of the grading prescription has been followed up by local grading claims and salary structure reviews which inevitably involve the library staff in participating in their union branch in order to have their claims put forward and negotiated for.

At times the mismatch between the members' aims and the results delivered by NALGO have been such as to lead to suggestions that librarians should leave NALGO altogether. Thus Dove reports that in 1959/60 the Secretary of The Library Association approached other professional associations with members in local government with a view to forming "a new body representative of all the leading professions in Local Government Service which would replace NALGO" (Dove, 1970, p.78). This initiative came to nothing.

Haslam (1977) reports that in 1963-64 several of the professional bodies with members employed in local government threatened to try to negotiate separately with the employers and recommend their members to leave NALGO:

"Neither the Employers nor Nalگو wanted this, so they offered seats on the Grading Committee to all professional associations whenever matters affecting the salaries of their members were under consideration. Since 1964 the LA has had two seats on the NJC Grading Committee whenever librarians' grading or conditions affecting pay have been on

the agenda." (Haslam, 1977, p.251).

The union also raised the profile of its activities on behalf of its professional members.

Again in 1967 the Council of The Library Association seriously investigated alternatives to NALGO for public librarians, this time looking at whether other unions "having some association with the clerical and professional grades in local government" (Haslam, 1977, p.254) might offer greater benefits. All those investigated either were not members of the National Joint Council for the industry (IPCS and ASTMS) or turned out not to represent similar staff to librarians within local government (NUGMW and NUPE). Haslam goes on to report that consideration was also given to turning The Library Association into a trade union, following the example of the Association of Chief Education Officers who set up a parallel trade union body. But once again the difficulties and disadvantages were judged to outweigh the potential benefits and, in the light of developments such as the introduction of the closed shop in some local authorities, the dominant position of NALGO on the National Joint Council (25 seats out of 32 on the Staff side) and the skilled staff and the financial resources needed to deal with the increasingly complex legal framework within which industrial relations was operating, the Library Association Council resolved to follow a strategy of raising the profile of library staff within NALGO and arguing their case there (ibid., p.254-255).

Writing in 1970 Dove judges that despite the

disappointments "to say I will resign from NALGO and rush to the lifeboats is premature - and meaningless - because it will save nothing" (Dove, 1970, p.85). But the issue was still not dead. In April 1974 a correspondent to the "Library Association Record" raised this issue yet again and put forward the specific suggestion that "we ask Mr Clive Jenkins' union, the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, to prepare a draft outline of a Librarian's Section" (Sage, 1974a, p.80).

The July issue of the Library Association Record contained both favourable and hostile responses and a summary from the original writer. One correspondent wrote:

"The impotence of the LA during the past 18 months has been matched only by that of NALGO, both organizations having been totally silent during the ritual slaughter of many of their members. Neither can hope to command continued loyalty after such an abysmal showing and there must be many librarians who would be glad of an opportunity to join the ranks of an organization which respected its membership." (Sykes, 1974, p.139).

Another correspondent commented:

"The letter from Mr Sage...suggesting a trade union of librarians is a valid one, and essentially an excellent idea..." (Wallace, 1974, p.140)

and it is interesting to quote Wallace a little further:

"Nalگو (which dares not even call itself a union) is simply a pseudo-union, and looks on itself as an elitist organization. So where does the committed and concerned librarian turn? Here we run into problems, for, before the organization come the individuals to make up that organization, and librarians committed to the formation of a strong union within the framework of the working-class movements of this country are few and far between. In fact, most librarians seem to be vehemently anti-union, judging from staff-room conversations on the miners' strike, etc. ... to be an effective voice in unionism the backing of the lumpen-proletariat of librarianship is needed." (ibid., p.140).

A strong counter-view is put forward by another correspondent:

"The idea of a "trade union for librarians", as suggested in the April Record, seems to me quite ludicrous. Our bargaining power may well be comparatively weak at the present time, but without the support of other groups of workers in the unions to which we already belong, it would be practically non-existent. Industrial action by a body of workers which includes librarians could pose a considerable threat, whilst industrial action by librarians alone would pose a very minor threat or no threat at all.

If such a union were to be formed, what would happen to the large numbers of people who work in libraries, but who are not, strictly speaking, "librarians" - the library assistants, office staff, typists and secretaries? They share our place of work, and they share our conditions of service: surely it makes more sense for us to share trade unions with them as well. After all, trade unionism should be a process of "joining together", and not one of unnecessary fragmentation.

What we ought to do in order to improve our pay and conditions of service is to become more active in - and make our voices heard in - the unions of which we are members at present, and not to form some ineffective elitist group, which would take years to to achieve any kind of recognition, and would never have the vast resources nor the expertise of an organization such as Nalگو" (Powell, 1974, p.140).

The writer of the original letter concludes:

"From the letters sent to me personally and from those published above, it seems that there is support for a genuine union...One member...made the interesting suggestion of a "ginger" group to work within the LA and Nalگو...The trouble with Nalگو, and perhaps with other unions having librarian members, is that very few non-librarians understand the special conditions that apply to us (for example, Saturday, evening and irregular-hour work) and fewer appreciate the "professional" part of our duties although they all are familiar with the stamping of books. Furthermore, they resist any concessions to us or improvements in grades since they realize full well that these would reduce the pool available to the rest of their members. Only the most unanswerable claims will ever get even grudging support from Nalگو. One has to admit the weakness of strikes by librarians, although I fancy they could be more effective than he [Powell] suggests and I have never thought the other unions any better - a case of weak but willing or big and balky... The question of who should be members is interesting, too. The professional/non-professional split is getting more out of date every year, with the obsolescence of the ALA/FLA qualification. What do others think? I am open to persuasion but inclined to favour the admission of at least our library assistants." (Sage, 1974b, p.140-141).

The correspondence has been quoted at length because it

exemplifies many of the issues in discussions about trade unions for library staff - or indeed other small occupational groups. There is the divergence between those seeking working class solidarity and those seeking to protect or improve rewards for a particular occupation; the unattractive choice between making one's voice heard in a large union or trying to obtain recognition for a small one; the difficulty of explaining to fellow-members the particular characteristics of the occupational work context; the question of whether to try to draw "professional" boundaries. It is also perhaps notable that the question of whether librarians should be union members at all is not considered by any of the correspondents.

No more has been heard of the suggestion of an approach to Mr Clive Jenkins, except, perhaps ironically, from the staff of The Library Association, who now belong to an ASTMS branch which has on occasion negotiated very effectively on behalf of its members with the Association.

For public librarians the outcome, as demonstrated above and discussed in a later chapter, has been that the professional body has become increasingly active as a pressure group on NALGO, very much in the style of the "ginger group" suggested by one of Sage's correspondents and as advocated by The Library Association Council in 1977.

It is worth noting that there is one small group of public librarians who have had their own representative body for nearly forty years. These are the Chief Librarians. They

founded the Society of Municipal (subsequently changed to Metropolitan) and County Chief Librarians in 1948. Membership was later opened to Deputy Chief Librarians in public libraries also. In 1977 the Society was granted the status of a "certificated" trade union. For most of its history this body has acted as a pressure group on NALGO, The Library Association, and local authorities. There are parallel groups for other local authority services (e.g. Association of Local Government Engineers and Surveyors, Association of Local Government Financial Officers, Association of Education Officers), and in 1982 these groups, acting as the Federation of Managerial and Professional Officers' Unions, obtained agreement with NALGO and the employers:

"...to set up an entirely new Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers and, following a ballot of Chiefs and Deputies it was further agreed that 23 of the 26 seats on the Officers' side were allocated to the FMPOU [now FUMPO] and three to NALGO. One of these 23 FMPOU seats will, by the Federation's Constitution be allotted to the SMCCCL." (Longworth, 1983, p.317).

This is an interesting approach to the problems of managers and employees in the same union (the Chief Librarians may remain members of NALGO as well) and the constitution of the staff side of the Joint Council perhaps has echoes of the early days of NALGO when it was very much dominated by Chief Officers (see for example Spoor, 1967; Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, 1981, p.48).

Trade Union Representation: University Libraries

In Universities there is a long tradition of a fundamental division of employees between "academic" staff and others. There are quite different salary scales for academic staff and other staff. The picture is further complicated by a past tendency for the possession of a degree or the lack of a degree to weigh as heavily in determining the scale to be used as the nature of the work done. Thus senior administrative staff usually possessed a degree and were paid on academic scales while administrators without a degree were employed on the non-academic scales. In addition, up until the 1960's many universities operated their own salary scales.

In the 1960's, when the writer began work in university libraries, there was very little awareness, at least within the university library, of unions at all, although formal union recognition existed within the institution and the academic staff union, the Association of University Teachers, already exercised a quite strong influence on matters such as superannuation arrangements for the academic staff.

The Association of University Teachers (AUT) has a partly federal structure based on "local associations" rather than branches and, as in NALGO, members were for many years reluctant to adopt industrial sanctions in pursuit of their aims and to recognise common ground with the trade

union movement. Changes in these attitudes have paralleled the gradual establishment by the AUT of national negotiation for both the teaching staff in UK universities and the graduate administrators, librarians, computer staff etc. who form the membership of the AUT.

For university library staff in the 1960's there were then neither nationally agreed salary scales nor a nationally recognised union, although the AUT and the LA had published a joint statement on "Grades and Salary Scales of Graduate Library Staffs in Universities" in 1963.

One of the problems is indicated in the careful wording of the title of the 1963 statement to restrict it to Graduate Library Staff. At that time many professional library staff were non-graduates and many staff employed in university libraries were either graduates with no formal professional qualification or had no post-school qualifications at all. Some university libraries had instituted a tripartite structure: graduate librarians, non-graduate librarians (usually known as Senior Library Assistants), and unqualified library assistants.

On the non-academic side a number of trade unions had obtained members and /or recognition at different universities. In 1971 these unions concluded a "Spheres of Influence Agreement for Clerical and Related Administrative Staffs of Universities" (as reported in the Library Association Record, February 1972). This was mostly based on

the historical pattern of recruitment. In 24 universities NALGO was granted sole recruiting rights (including three where NUPE ceded existing members to NALGO), in five (including Durham) NUPE (National Union of Public Employees) was granted sole recruiting rights, in ten NALGO and NUPE agreed to share representation, and in two others these unions plus variously the Clerical and Administrative Workers Union (now APEX), Transport and General Workers' Union and ASTMS were recognised. Any university not specified in the agreement was to be regarded as "an open field of recruitment for NALGO, TGWU and NUPE". The Library Association advised its members (qualified and unqualified) on the non-academic staff of universities to join an appropriate union (ibid.).

In 1972 the LA and AUT revised their joint statement, recommending Librarian scales which equated to the now nationally agreed structure for teaching staff of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Professor (Library Association/Association of University Teachers, 1972). This was part of a campaign both for national scales for university library staff and to obtain acceptance by the bulk of the AUT membership that graduate librarians and graduate administrative staff in universities should be regarded as academic staff. The point of equivalence was readily agreed by the AUT at national level, and library staff have their own national annual meeting and sub-committee to advise the union executive. At local level the author still recalls the reluctant acknowledgement, not

to say amazement, of some AUT local association committee colleagues in 1974 when he was finally coopted to their ranks as a representative of library staff following sustained pressure from the university library staff.

The campaign was largely successful. By 1975 librarians scales (and administrative staff scales) related to the university teachers' scales had been agreed nationally, as had principles for assimilation from the multitude of scales previously used in different universities. Library staff are now active in the AUT at both national and local levels.

As graduate qualifications became the norm in librarianship the issue of possession of a degree became less of a problem, except in the case of long-established senior library staff who lacked a degree. In at least one university this problem was resolved in a typically British way by the coincidental conferring of honorary degrees on one or two senior library staff. The university libraries were, however, then confronted with another difficulty (or opportunity) as jobs became harder to find: applications from graduate librarians for Senior Library Assistant posts on non-academic scales. The outcome has varied in different universities: in general there has probably been a trend to abolish such posts or to use instead the lowest and shortest variant of the academic-related scales. Alternatives had originally been included in the scales agreed in order to encompass the wide variety of previous practice. There has

continued to be disagreement between the AUT on the one hand and university employers on the other on the correct application of parts of the national scales (Library Association/Association of University Teachers, 1972).

As regards conditions of service, the librarians have sought equality with teaching staff in relation to study leave, funding for staff development, leave entitlements etc. In 1977 the AUT produced a document "Model Clauses for Senior Library Staff Conditions of Service" (Association of University Teachers, 1977) which were incorporated in a common model for teaching, administrative and library staff in 1979.

For the library assistants in university libraries the unions have fought a long battle to improve the gradings applied to library staff within the now nationally adopted and negotiated salary scales for university clerical and related staff.

Trade Union Representation: Non-University Academic Libraries

In Polytechnics and other colleges, as in universities, the professional library staff in general find themselves forced into one of two categories, neither of which totally fits. On the one hand are the teaching staff and on the other the administrative, clerical and technical

staff. The teaching staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are paid according to statutory further education teachers scales and have conditions of service closely tied to the traditional role of the teacher: hours of work are determined by reference to "class contact hours" and academic terms. Similar arrangements exist in Scotland. The administrative, clerical and technician staff are employed under the standard NJC (National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Staffs) salary scales and conditions of service. An exception to this is provided by the Inner London Education Authority, which has established its own librarians' scales. The significance of the different systems lies in the longer and more generous pay scales and longer holidays which are provided for teaching staff, together with the higher status which attaches to teaching posts in further education establishments. For this study it may also be significant that different unions are recognised by the employers for the different groups.

The Library Association argues strongly for the academic role of all or most of the professional staff and their corresponding placement on teachers' scales and conditions of service. A contrary view argues that the teachers' conditions of service are totally inappropriate for staff in a library, which is usually required to remain open throughout the year, and for whom conventional class teaching is no part or only a small part of their work.

The reality is a confusion of different practice dependent on the views of particular authorities or institutions, or other local circumstances. The Library Association "Census of Staff Establishments and Staff in Libraries of Polytechnics, Higher and Further Academic Institutions, 1983" shows that all but one of the Polytechnic Chief Librarians were on the teachers' scales and of the remaining 524 professional posts outside Inner London 180 (34%) were on the teachers' scales. Of the total number of teachers' posts some 88 had teachers' conditions. But in practice a number of these have local variants fixing annual leave at a given number of weeks. The remainder have teachers' salaries and NJC scales. The majority of professional librarians outside Inner London are employed on NJC scales and conditions.

The balance within individual institutions varies greatly. A number have only one or two posts on teachers' scales. A few have all their professional staff on teachers' scales. Most have a mixture somewhere in between.

For other colleges, adding together the results in the LA Census referred to above for the various categories of colleges (including Scotland), 39% of professional posts outside Inner London are on teachers' scales and only a small proportion of these posts have NJC scales attached.

In all the institutions, except Inner London ones, library assistants are placed on NJC scales and conditions

of service and are represented by NALGO. In Inner London library assistants are graded on ILEA clerical scales and are represented by NALGO.

The established union for teaching staff in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE). One feature of NATFHE's organisation is subject interest Sections (eg Geography, Education etc.). Library staff have used this structural feature to develop a Library Section, with its own Officers, Committee and newsletter. As well as acting as a professional interest group, through the organisation of conferences, courses and publications, this Section functions as a quite vocal pressure group for librarians' economic and status interests within NATFHE. The Section is able to put forward motions to the National Executive and to make representations to national officers (see NATFHE, Library Section newsletter, May 1985, p.2-3, for example). However it was not until 1978 that librarians were specifically mentioned in a national salary claim.

There is also a breakaway union for polytechnic staff, the Association of Polytechnic Teachers (APT), which has accepted the principle of teachers' scales for professional library staff in polytechnic libraries and has several times attempted to set up a librarians' group, but has yet to make much direct impact on most polytechnic library staff.

For non-teaching staff in colleges - i.e. those on

local government administrative, technical and clerical scales - NALGO is the established union.

Both NATFHE and NALGO are opposed to the "hybrid" posts on the grounds that neither union can fully represent a member employed on teacher's scales but administrator's conditions of service. However, given the generally higher and longer salary scales offered by the teachers' grades, the greater status attached to teachers' grading and the lack of any serious practical objection to the actual NJC conditions in themselves, institutions have not found it too difficult to persuade librarians to accept a combination of teachers' salaries and NJC conditions where the alternative was NJC scales.

In 1981 NALGO and NATFHE arrived at a joint statement on gradings for college library staff, but this in effect left decisions to be negotiated locally (James, 1981). In 1984 NALGO issued a "Colleges and Polytechnics Action Briefing: Library Staff" urging that all college library staff should be on NJC scales and conditions. This was met by a considerable storm of protest from librarian members of NATFHE and from The Library Association (see Library Association (1985d), Seago (1985) for examples).

The current of dissatisfaction with the recognised trade union which was noted in the case of public library staff has therefore had its counterpart in non-university academic libraries too.

The history, as in public libraries, illustrates the difficulties for trade unions of dealing with minority groups with distinct occupational identities within broad generalised salary structures - especially when there is more than one such structure in operation within the same organisation. For groups such as librarians it may be significant that it is within the more specialised, independent organisational identities of the universities and the Inner London Education Authority that it has proved possible to establish special librarians' scales and to escape from the pressures to conform to the inappropriate occupational categorizations derived from the dominant occupational groups. In the larger community of local government it seems likely that such solutions will continue to be resisted by both employers and unions because of the number of occupational groups who could seek similar "special treatment" if the principle were established. Indeed, successive annual settlements between the local authority employers and the unions have steadily reduced the distinctiveness of the grades for different types of worker: for example, during the 1980's the long-established system of separate grade structures for clerical, for administrative/professional and for technical grades has been replaced by common scales.

Trade Union Representation: Special Libraries

Trade union representation of library staff in special libraries is less easily summarised. It is likely that the library staff, if they belong to a union, will join whichever union is recognised by the relevant employers. In the Civil Service this is IPCS, the Institution of Professional Civil Servants, for professional staff and the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA), the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) or the Civil Service Union (CSU) for others. The Civil Service has its own librarians' grades and once again there have been difficulties about the status of librarians in the organizational pecking order.

In the National Health Service also a long battle has been fought to obtain general guidance to Health Authorities that recommended a minimum grading for librarians within the NHS pay structure which reflected the views of the librarians themselves. Here the library staff are a very scattered group, since most libraries have only one or two staff, and in many cases the Library is in the care of a clerical member of staff.

The appropriate union for library staff in the Health Service is NALGO but, given the small numbers and scattered location of librarians, they have not been very visible as a pressure group within union branches and have relied more on action through the main professional body and several ad hoc groupings designed to influence NHS managements by direct

pressure outside union channels.

There is very little evidence at all about the unionisation of library staff who are employed in other work contexts. Nuttall (1972) reports discussions within the Industrial Group and the Special Libraries Committee of The Library Association of two policy suggestions: that special librarians might join the Publishing Branch of ASTMS or the Association of Professional Scientists and Technologists. While such an arrangement might give individual employees a source of trade union help in instances of redundancy and other individual problems, it is difficult to see, for example, the 1500 firms and non-government organisations reported in Chapter One as employing library staff all agreeing to negotiate with a librarians' union over salaries. It seems more likely both that library staff would be expected to join an already recognised trade union and that, for the staff, membership of such a union would be more effective. Secondly, it seems likely that in "non-union" firms few library staff would be union members.

A Library Staff Union? - Influences On The Pattern Of Trade Union Representation

As has been shown, the idea of a librarians' union occurs quite regularly in the library literature, and such unions have been established in both the United States and Canada (see Chapter Three). However, it appears that the

Canadian one has failed and in the United States the librarians' union has only a small membership.

In the UK most library staff are employed in the public sector, with its centralised patterns of bargaining. The remainder are scattered through a wide variety of organisations. In these circumstances it seems unlikely that a librarians' union could obtain employer recognition and become a realistic alternative to the established large unions.

A workable arrangement may be the special scales or special section for library staff which have been negotiated within universities/AUT, ILEA, and NATFHE. This pattern makes representation by one of the larger unions, which economic forces tend to favour, more palatable to small, specialised occupational groups who would like, or have had, their own union.

The very strong influence of historical precedent and the structure of the bargaining process on the pattern of trade union representation is clear from the foregoing. It is further underlined in Sheargold's report of the emergence in the 1980's in Australia of the Victoria Colleges Staff Association (VCSA) (Sheargold, 1984). This newly formed union aims to represent all levels of library, administrative, technical, computing and clerical staff in higher education colleges in the State of Victoria. It succeeded in obtaining recognition very quickly despite the

existence of two long-established competitors. These were a union for teaching staff in some of the colleges, which had (like AUT in UK) accepted senior library staff as members because they were employed on academic or academic-related scales, and a general union for public employees.

The success of the VCSA seems to be due to a conjunction of factors. Firstly, it is suggested that neither of the existing unions had a strong base in a majority of the colleges covered by the new union. Secondly, in 1981 a state-wide tribunal to resolve industrial disputes, the Victorian Post Secondary Remuneration Tribunal (VPSERT), the jurisdiction of which matched the boundaries which VCSA had set itself, was set up by the State Government. This has enabled the VCSA to negotiate state-wide salary scales in a short period.

Sheargold reports that those senior librarians on academic-related scales who had membership of the university teachers' union were totally unwilling to risk their 'academic status' by joining the new union. However, the teachers' union in the end backed away even from discussion of spheres of influence and changed its rules so that library staff were no longer eligible for membership. The general public employees union had too few members in comparison with the number of previously un-unionised staff in the colleges to offer resistance.

The case provides interesting evidence of the

importance of 'natural boundaries' in determining the likelihood of a union being successful in gaining recognition, and of the significance of government action in influencing those 'natural boundaries' and in providing a situation in which recognition is more readily achieved. Sheargold speculates on the likely outcome of a recent federal legal decision which has extended the scope of the Australian national arbitration process for settling industrial disputes to cover public services such as education, and on the possible effects if, at a State level, the Government of Victoria were to legislate for VPSERT to be absorbed into a more general state arbitration process.

The dividing lines introduced by the VCSA offer an interesting contrast to the situation in UK colleges, where the existence of strong specialist teachers unions and a well-established general public employees union, combined with national bargaining processes which match these unions' 'natural boundaries' would seem to preempt any attempt to form a union based on overlapping boundaries. Thus Bright (1979) concluded that the Association of Polytechnic Teachers, which was formed as a specialist union for teachers in the 30 UK polytechnics in a breakaway from the main lecturers union, NATFHE, which represents lecturers in all higher and further education colleges except the universities, had very little chance of success. However, a change of Government in 1979 has brought the APT representation at national salary negotiations, despite the vehement opposition of the rival union, and would appear to

have greatly increased its chances of survival. It is tempting to speculate what the outcome might be if Polytechnics were to be separated as a sector from further education colleges, as has been suggested from time to time.

Summary

The majority of library staff work in organisations where union recognition is well-established and there is therefore an "appropriate" union to join. The history of the relationship between these unions and their library members suggests that the library staff have often not been convinced of the "appropriateness" of the recognised unions in other senses. Marsh concludes:

"Of those who do take an interest in union affairs, the members of AUT, NATFHE and APT ... expressed the more favourable attitudes towards their unions. Some NALGO members do approve of their union, but some strong dissatisfaction has been felt..." (Marsh, 1980, p.88)

Nevertheless, the whole discussion in this chapter underlines the improbability of success for a "librarians' union" in the UK, given the pattern of employment of library staff.

There is considerable evidence (see also Chapter Four) of library staff using professional bodies, direct pressure on employers or pressure within a trade union with equal willingness, and with the same aim of defending or advancing the occupational status and situation within a partly alien culture which is often felt not to "understand" library

staff and which imposes a grading structure on library staff which is devised primarily to serve other occupations. There is rather more emphasis on this than on straightforward pressure through the trade unions to negotiate higher salaries for the grading structure within which the library staff are located.

Chapter 3

Trade Unionism And Library Staff

Introduction

Chapter One attempted to describe the nature and the context of library work. Chapter Two outlined the pattern and history of trade union representation of library staff. The purpose of this chapter is to draw from the extensive literature on trade unionism in two ways. The first is to seek empirical evidence relevant to the concerns of this study and to the particular context of library work. The second is to review the theoretical suggestions which are likely to help in understanding trade unionism in libraries. The intended outcome is an analysis which is useful in its own right and can also form a basis for reviewing and complement the fieldwork which is reported in later chapters.

The central concerns are the assessment of:

- the scale and density of trade union membership, including the rate of growth or decline

- explanations of union membership or non-membership
- the character of union activity in libraries and

related environments

- associated attitudes and behaviour

with a view to suggesting appropriate strategies for both the staff and the management.

This chapter begins with a brief review of the literature on trade unionism and library staff in the United Kingdom and in other countries. This is followed by a short discussion of the applicability of the general literature on trade unions to library trade unionism. The main substance of the chapter is a discussion drawing on a wide range of sources and focussing in turn on the issues set out at the beginning of this introduction. In the course of this discussion a number of hypotheses are developed as a way of summarising the ground covered. These are also listed together at the conclusion of Chapter Three.

Library Trade Unionism In The United Kingdom

There is one major published empirical work specifically about library staff and trade unionism in Britain (Marsh, 1980). This provides a helpful beginning but is based, as the author acknowledges, on very limited evidence drawn from the slender published literature, personal interviews with union officials and fairly informal investigations at one national, five public and four

academic libraries. It is not stated how many people in the various categories were interviewed and there is no attempt to present the results as more than impressionistic summaries. It does, however, provide an excellent account of the evolution of trade union policies relating specifically to library staff since the early 1970's.

An unpublished dissertation (Kaye, 1979) reports a survey of attitudes to trade unionism of public library staff in one authority and attempts to relate attitudes to gender and job. The source data comes from a questionnaire survey of a 30% sample of all 328 union members which produced 70 usable responses (ibid., p.43).

Also, Nigel Nicholson and his colleagues have kindly made available a subset of the results of their enquiry into participation in a local authority union branch (Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, 1981), relating to the union members who worked in the public library. This data is based on a questionnaire survey which, in this case, resulted in 141 responses from library staff.

Both these sources became available after the survey work (described later) had been carried out. They appear to provide, together with Marsh, the only systematic empirical data specifically about United Kingdom library staff as trade unionists.

A number of articles in the library literature deal

with trade unions. Most of the longer contributions approach the subject from an historical or group self-interest viewpoint. (See for example Dove (1970), Maidment (1976), Haslam (1977) and Taylor (1977).) There are a few signs of discomfort with certain aspects of trade unionism such as attitudes to "unsocial hours" (Morley, 1961), the use of industrial action (Tomlinson, 1977a), and the dismissal of a Library Assistant who refused to join the union when a closed shop was instituted (Webb, 1976). In recent years in particular the emphasis is on more energetic use of the trade union channels available to library staff. There are a number of reports of industrial action by library staff over library and more general issues. One or two titles of short pieces give the flavour: "All have a part to play in grading and salary struggle" (Featherstone, 1981), "Chiefs in negotiation" (Longworth, 1983) and "Striking lessons" (Backhouse, 1984).

The general literature on trade unions and industrial relations appears to contain very little specifically about libraries. The few incidental references to library staff which have been found are picked up at appropriate points in the main discussion.

Trade Unionism And Library Staff In Other Countries

The most thorough investigation of trade unionism in libraries was that of Californian librarians by Guyton

(1975), but, in view of the rather different American context, it is questionable whether the findings necessarily apply in the UK.

The different context is demonstrated by the different preoccupations of the North American literature. A large proportion of the US literature is taken up with listing those library systems which are unionized and the nature of the collective bargaining agreements reached (see three major publications: Schlipf, 1975; Weatherford, 1976; O'Reilly and O'Reilly, 1981; and a host of articles: Flanagan, 1974; Weatherford, 1974; Burns & Carter, 1975; Spang, 1975; Chaplan and Maxey, 1976; Aaron, 1979; Brandwein, 1979; Weatherford, 1980; Carmack and Olsgaard, 1982; Port and Hill, 1982). The general picture which emerges is of unionisation at a level of up to 25% of potential union membership in a situation where recognition has always to be won on a local basis following a ballot of employees and negotiation is also a local matter. There seems to be no clear trend towards growth or decline, rather a patchy picture of pockets of activity.

There is also far more consideration than in the UK of whether unionized library staff are different (Simonds, 1975; Bentley, 1978; Caynon, 1982) and there is livelier debate about whether library staff should be unionized at all and how management can avoid unionization (Golodner, 1967; De Gennaro, 1972; Shaughnessy, 1977; Ballard, 1982). One article reports the founding of a professional union -

the National Librarians Association (Dollard, 1979). There are reports of strikes over recognition ("Youngstown, Ohio library sttles longest strike", 1980) and equal pay with other city employees for equal work (Fischer, 1981). However, as with trade unionism in UK libraries, there are few empirical studies of the union members and non-members. The obvious exception to this is Guyton's study (Guyton, 1975), in which he offers an analysis of unionism based on a survey of Californian library staff. Biblo (1976) provides an historical perspective on library unionism in the United States.

The Canadian literature reveals a parallel emphasis on the debate about collective bargaining (Swan, 1976) but with a particular concern about whether professional and non-professional staff should be in the same union (Capes, 1976; Schroeder, 1976). This relates to the Canadian law governing union recognition, which requires that managers and employees shall not belong to the same union. There is nearly as much overt opposition to unionization as in the United States (Francis, 1981), but a survey by Winter (1981) appears to show that, at least in academic and public libraries, a majority of library staff are now unionised. Winter indicates that an attempt to found a union for librarians (see Capes, Schroeder) was eventually unsuccessful. A paper by Garry (1977) charts the economic, political and social circumstances which may explain the growth of unionization. There appears to be only anecdotal evidence of staff attitudes or of the effects of

unionisation.

The growth of unionisation and of militancy in Australasia, as revealed in the library literature, parallels in many ways developments in the United Kingdom. Brian (1974), Coleman (1976), Sage (1976) and Beresford (1983) all put forward strongly the case for union membership by librarians. Lundin (1973) reports a strike by library staff - in this case precipitated by staff transfers. Sheargold (1984) reports on union membership by library staff in the State of Victoria. Hovenden (1972) tries to put unionization in a more long-term perspective by reference to British and North American experience. As in the United States, it is not clear from the literature what the trend is.

White-Collar Trade Unionism: Theories and Results from Recent Studies

The review of the literature of trade unionism in libraries provides a limited amount of empirical evidence of the growth and character of the trade unionism, but there are large gaps in our knowledge. Theoretical starting-points have to be derived from theories put forward on the basis of evidence from other occupations or from aggregate patterns. And there is in any case no *prima facie* reason to suppose that library staff are totally unique (whatever they, like many occupational groups, may like to believe!). Indeed,

given the variety of organisations which employ library staff (demonstrated in Chapter One) any general occupational view is likely to be mediated by the various employment contexts which apply for library staff.

At a broader level Chapter One illustrated that library staff are conventionally regarded by the Department of Employment and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys as part of the professional and clerical groupings which together make up the whole group of staff who are usually subsumed under the label "white-collar".

The distinction between "manual" and "white-collar" (or "non-manual") staff has a long history, exemplified in separate methods of payment (wages or salaries); different canteen facilities, holidays, pensions and other benefits; statistical categories; and in some countries industrial relations law and trade union organisation. Traditionally many white-collar staff did not belong to unions. This led writers such as Mills (1953), Strauss (1954) and Allen (1971) to suggest a relationship and perceived identity of interest between white-collar workers and their employers derived from proximity, which was different in kind from the relationship between manual worker and boss. They therefore saw white-collar unionism as a new and different phenomenon. Other writers, reviewed in Bain and Price (1972a), have sought to define in other ways the essence of being a white-collar worker.

The usefulness of the white-collar label as an analytical tool has been effectively challenged on two grounds. Sturmfthal (1966), Braverman (1974), Crompton (Crompton and Jones, 1984) and others have pointed out that there are fundamental differences in the work role of the managers, technicians, professionals, clerical workers etc. who are usually deemed to make up the white-collar group. Other writers such as Roberts, Cook, Clark and Semeonoff (1977) suggest that there are no clear differences in attitudes between manual and white-collar workers. It is argued that the supposedly different characteristic attitudes of white-collar and manual workers depend on the particular circumstances in which any individual worker or group of workers find themselves.

The term "white-collar" might therefore be regarded as having no more precise or coherent a meaning than that given by the Concise Oxford Dictionary: "(of worker) not engaged in manual labour". However, the growing application of computers in white-collar work and in manual work tends to make even this distinction less certain. In these circumstances it seems prudent to eschew looking for the elusive "essence" which will positively characterise the white-collar group in some way.

The intention in this chapter is to draw relevant evidence or understanding from any source, be it a study of manual or non-manual employees, or a theory based on analysis of class or status, or a theory derived from

statistical correlation of aspects of trade unionism with social and economic features.

The Scale And Density Of Trade Union Membership

There is no clear evidence of the general scale or density of union membership among library staff, nor of the rate of change. Both the empirical studies from which we have statistical evidence for library staff as a separate group (Kaye, 1979; Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, 1981) used as their sampling frame the membership of a particular NALGO branch, thereby excluding any non-members. Kaye comments that: "the number of non-union members in the library staff was known to be quite small" (Kaye, 1979, p.40). In the case of Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton's study, union density should have been 100%, since a closed shop was in operation. The authors imply a rather lower rate of membership prior to the conclusion of the closed shop agreement:

"This, in 1976, had increased branch membership "at a stroke" by 1500 and helped support its future growth to a total of 6000" (Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, 1981, p.52).

This suggests a membership density of less than 75% in 1976 prior to the closed shop. In contrast Taylor reports that in Islington in 1974 "...of 181 full-time library staff, only three were non-union members" (Taylor, 1977, p.88). However, he also comments that: "The Inner London Borough library staffs have for many years been better union organised than the national average." (ibid.).

Marsh, researching in 1978-79, reports estimates by union officers and library managers of NALGO memberships in local authorities between 55% and 75% (prior to the impact of a closed shop in some cases), while an AUT official is quoted as claiming "good membership in the library grades". This was supported by Marsh's visit to one library where membership was 88%. A British Library union official estimated membership of the CPSA at 70%-80% of those eligible, of CSU about 80%, and of IPCS about 90%. (Marsh, 1980, p.47-49).

If we assume for the present that library staff as a group do not reveal any markedly idiosyncratic behaviour as potential trade unionists, then matching Price and Bain's estimates of density of union membership by industry to the distribution of library staff across different types of employment identified by the DES Censuses (see Chapter One) will provide a reasonable guide to the broad overall level of unionisation we should expect among library staff.

Table 3.1 regroups the data on employment of library staff from Chapter One to match Price and Bain's industrial categories as closely as possible and shows that for each of the three years 1972, 1976 and 1981 around 90% of library staff were employed in the public sector. Table 3.2 presents summary statistics from Price and Bain for analogous or comparable groups. The table indicates union membership densities for public sector activities in the ranges 73%-93% in 1979, together with a strongly rising trend between 1968

and 1979. Between 1948 and 1968 the trend is different for

Table 3.1 Distribution of Employment of Library Staff
by Industry in the United Kingdom, 1972-1981
(full-time equivalent posts)

	1972		1976		1981	
Local Govern- ment and Education	30,108	76.4%	35,490	79.6%	34,391	78.8%
National Government	3,849	9.8%	4,225	9.5%	4,345	10.0%
Public Cor- poration(2)	711	1.8%	848	1.9%	555	1.3%
Industry(3)	3,935	10.0%	3,241	7.3%	3,432	7.9%
Other(4)	803	2.0%	799	1.8%	922	2.1%
TOTAL(5)	39,406		44,604		43,644	

Sources: Chapter 1, Tables 1.4 and 1.7.

Notes:

- (1) comprises these categories: Public library, Academic library, Local Government Special library, School library, Library School
- (2) comprises these categories: Government Agency library, National library
- (3) comprises these categories: Private business, Research or trade association
- (4) comprises these categories: Learned and professional society, Other
- (5) columns do not sum exactly because of rounding of detailed figures

the different groups, but in the sector employing 75% of library staff, Local Government and Education, density of union membership fell prior to the 1968-1979 rise. This would be consistent with the apparent surge in union membership in public sector libraries to high levels during the 1970's, which subjective observation and the report of

Marsh (1980, p.48) had suggested. In the private sector the density is more variable, as the specimen figures in Table 3.2 show.

Table 3.2 Union Membership Density by Industry in Great Britain, 1948, 1968 and 1979 (selected industries)

	1948	1968	1979
Local Government and Education	69.4%	61.5%	77.5%
National Government	52.9%	75.8%	91.3%
Health Services	42.65	37.9%	73.7%
Water	57.0%	70.5%	92.7%
Printing and Publishing	75.8%	79.3%	93.8%
Metals and Engineering	54.5%	56.7%	79.6%
Insurance, Banking and Finance	38.9%	42.9%	54.8%
ALL INDUSTRIES	45.2%	44.0%	55.4%

Source: Price and Bain, 1983, Table 6, p.54-55 and Table 1, p.46.

These industry figures are nevertheless high compared with those assembled by Bain and Price for white-collar workers alone (Bain, 1966; Bain, 1970; Bain and Price, 1972b; Price and Bain, 1976; Bain and Price, 1980; Price and Bain, 1983). Table 3.3 illustrates the pattern of unionization for the white-collar group as a whole between 1911 and 1979 according to Price and Bain's 1983 assessment. Except for the period 1920-1931, when there was a slight falling-off, the number of union members has grown continuously. However, the potential union membership has grown almost as rapidly, so that during the whole period

1920 to 1979 white-collar membership density, besides falling back between 1920 and 1931, was static between 1948 and 1968, and appears to have grown steadily and significantly only in the 1970's. By 1979 average density of union membership for white-collar staff had reached 44%.

Table 3.3 White-collar Union Membership and Density in Great Britain (selected years 1911-1979)

	potential membership	actual membership	density	white-collar density as a % of manual density
1911	3,297,000	398,300	12.1%	58.2%
1920	3,847,000	1,129,200	29.4%	54.7%
1931	4,639,000	1,025,400	22.1%	88.4%
1948	6,243,000	2,062,100	33.0%	65.6%
1968	9,381,000	3,056,000	32.6%	65.5%
1970	9,688,000	3,533,000	36.5%	66.1%
1975	10,715,000	4,488,000	41.9%	72.6%
1979	11,652,000	5,124,700	44.0%	69.8%

Source: Price and Bain, 1983, Table 4, p.51

Throughout the period since 1911 unions have succeeded in recruiting a higher proportion of manual workers than of white-collar workers. However, the degree of difference was subject to marked variations between 1911 and 1948. This reflects principally variations in the number of jobs lost in the different sectors during the depression years.

Since 1948 there has been a 150% increase in total white-collar union membership from two million in 1948 to

five million in 1979. Yet the comparative density of white-collar union membership was static at around 65% of manual union membership density from 1948 to 1970. Even in 1979, the year of peak union membership (Table 3.3), it rose only to 72% of manual union density. This could suggest that in fact the white collar group has not shown any markedly greater increase in the propensity to unionisation in recent years than the population as a whole, despite the expectations of researchers such as Shackleton and Davies (1976) and of the managers they surveyed. A recent survey of a national sample of 30,000 individual workers reported by Bain and Elias (1985) finds an overall union membership density of 35% for white-collar workers compared with 52% for manual workers. On these figures the density of white-collar union membership is 67% of manual union density.

However, these averages conceal marked variations between different industries and between public and private sectors. In 1966 Bain pointed out that:

"the vast majority of white-collar union membership is concentrated in the public sector of the economy: while roughly eight out of ten employees in public employment belong to a trade union, only one out of ten are union members in private manufacturing employment" (Bain, 1966, p.330).

In the same year Sturmthal noted in a review of unionisation in 8 countries that "Public employees frequently seem to organise more readily than private employees" (Sturmthal, 1966, p.377). Mercer and Weir found "...practically 100% unionism among the public employees, 66% among the draughtsmen, and 25% among both the technicians and the

[private industry] clerks" (Mercer and Weir, 1972, p.57).

Within the manufacturing area Bain estimated that the density of white-collar union membership varied from less than 5% in some industries to over 20% in others, whereas manual staff unionism was usually much higher (Bain, 1966, p.328).

One other feature, suggested by Rallings on the basis of data from Butler and Stokes national surveys of the population at the time of General Elections, is that between 1964 and 1979 union membership appears to have spread more rapidly among the market researchers' "AB middle class" than in the less well-off "C1" white-collar worker class (Rallings, 1983, p.62).

Table 3.4 Union Membership Density by Sector
in Great Britain, 1948-1979

	1948	1968	1973	1979
Public Sector	70.7%	66.1%	73.0%	82.4%
Manufacturing	13.2%	15.4%	30.1%	43.7%
White-collar				
Private Sector	14.5%	12.7%	13.9%	16.7%
Services				
Manufacturing	58.2%	62.0%	70.8%	80.3%
Manual				
Construction	46.1%	30.1%	31.2%	36.7%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	22.7%	25.4%	23.8%	22.7%

Source: Price and Bain, 1983, Table 5, p.52.

While the detailed statistics vary a little, the broad trends discussed above are confirmed in Price and Bain's

1983 assessment of union membership figures, from which Table 3.4 is drawn. Price and Bain comment:

"One important feature ... is the concentration of union growth in the already well unionised manufacturing and public sectors; they accounted for about 85 per cent of the increase in total union membership during the period 1969-79. The poorly unionised sectors showed little sign of producing a significant expansion of the base of unionisation in Britain in this period; in particular, although union membership in private services increased by close to 60 per cent during 1969-79, its level of union density increased by only 4 percentage points to 16.7 per cent, a level only about 2 percentage points higher than that prevailing in 1948" (Price and Bain, 1983, p.53).

In manufacturing industry there was a dramatic increase in white-collar union membership - from 15% in 1968 to 43% in 1979.

Table 3.5 Total UK Trade Union Membership, 1979-1984

	TU Members at year end	Percentage change
1979	13,289,000	+1.3%
1980	12,947,000	-2.6%
1981	12,106,000	-6.5%
1982	11,593,000	-4.2%
1983	11,337,000	-2.2%
1984	11,086,000	-2.2%

Source: "Membership of trade unions in 1984",
Employment Gazette, January 1986, p.16-18, Table 1.

However, for union membership in general 1980 saw a marked change of trend. In both 1980 and 1981 aggregate trade union membership dropped absolutely. Price and Bain calculate that the overall density of union membership fell from 55% of potential membership to 51%. (Price and Bain,

1983, Table 1, p.47 and Table 2, p.48). Beaumont (1985) comes to similar conclusions. Government figures for union membership reproduced in Table 3.5 suggest that the declining trend has continued between 1981 and 1984, with a fall in total UK union membership of two million or 16% in the five years since the peak in 1979. A similar drop (18% between 1978 and 1984) is also reflected in TUC affiliated membership figures for the 15 largest UK trade unions, as Table 3.6 shows. However, membership of some public sector unions has held up better than average: NUPE -5%; COHSE -1%; NALGO +5%. White-collar unions in general have done better but cannot compensate for the large drop in membership suffered by the manual unions.

Beaumont (1985) draws attention to the high proportion of newly established firms which are non-union; to a reduction since 1979 in both the number and success rate of union recognition claims under the ACAS voluntary conciliation procedure; to an increased number of staff associations in building societies; to a willingness by ASTMS since 1983 to make agreements with staff associations; and to some growth in the institution of single-union recognition agreements which seek to avoid strikes - e.g. at the new Nissan plant on Wearside. Bright, Sawbridge and Rees argue that there is in action "a process of fundamental and permanent change" (Bright, Sawbridge and Rees, 1983, p.33) based on major shifts in the economic, industrial, legal and political situation. They predict a return to union

Table 3.6 Membership Trends in the 15 Largest TUC affiliated unions, 1979-1985

Union	Membership at 31.12.78	Membership at 31.12.84	Percentage Change
Transport and General Workers Union	2,072,818	1,490,555	-28%
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (Engineering Section)	1,199,465	1,000,883	-17%
General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union	964,836	846,565	-12%
National and Local Government Officers' Association	729,405	766,390	+ 5%
National Union of Public Employees	712,392	673,445	- 5%
Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers	462,178	392,307	-15%
Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs	471,000	390,000	-17%
Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union	420,000	355,000	-15%
Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians	320,723	249,961	-22%
Confederation of Health Service Employees	215,033	214,321	- 1%
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section)	200,954	220,000	+ 9%
Society of Graphical and Allied Trades '82	203,352	210,462	+ 3%
National Union of Teachers	291,239	214,361	-26%
National Union of Mineworkers	254,887	200,000	-22%
Union of Communication Workers	197,157	195,374	- 1%
TOTAL	12,128,078	9,855,204	-18%

Source: D. Bright, based on TUC statistical statement and list of delegates for 1979 and 1985.

Notes: 1: No account is taken of mergers.
 2: National Union of Teachers figures affected by special factors.

membership density levels of the 1960s. Strauss (1984) offers similar predictions for the USA and foresees a drop in union membership density to 15% to 20% of potential membership, in the face of economic circumstances, foreign competition, and "quality-of-worklife" and other innovative management styles such as those discussed by Kochan, McKenzie and Cappelli (1984).

For library staff as an occupational group, given the dominating position of public sector employment, it seems reasonable to expect a density of union membership at the time of the fieldwork for this study of the order of 70%-80%. The figure should be slightly higher than this in public sector, but would be much lower in the private sector overall.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are derived:

- 1 For the polytechnic library staff who are the subject of the fieldwork for the study a union membership density of 80% or more is expected

- 2 That union membership density in library work grew in the 1970s and then began to decline in the early 1980s.

Explanations of Trade Union Membership

The literature reveals a number of quite different approaches to understanding the reasons for trade union membership. One school, represented in the United Kingdom by Bain and his colleagues, has sought to establish strong correlations between changes in density of union membership and various economic and social factors. Others, such as Lockwood (1958), Dahrendorf (1959) and Crompton (1976), have sought to relate increasing density of union membership to an analysis of the class or status structure of society. A third approach, including Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechhofer and Platt (1968), depict trade unionism as a largely "instrumental" phenomenon on the basis of empirical analysis of the perceptions of particular group of workers.

The central question for this study is to what extent any of these approaches explain the individual and group decisions which are reflected in the scale, density and character of trade union membership.

The following sections are intended to extract from the large volume of literature some broad outlines of evidence and conclusions, in so far as they might be relevant to library staff.

Correlation Theories

Having established a base of information about the

size, density, change and variability in union membership, Bain and his colleagues have sought to demonstrate correlations between the aggregate levels of density of union membership in the United Kingdom and measured changes in other variables. The variables can be grouped into four areas:

- employer policies and government action
- the business cycle
- personal and job-related characteristics
- industrial structure.

Generating hypotheses in this area is deferred until all four areas have been considered.

Employer Policies And Government Action

The first area of significant correlation suggested by Bain and his colleagues is that of employer policies and government action (for example, Price and Bain, 1983, p.59-61). Employer policies which accept unions encourage pro-union attitudes and union membership among staff, and employer recognition of a union makes it possible for the union to represent employees more effectively. Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn (1983) also found that pro-trade union attitudes of white-collar staff were associated with firms where there were large unionised manual staffs with established collective negotiation procedures and noted "the influence they seem to have on management's general attitude towards collective bargaining" (Prandy, Stewart and

Blackburn, 1983, p.147). They also suggest that:

"In much the same way, the fact that unionism tends to be stronger in larger communities indicates the importance of a demonstration effect, and of a general climate of opinion favourable towards trade unionism" (ibid).

This echoes the findings of Shackleton and Davies (1976) that managers are more likely to be unionised in firms where union density is highest. Poole, Mansfield, Frost and Blyton (1983) found that the presence of a union for managers to join was the strongest single correlate of union membership density at an organisational level, followed by union recognition and employment in the public sector and, some way behind, the size of organisation. Clegg (1976) argues that the density of white-collar unionisation is high in public sector organisations partly because the senior officials are themselves members. The effect of the closed shop in increasing union membership is demonstrated in the findings of Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton reported above.

Employer policies favourable to trade unions can be encouraged or discouraged by the legislative framework maintained by Government action. This can be direct legislation governing procedures for gaining union recognition, rights regarding union membership or the legal status of industrial action, or legislation which provides a role for the union within the firm in matters such as individual employment rights or health and safety. In these circumstances it may also become more or less "respectable" to belong to a union.

Price and Bain (1983, p.68, note 10) refer to the

flurry of industrial relations legislation in the 1970's and Lewis (1983) catalogues it in more detail. Bain and Price (1983, p.21-22) summarise the evidence for a strong connection between all this and growing union membership. Also, Guyton (1975, p.175) finds in his study of American librarians that "favorable labor legislation seems to be instrumental in fostering the formation of many current unions".

However, Bain and Price caution that there appears to be a certain minimum density of union membership below which this influence is not effective:

"in the well organised sector economic factors, employer policies and public support for union recognition combined to produce a major expansion and consolidation of union membership and organisation. In the poorly organised sector neither economic factors nor public support for union recognition were felt sufficiently strongly to overcome an environment which was generally hostile to unionism" (Bain and Price, 1983, p.22),

This accords with a point of view expressed by Adams (1975) that, significant though government action is, it is a combination of factors which leads to union recognition.

The occupation of librarianship in the United Kingdom clearly fits mostly into the "well organised" sector and therefore a significant consolidation of union membership in the late 1970's might be expected. This appears to correlate well with the membership data discussed earlier. The conjunction since 1979 in the United Kingdom of falling union membership nationally and industrial relations legislation designed to limit the power of trade unions might suggest that for library staff, too, during the period

of study the level of unionisation might have begun to stabilise or fall. This proposition likewise correlates well with the actual membership data, although some caution is in order since disaggregated data relating to library work or broader groups containing library staff is not available.

One other area of the influence of government policies is the unwitting influence of government incomes policies in the 1960's and 1970's (see for example Crouch, 1979), to which Jenkins and Sherman attribute some of the growth of white-collar unionism (Jenkins and Sherman, 1979, p.121-123 and p.39-40). It may well be argued that incomes policies had some bearing on the impact on wages of the factors to be analysed under the heading "The Business Cycle".

The Business Cycle

The business cycle is seen as a strong influence on union membership trends but the relationship is not a simple one. It is argued that high unemployment, in addition to causing direct loss of union members, weakens the bargaining power and hence the attractiveness of unions (Bain and Price, 1983, p.17); but the threat of unemployment may also increase membership by encouraging workers to join unions in the hope of protecting their jobs (Hawkins, 1981, p.84-85).

It is also argued (Bain and Elsheikh, 1976; Price and Bain, 1983; Bain and Price, 1983) that a high rate of price

inflation, operating as a threat to living standards, encourages union membership.

Equally, a high rate of increase in money earnings (regardless of their real value) tends to be credited by workers to unions and hence again encourages union membership.

Thus, it is argued, increased density of white-collar union membership in the 1970's is associated with workers' attempts to defend or improve their standard of living at a time of high inflation and dropping differentials.

The analysis in Chapter One of the earnings of the groupings including library staff during the period 1973-1984 suggested a slight drop in earnings relative to other groups during the years 1973-1979 for all except female professionals. There was also a high rate of increase in cash earnings. Real earnings stayed constant or improved slightly over the whole period.

As regards unemployment, there was growing concern among librarians during the middle and late 1970's that the number of librarians being trained was increasingly exceeding the diminishing number of vacancies (see Library Association, 1977, for example) and the estimate that by 1981 there was significant unemployment among librarians was reported in Chapter One. Whether the 'threat' effect was operating is more difficult to determine. As principally



public sector employees, library staff have enjoyed good job security and in general have been protected from compulsory redundancy.

Guyton (1975, p.176) concluded in an American context that:

"Economic position of librarians has had a differential effect upon the pattern of library unionism. Most early unions emerged as a reaction to low salaries and high inflationary prices. In contrast, while economic issues are topics of concern to most current unions, they do not emerge as highly significant in promoting current union formation."

On unemployment Guyton found "no evidence to suggest that concerns of unemployment or other matters of employment security have been important in fostering union formation" (Guyton, 1975, p.176). However, it might be argued that joining an existing trade union, recognised by your employer, which is the course of action facing most UK library staff, is rather different from organising a union from scratch and seeking employer recognition, which is what Guyton is commenting upon. Adams (1975) illustrates from UK examples how much more difficult the latter is. In a UK context it would seem worthwhile seeking to apply Bain's conclusions regarding the business cycle in understanding the growth of trade unionism in libraries.

Personal And Job-Related Characteristics And The Composition Of The Workforce

In terms of personal and job-related characteristics

and the composition of the workforce, most writers agree that union density is usually lower among women than men. For example, Bain and Price (1983, Table 1.2) show that for the workforce as a whole union density among females was consistently 40% to 80% lower than for males throughout the period 1896 to 1979. More recently a study by Bain and Elias (1985) suggested at an aggregate level a very strong correlation between gender and union membership. Likewise, as discussed above, unionisation is consistently lower for white-collar workers than manual workers. In the period 1948 to 1979 the proportion of women and white-collar workers in the workforce grew steadily. Bain and Price conclude:

"The negative effects of these changes in the composition of potential union membership are probably sufficient in themselves to account for the slight downward trend in aggregate union density during the years 1949-68. By their very nature, however, they do not vary sufficiently to account for the year-to-year movements around the trend in union growth during this period. And since these negative effects persisted and, in most respects, were accentuated after 1968, there is a need to explain why union density nevertheless increased markedly during the next eleven years and then in 1980 began just as markedly to decline." (Bain and Price, 1983, p.13 and 16).

As Bain himself pointed out (Bain, 1970, p.41-42), the correlation between gender and lower union density could simply be due to the operation of other forces in the types of employment in which women happen to be concentrated. For example, Crompton and Jones report a correlation between density of female union membership and the extent to which their employing organisation expects female staff to have a career-type commitment to their work (Crompton and Jones, 1984, p.183-192).

Bain and his colleagues report finding little evidence to support the direct independent influence of other characteristics which have sometimes been thought to have a bearing on propensity to join a union such as age, part-time employment, labour turnover and occupational status. Their investigations (Bain and Elsheikh, 1979; Elsheikh and Bain, 1980) and those of others (Richardson and Catlin, 1979) find some correlations with these variables, but patchily and in circumstances where other variables are felt to be more powerful causes.

Another group of variables which has been put forward as having an influence on the propensity of workers to join unions (for example Strauss (1954), Mills (1953), Prandy (1965), and Blackburn (1967)) derives from social class and family background, measured through variables such as parental occupation or involvement of family and friends in trade union or political activity. After reviewing the evidence, Bain, Coates and Ellis concluded that this is not a major factor in the overall growth or decline of union membership. They quote an explanation from Kornhauser:

"when unions are completely institutionalised, there should be no association between union membership and attitudes formed prior to unionisation, for membership is no longer confined to individuals whose favourable orientations lead them to unions; it now includes many who are indifferent and some who are hostile to unionism, but who join because membership is either customary among their fellows or compulsory for those in their employment situation" (Kornhauser, 1961, p.51-52).

but Bain, Coates and Ellis nevertheless allow that:

"...at less aggregate levels, stratification variables may at least partly explain why, in a situation of less than total unionization, a particular individual joins a union and another does not." (Bain, Coates and Ellis,

1973, p.155-156)

Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechhofer and Platt (1968) noted that many white-collar workers are of working class origins. This must have happened on a quite large scale given the growth in the absolute and relative size of the white-collar group. Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton (1981) also found that personal social background was related to participation in a closed shop union branch. Rallings reported on the basis of election survey data that by 1970 only a small fraction of white-collar employees seemed to display ideological anti-unionism but went on to argue that political family background (pro- or anti-trade union, pro- or anti-Labour) rather than class origins of the individual is a strong determinant of the inclination to join a union where choice exists (Rallings, 1983, p.63). Poole, Mansfield, Frost and Blyton (1983) found a positive correlation between an individual manager's predisposition towards collective action and union membership, and a less strong correlation with general views on unions and on politics. They see social origins in themselves as playing only "a trivial part" in the overall explanation. However, Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn (1982, p.182) report from their survey of white-collar workers that being of manual worker origins was one of the factors which correlated with pro-union attitudes.

Despite Bain's inability to establish statistically significant correlations for white-collar workers between social class and the growth of trade union membership, it

seems possible that the influx into white-collar work of people from working-class backgrounds could have had marked effects on the predominant attitudes and social imagery of the white-collar group looked at as a whole, including a greater sympathy towards trade unions.

Library work has a very high proportion of women and is, by most definitions, a white-collar occupation, despite the element of manual labour provided by shelving and moving books. However, Guyton (1975, p.77) concludes from his study of Californian librarians that women are no less likely than men to favour union membership and that there are likewise no grounds for suggesting (Bain, 1970, p.40) that married women are less likely than unmarried women to favour union membership. This last conclusion is supported by the results of the large scale UK survey reported by Bain and Elias (1985). Further, the high proportion of public sector workers who are unionised, despite a strong representation of women and of white-collar work (as, for example, in library work), runs counter to the idea of lower rates of union membership among women workers and white-collar workers. It may be that while Bain has found a correlation there is not a strong causative link.

Librarianship has a relatively youthful workforce and a quite high proportion of part-time employment. Labour turnover appears not to be very high. There is often felt to be a problem of status. However, there is no evidence at an occupational level for the United Kingdom relating these

characteristics to union membership. Kaye found few attitudinal differences between full-time and part-time staff in his survey of Manchester Public Library staff (Kaye, 1979, p.74). Guyton found that such characteristics were not significant in explaining propensity to unionisation among Californian librarians (Guyton, 1975, p.176).

It is therefore expected in our study that there will be no negative correlation between the high proportion of women and density of unionisation, nor between age, part-time employment, turnover or status and density of unionisation. Personal social background, on the other hand, is expected to be related to unionisation

Industrial Structure

A bureaucratic structure and large organisational units have frequently been cited as causes of growing unionisation, as a result of the accompanying depersonalisation and alienation (for example, see Bain, 1970). Industrial structure was found by Bain and his colleagues to account for a large amount of inter-industry and inter-group variation in levels of unionisation (Bain and Elsheikh, 1979; Bain, 1970). The larger the size of establishment the higher the level of unionisation - but not in direct proportion (Elsheikh and Bain, 1980). This correlation is conventionally explained by the greater

impersonality and organisational problems of larger organisations. Large organisations also find it more difficult to deal with employees as individuals and therefore unions are attractive in some respects for the employer as well as for the employee. For example, Bain and Price quote HM Treasury to that effect (Bain and Price, 1983, p.29).

In seeking an explanation of the higher level of unionisation of white-collar workers in public employment, Clegg (1976) pointed out that in larger undertakings there are fewer decision points for the unions to "capture" than where control of employment is fragmented in a number of small independent concerns. Poole, Mansfield, Frost and Blyton (1983) found a correlation between employment concentration and union membership among their cross-industry sample of managers, but felt that this influence was "better explained by union preference for recruitment in the large-scale enterprise than by job dissatisfaction" (Poole and others, 1983, p.437). Guyton found that employment concentration was positively associated with higher levels of unionisation (Guyton, 1975, p.177).

Establishment size in UK libraries was commented on in Chapter One. In this country there has been a very clear move in library work towards larger organisations, but it was pointed out that many of the units in which library staff work remain small and isolated. Any evidence regarding

levels of unionisation in libraries may therefore be of some interest in testing the inevitability of the claimed effects of bureaucracy and size, as against the greater availability of unions.

Correlation Theories - Summary

There is then no clear evidence which would contradict the suggestion that most of Bain's conclusions in the four broad areas described above are as applicable to library work as to the aggregate level at which they were largely derived. The one exception to this is provided by social class, where other evidence suggests that it may be worth exploring the possible influence of social background variables. It is therefore proposed to seek evidence at the occupational level which would support or qualify Bain's conclusions, except on social background where a positive influence is to be tested for.

HYPOTHESES

The formal hypotheses derived from this discussion of correlation theories are:

3 That changes in union membership density in library work are influenced by:

- employer policies and government action
- the business cycle

- establishment size

4 That personal characteristics of the workforce such as age, gender, and part-time or full-time employment, have no influence on union membership density, but that social background correlates with attitudes to trade unionism.

Trade Unionism and Class

Some writers seek to explain trade unionism by reference to one or another analysis of the underlying class or status structure of society. The Marxist schools (for example Blackburn (1967), Braverman (1974), Crompton (1976)) see trade unionism in the context of a polarity of interest between a propertyless working class, who have to sell their labour to live, and the owners of the means of production, who cream off the productivity of their workers in order to increase their capital. From this point of view, trade unions are seen as part of "the labour movement" and joining a trade union may be seen as an awakening of class consciousness arising from the inevitable contradictions of capitalism finally becoming clear to the group of workers concerned (see for example Klingender, 1935). Hence the rise in white-collar union membership or increasing militancy were seen by both Right and Left as having a political meaning. Joining a union in circumstances where there is a choice, even if there is no awareness of class consciousness, is seen as representing "a clear recognition

- however unwilling (as when the union is described as a 'necessary evil') - of the gulf between their interests and those of their employers or their representatives" (Crompton and Jones, 1984, p.206).

However, such interpretations of trade unionism have been criticised, notably by Bain, Coates and Ellis (1973). Even some left-wing writers have found themselves unable convincingly to relate this view of trade unionism to the reality. As Braverman puts it:

"The unionized working class, intimidated by the scale and complexity of capitalist production, and weakened in its original revolutionary impetus by the gains afforded by the rapid increase of productivity, increasingly lost the will and ambition to wrest control of production from capitalist hands and turned ever more to bargaining over labor's share in the product." (Braverman, 1974, p.10).

or Lane:

"The trade unions could not transform society because their very nature - as signified by their spontaneous formation and the character of their aims - required them to work within it, to take it for granted." (Lane, 1974, p.266).

This admission is important, because it points in a theoretical way to the acceptance of Bain's notion that the growth and character of trade unionism will be dependent on various features of the particular work context rather than being determined by the underlying class structure.

Another difficulty for those who seek to make a class analysis on the basis of relations to production is the situation of white-collar groups such as library staff, who (in general) neither produce a saleable commodity nor exploit others to do so, and of the supervisors, managers

and technical staff who appear to have an ambiguous or confused position on the basis of a class analysis. If white-collar groups are excluded from the working class then, given the relative growth of white-collar work and reduction in manual work proportional to the total working population, it is implied that the working class is shrinking in size. If the white-collar groups are included then the theoretical definition of the working class becomes more complex.

The first part of Hyman and Price's reader (Hyman and Price, 1983) provides a review of various attempts to deal with the problems of defining the boundaries of this "new working class" and of convincingly relating workers' behaviour and perceptions to such a class analysis by writers such as Dahrendorf (1959), Braverman (1974), Giddens (1980), Poulantzas (1975) and Wright (1978). In relation to such attempts, Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn argue that:

"...since Marx assumed that the service sector would always be small and dependent upon the overwhelming power of the capitalist, modern Marxists have had to produce new explanations to account for the massive growth in this area. For the most part they have done this by ad hoc modifications of the basic theory which have undermined its central tenets." (Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1982, p.191).

Wright has redefined the Marxist concept of class in terms of exploitation. Exploitation relations are seen to have three dimensions: control of capital, organization, and credentials/skills. A variety of "contradictory" class locations, in which the individual is part exploiter and part exploited, offer a way of dealing with the intermediate

classes (or "disputed category") whose growth has caused some difficulty to orthodox Marxists (Wright, 1985, p.148-153). Unionisation is viewed fundamentally as an indicator (or "adjudicator") of class location, but not a very satisfactory one, because of the "political and ideological determinants" and the "strategies of unions and various kinds of structural obstacles to organizing certain categories of labour" in different countries (Wright, 1985, p.172-173). This would again seem tantamount to supporting a Bain-type approach to the determinants of unionisation.

Other writers, while accepting the basic importance of economic class divisions, have turned away from the Marxist emphasis on production. A number of writers trace this development back to Weber. Crompton and Gubbay define the difference from Marx as follows:

"Weberian theory focuses on the way in which societal rewards are acquired, and the manner in which patterns of acquisition are determined by the market. Marx's theory focuses on the manner in which new values are created, and the social relationships arising out of and sustaining this process." (Crompton and Gubbay, 1977, p.16).

Hyman puts it more succinctly:

"For Weber, conflicts of interest arose, not within production but in the labour market" (Hyman and Price, 1983, p.20).

At a broad level, this again points to a Bain-type conclusion in which trade unionism is to be seen as a reaction to what Hyman and Price (1983, p.24) call "market-derived life chances".

These life chances may, of course, change with time

for any particular occupational group, and it is to such changes that Mills and others have attributed the apparently increasing propensity of white-collar groups to unionise. Mills is, however, careful to stress that such unionization does not imply acceptance of a Marxist analysis, but rather a recognition that some individual goals may be best pursued by group action in the particular work situation in which the individual finds himself (Mills, 1953).

Lockwood analyses the development of clerical trade unionism in the United Kingdom from a point of view that tries to synthesise the approaches of Marx and Weber. He concludes:

"action in concert, while obviously an expression of group consciousness, is not necessarily an expression of class consciousness...Concerted action is a function of the recognition by the members of the occupational group that they have interests in common; class consciousness entails the further realization that certain of those interests are also shared by other groups of employees.

In the case of blackcoated workers, class consciousness may be said to emerge when the members of a clerical association realize, first, that their common interests are engendered by the conflict of interest between employer and employee, and, secondly, that their common interests are not fundamentally dissimilar in type from those underlying the concerted actions of manual workers." (Lockwood, 1958, p.137).

In practice, as was demonstrated in the extracts from the Library Association Record in Chapter Two, class consciousness seems unlikely to emerge very readily among library staff.

Abercrombie and Urry (1983), in studying the middle classes, also seek a synthesis of Weberian and Marxist theory. They build their model around "the crucial

difference between what we have called the service class and deskilled white-collar workers" (Abercrombie and Urry, 1983, p.152). However, Poole, Mansfield, Frost and Blyton (1983) found no evidence from a study of managers to support the more radical sociological analyses, Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton in their study of a NALGO Branch found no clear differentiation in attitudes between clerical and managerial staff (Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, 1981, p.213), and in a library context neither their data about library staff nor Kaye's unsuccessful attempt (Kaye, 1979) to characterise library assistants as having a different ideology to librarians provide any support for Abercrombie and Urry's thesis.

A number of writers, including Bain and others (1973), Lockwood (1958) and Prandy (1965), have investigated the notion of two types of social imagery as determinants of attitudes to trade unionism. One, which might be characterised as middle class, is based on a status ideology in which society is seen as an extended hierarchy in which a higher level of reward and upward mobility between strata is quite possible for the individual. The other, which might be characterised as working class, accepts a class ideology of 'us' and 'them' which looks to group action for improvement. In the first the individual seeks to rise by his own effort; in the second he looks to group solidarity, trade unions and perhaps political action to achieve a redistribution of wealth and power in favour of 'us'. Recent empirical evidence tends to support more strongly the instrumentalist

views of those such as Strauss (see later section on instrumentalism). However, it seems possible that differing social imagery is at least a contributory factor to the correlations noted earlier between social origins and attitudes to trade unionism, even if it is not a major determinant.

In recent publications Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn (1982, 1983) bring together the concept of class and the idea of a social imagery based on possibilities of promotion in the work context, with an added distinction between private and public sectors of employment. "Class" is redefined as "relative disadvantage under current processes", with "class action" redefined as "that which is concerned with pursuing alternative principles of distribution" (Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1983, p.146). They found that their sample of 2000 non-manual workers accepted the existence of an unequal distribution of material rewards when comparing themselves with more remote groups and were strongly motivated by comparisons only in relation to "others whom they consider to be much like themselves" (ibid, p.176). Individuals are seen as adapting to this situation of unequal distribution by adopting either individualistic or collective approaches. A powerful force for an individualistic approach is the possibility and reality of promotion. Reliance on collective adaptation through collective bargaining varies between public and private sectors. In the private sector:

"Trade unionism tends to be concentrated among those filling the lower level occupations in the non-manual

hierarchy which are less well paid and generally less highly rewarded. However, what is important is the relation of positions of that kind to the career processes of which they form a part...union involvement does not simply depend upon current experience, although this is important, but upon the present in relation to past, and anticipated future, experience..." (Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1983, p.146-147).

In such circumstances trade unions are depicted as a straightforward class phenomenon. Trade unionism and collective bargaining in the public sector is seen in a rather different light:

"The obvious facts of the very much more highly developed system of collective bargaining for public employees, and the much higher rates of membership in trade unions, suggest that quite different principles operate." (ibid., p.149).

Those principles are interpreted as:

"...the substitution of what are, or appear to be, market criteria of allocation by other, more universalistic criteria...employment relations take on a different class character because they are no longer tied so closely to market principles. Instead, other, more bureaucratic and more universalistic criteria are applied, of the sort that elsewhere would be the object of trade union action. Thus, trade unions in the public sector are not so much reactions to a continuing class situation, but more a reflection of an already-modified relationship." (ibid., 1983, p.150-151).

This notion that public sector trade unionism relates to a quite special situation is relevant to groups such as library staff, most of whom are employed in the public sector. In particular it could cast light on the "paradox" from which this study started of low union commitment and high membership rates. Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton found that 17% of local government union members in a closed shop situation were "only a member because I have to be" and a further 35% "don't mind being a member but I don't have any interest in union activities" (Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton,

1981, p.86) It might be argued that, in many organisations such as local government, for many union members joining the union is simply part of the social framework of their employment, whether it is formally required by a union membership agreement or not, and has no particular implications about the attitudes of the persons concerned.

In the public sector particularly, there is frequently a feeling that the immediate manager, even the local authority or board of a nationalised industry, is not in any case the real "adversary" for the trade unions. In such situations the real adversary is often central government, which imposes the financial targets and spending limits which inhibit salary increases and require loss of jobs.

At the practical level of influence on behaviour, it might be argued that all the class and status approaches are not so very far from the notion of characterising trade unionism on the basis of characteristics of the particular employment context of the trade union members. The differences seem to arise about the nature of that context and whether it is to be judged primarily from a structural analysis or from the perceptions of the workers themselves.

HYPOTHESIS

5 That for many trade union members in libraries trade union membership is just part of the social framework of their job and has no positive significance.

De-skilling

One particular aspect of the work context which has attracted attention in recent years has been the notion of "de-skilling" as a result of automation. Braverman (1974) sees de-skilling as a basic feature of working life under a capitalist system. The contributors to the collection of essays edited by Wood (1982) suggest that Braverman's approach encompasses some overly simple, romantic stereotypes and they offer further developments of the "de-skilling" idea to take account of the variety of contextual variables which influence what happens in a particular situation. Walker's study of a large white-collar organisation - part of the Civil Service - suggests that the nature of work in such an "office-factory" leads to a situation similar to that of the assembly line, and to similar problems of poor motivation and low job satisfaction (Walker, 1960). Crompton and Jones (1984) argue that much white-collar work - if not the white-collar workers - has been "de-skilled" and "proletarianised" by the growth in its volume, the application of the principles of division of labour, the filtering out of most elements requiring decision-making, and computerisation.

However, Mercer and Weir, in reporting a study of a cross-section of white-collar workers in Hull, argue strongly for the existence of a "craftsmanlike" attitude to work, driven by a strong internal desire to find satisfaction even in work "which appears to the outside

observer to be boring, monotonous and repetitive" (Mercer and Weir, 1972, p.56), in contrast to the alienation which Mills (1953) had stressed as a factor in unionisation

The most likely cause of de-skilling in library work which emerges from this debate is computerisation. The growing use of computers in libraries referred to in Chapter One has clearly raised productivity in a way analogous to the introduction of machinery into manufacture. One library assistant with a light-pen attached to a computer (which does all the filing, production of reminders, calculation of fines etc.) can do the book issuing and record maintenance workload of three or four library assistants operating a manual system. Computerisation has also led to closer grading of work, as was noted in Chapter One for libraries and as is reported in local government, banking and insurance by Crompton and Jones (1984). The question is whether, as Braverman and others suggest, this represents a de-skilling and degradation of work likely to be reflected in more antagonistic employee attitudes. Even a non-Marxist, Sturmthal, commented on the effects of rapidly changing technology:

"The nature of occupations, their status, their prospects are undergoing vast and frequent transformations. Expressions of these changes can be found in the job content of different white-collar occupations, in the wage structure, and in differences in the attitude towards unionism." (Sturmthal, 1966, p.388).

He went on to explore the relationship between new technology and job content:

"One of the most significant characteristics of any job is the degree to which the job holder controls or influences the content of his job. The higher the ranking

of the worker, the greater is the degree to which he has such control." (ibid.),

defining control in terms of Jacques' "time-span of discretion": "the longest period that the jobholder is acting on his own without direction from his supervisor" (ibid.). Sturmthal points out that:

"...status threatened by technological change may induce the white-collar workers to adopt the pattern of union action even while they affirm their fundamental hostility toward the unionism of manual labor." (ibid., p.391).

Hawkins also asserts that resistance to technological innovation is often not only because of the threat of reduced job opportunities but also because mechanization and automation, in "de-skilling" jobs, reduce the status in the occupational hierarchy of those who do them (Hawkins, 1981, p.17).

However, just as Crompton and Jones (1984, p.54-55) report simple acceptance of computerisation by their respondents, there has in general been very little opposition to the introduction of computers in libraries, particularly during the 1970's. This is probably at least partly because use of libraries has at the same time been increasing and the public sector employers in any case usually prefer natural wastage rather than dismissal of staff if numbers are to be reduced, so there is little likelihood of redundancy as a consequence of computerisation. It could also be that the work which is being lost - filing, copying, checking - was so tedious that the staff view computerisation as a genuine liberation, allowing them to concentrate on more interesting work

dealing with people and the contents of books.

This is particularly so now that direct data entry via a desk-top terminal is replacing the laborious process of filling in data preparation forms and then checking the resultant printout. It is interesting that Crompton and Jones report higher levels of work interest than they had expected post-computerisation in one organisation and attribute this to a high level of contact with the public by the clerical staff (Crompton and Jones, 1984, p.66). A high level of public contact is also a feature of library work. However, as NALGO in particular has taken up the idea of "new technology agreements", there have been instances in libraries (for example London University in 1983 and Glasgow Public Libraries in 1985) of the new computer terminals being "blacked" and standing idle until new technology agreement procedures have been agreed or honoured.

It is therefore intended to explore whether there is any evidence of the "proletarianisation" of the library section of the white-collar labour force due to de-skilling, as is anticipated in such circumstances by some writers.

HYPOTHESIS

6 That computerisation had has neither a de-skilling nor a proletarianising effect on the situation of library staff.

Instrumentalism

A final group of writers have seen workers' attitudes to trade unionism in straightforwardly "instrumental" terms: trade unions are joined in so far as the potential members feel that the unions are the most promising avenue of achieving particular personal work-related goals.

The classic study of workers in Luton suggested that most workers have as instrumental an attitude to union membership as they have to their work as a whole (Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechhofer and Platt, 1968, p.93-115). Participation in both is related principally to economic rewards, without personal or political commitment.

Foreshadowing some of the arguments on de-skilling Strauss suggests that white-collar workers join unions:

"not because they reject their middle class aspirations, but because they see unionism as a better way of obtaining them. In other words, they look on the union as a means of obtaining dignity, prestige and control over environment, things which are denied them by the increasingly bureaucratic organisation of the modern office" (Strauss, 1954, p.81).

Some research (see for example Roberts, Loveridge, Gennard et al., 1972; Hartmann, 1974; Weir, 1976) supports Strauss's view of why white-collar workers join unions and provides evidence that for managers, professionals, scientists and technicians etc. joining or developing a trade union is a defensive act designed to protect what they see as their distinctive position between top management and other workers, which is best explained by a pluralistic

interpretation of the social structure of the firm rather than a class analysis: employees are viewed as interest groups who adopt a collectivist viewpoint when and in so far as it suits them.

Mercer and Weir report that "higher wages and better conditions" and "consultation with management on all levels" were their respondents' priorities for trade unions, with "unity between all workers" cited by less than 10% (Mercer and Weir, 1972, p.57). Union non-members explained their reasons principally in terms of not needing a union, followed by antipathy to various perceived characteristics of trade unions (ibid., p.58). Mercer and Weir come to the conclusion about the white-collar workers whom they surveyed that:

"It would perhaps be accurate to characterise them as displaying a limited instrumentalism, a "conditional assent", not to the values necessarily, but to the possible efficacy of trade unions in obtaining tangible benefits for their members ... this perspective may derive from a quite realistic assessment on the part of the white-collar worker of his intermediate status, and not from any status panic or false consciousness" (Mercer and Weir, 1972, p.57).

Bright (1979) concluded in a study of polytechnic lecturers that:

"... the respondents, when asked to conceptualise an organization known as a Trade Union, were more likely to do so by reference to indices related to job issues as opposed to wider industrial and political issues." (Bright, 1979, p.345).

"Job issues" covered improved wages, maintaining relative economic position, job security and professional insurance.

Roberts, Cook, Clark and Semeonoff perhaps summarise

this view very well when they describe white-collar workers as:

"...willing to support either individualistic or collective action, or a combination of both, depending upon the strategy that best fits their situations...White-collar workers can join trade unions thereby endorsing the principle of collective action without their attitudes otherwise becoming any less middle class." (Roberts, Cook, Clark and Semeonoff, 1977, p.134).

This instrumental approach seems apposite to many of the initial perceptions of library trade unionism with which Chapter One of this dissertation began. This approach is also arguably supported by a great deal of the empirical evidence discussed and by the dependence on the particular employment context which has emerged from examination of other approaches earlier in this chapter. It is proposed to test the view that most trade unionists have a predominantly instrumental approach to their unions, meaning that they are members in order to obtain the benefits of higher wages, greater security of employment and more influence over conditions of employment which can follow from the presence of a strong union.

HYPOTHESIS

7 That library trade unionism is motivated by an instrumental approach focussing tightly on job issues.

The Character Of Trade Unionism

The history of trade union development reveals considerable contrasts in union style, attitudes, policy and behaviour, even within the "white-collar" area. Price draws out from Lockwood's account of the early years of NALGO and of the Railway Clerk's Association (RCA) how different two unions formed within a few years of each other could be: NALGO began as a social club and friendly society, did not consider itself opposed to the local government employers and took more than thirty years to come to serious consideration of industrial action; by contrast the RCA was from soon after its outset a registered trade union, affiliated to the TUC and to the Labour Party, unambiguously seeking improved salaries and conditions of service, and using both industrial action and political channels, via parliamentary opposition to Railway Bills, to achieve its objectives (Hyman and Price, 1983, p.156-157). There is no reason to doubt that these different approaches reflected the views of the respective memberships. Price also refers to the 'professional' orientation of the Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen (AESD) as described by Roberts, Loveridge, Gennard et al. (1972) (Hyman and Price, 1983, p.159). In line with Bain's work, Price attributes these differences of union character to the varying economic situations of the occupational groups and to differing employer attitudes. This character may therefore change over time as a union and its membership respond to changing circumstances.

The post-war period has seen one white-collar occupational group after another undertaking some sort of strike action in pursuit of group ends. Jenkins and Sherman provide numerous examples of white-collar militancy (Jenkins and Sherman, 1979, p.71-85). Walsh (1982) traces the growing militancy of local government workers in the 1960s and 1970s, which he concludes stemmed originally from economic factors but was made easier by the existence of an established national trade union and negotiating framework, however moderate that had previously been. Undy, Ellis, McCarthy and Halmos (1981) chart the changing character of NALGO, the National Union of Teachers and other unions since the 1960s, as discontent with their declining economic position persuaded members to become more militant and as membership of the TUC was gradually accepted by white-collar unions which had traditionally remained outside it. Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn found that workplace militancy, or as they term it "enterprise unionateness" was determined most strongly by dissatisfaction with earnings and to a lesser extent by feelings of lack of job security. There were also differences between private enterprise, where enterprise unionateness tended to vary with status, and public employment, where no such correlation existed (Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1982, p.161-164).

The nature of white-collar militancy can be exemplified by events in 1986. The teachers undertook half-day strikes for many months in pursuit of their salary

claim; there was the one day strike of university teachers, whose dispute with the Government over salaries is linked with Government restrictions on funding for universities; and there were threats by lawyers, in dispute with the Government about the fees paid for legal work under the Legal Aid scheme, to withdraw from it.

On the other hand Kelly, in a study of the 1979 Civil Service dispute in Scotland, emphasises the careful planning and presentation by local union officers needed to persuade many members to take even selective industrial action and the careful selection of groups to undertake all-out strike action. The groups chosen included the computer staff, "a tightly-knit occupational group with a high degree of work-group integration", whose work environment Kelly likens more to a factory than an office, and law court staff, who had a particular grievance about gradings. Kelly reports some, though not all, union officials commenting that even for these groups the payment of full net pay to anyone on whole or partial strike was critical to sustaining the action. Undy, Ellis, McCarthy and Halmos (1981, p.260) report the price paid by the NUT for its militancy in losing members to the "no-strike" Professional Association of Teachers.

The 1979 Civil Service dispute illustrates the unintended effects which management reaction to union actions, in this case suspensions of staff taking limited action, can have in influencing staff attitudes:

"The suspensions provided the immediate and concrete issue which had until then been lacking. Before the suspensions the strike had appeared to local officials as if it were about to collapse. After the suspensions the strike received a new lease of life. Support for the action increased rather than diminished and the power of the local branch officials was enhanced." (Kelly, 1983, p.48).

What is different about white-collar groups is that they have evolved their own tactics of militancy. In general the all-out strike has been avoided, perhaps because the unions are unable to provide strike pay for more than very small groups of members and the economic losses of such action are so large for the better-paid groups as to make all-out strike action too economically damaging to them for it to be acceptable to the potential strikers. Instead selective action, which minimises costs to the union and its members and has maximum impact on the employer or in gaining publicity, is employed. The members also seek to identify their own interests with the public good.

Carter (1979) illustrates these approaches from his study of ASTMS, which has been innovative both in its tactics for recruiting members (newspaper advertisements such as "My tragedy was that I picked up a pen instead of a shovel") and in its use of parliamentary and other strategies for achieving its objectives.

Bamber (1986) illustrates the careful use of industrial sanctions by steel industry managers. But he also suggests that environmental factors will eventually overcome whatever scruples about using industrial sanctions union

members begin with (Bamber, 1986, p.125) and notes the influence of job insecurity, amongst other factors, in pushing members towards both participation and militancy (ibid., p.111-123).

The picture to be drawn seems therefore to be one of a workforce who are not keen to be militant but who can be persuaded to be so by events.

A second question concerns the extent to which the union activity of white-collar union members can usefully be described as "class action". The analysis earlier in this chapter of explanations of union membership would suggest that such activity is better understood as sectional activity by particular groups, who may ally themselves with other groups for purely practical reasons.

Hawkins draws attention to the willingness of various unions and workgroups to exploit market forces for their own sectional ends regardless of the effect on other workers (Hawkins, 1981). Taylor shows that sectionalism is a characteristic of manual as well as white-collar unionism (Taylor, 1982).

Even for a group who have a reputation for solidarity and trade union commitment such as the miners, we saw in 1984-85 the inability of the leadership of the National Union of Mineworkers to carry all their members with them in an industry-wide campaign seeking political decisions in

favour of the mining industry, an inability which eventually led to the formation of a breakaway union, the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, based on a mining area which has a more prosperous future. This once again underlines the instrumentalism and complexity apparently inherent in most union membership.

The apparent unwillingness of the British union movement, even when encouraged to do so by trade union leaders, to support any kind of incomes policy for very long and the insistence on a return to "free collective bargaining" (see Jenkins and Sherman, 1979, p.112-123 and Crouch, 1979) indicates how firmly trade unions in practice subscribe to the framework of the capitalist system, whatever political rhetoric might suggest. It also underlines that for many employees trade union membership does not imply any political commitment either to socialism or to a labour movement, nor does it imply hostility towards their employer or the framework within which they are employed. Bain, Coates and Ellis comment:

"Precisely because so much of the literature considered here has operated with too simple a notion of character, it has focused on peripheral aspects of unionism which do not locate the significant points of difference within unions or between them. Unions are not monolithic entities. They exist at many different organizational levels, contain many diverse groups of employees, and operate in many different work and bargaining contexts." (Bain, Coates and Ellis, 1973, p.158).

The issue has also been confused by the emphasis on what makes white-collar trade unionists different and the uncritical and misleading use of what Price describes as:

"the romantic stereotype of the manual trade unionist as a committed proletarian collectivist" (Hyman and Price,

1983, p.176).

Turning to white-collar workers specifically, Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton found in their study of NALGO local government staff "...a strong majority assertion that the union branch should "confine itself to defending my job and pay level" (Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, 1981, p.81). Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn found from their survey of white-collar workers that "the form of unionism encouraged is specific and depends upon a 'non-proletarian' identity." (Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1982, p.178). Walsh points out the differences of interest between groups of local government workers which have led to divisive action as expenditure cutbacks have had their effect in the late 1970s and 1980s:

"Teachers have defended their own jobs at the expense of ancilliary workers; white-collar workers have managed to defend their position ultimately at the expense of blue-collar workers." (Walsh, 1982, p.16).

The complexity of the sectionalism was increased in the 1970s by the growing unionisation of managers via membership of the general workplace union (see for example Blyton, 1981, and Blyton and Ursell, 1982). Blyton reviews studies of the effects on union character of incorporating all grades in the same union. He notes in connection with the study of which his work was part that higher-graded staff tended to be more active and therefore more influential in the union branch than their numbers warranted (Blyton, 1981, p.131-132) and that some members on lower grades felt that this affected the union's responsiveness to their particular problems and views (ibid., p.133). This

captures the tension between senior staff who "desire to exert similar degrees of involvement and control within the union setting to those which they are accustomed to wielding within the work organisation" (ibid., p.135) and lower grades whose work does not offer such ready training for representative roles. But Blyton and Ursell note that:

"For their part, the higher grade individuals did not comprise a faction but were divided by differences of political perspective and of functional or professional identification. They tended to draw their alliances vertically across all grades rather than horizontally within a grade." (Blyton and Ursell, 1982, p.192).

Further evidence of the tensions within an all-grades industrial union is perhaps provided by the recent founding in January 1986 of FUMPO, the Federated Union of Managerial and Professional Officers, seeking to recruit local government staff from chief officers down to principal officer level in local government and equivalent staff in public sector industries. The Society of Metropolitan and County Chief Librarians has agreed to become the basis of of a FUMPO section for senior librarians (see Chapter Two)

On balance it would seem that hierarchical divisions are another source of sectionalism.

Marchington and Armstrong comment interestingly on both the occupational and hierarchical divisions between local government workers and the problems of whatever solution is adopted in terms of union organisation:

"On the one hand, we have a single "industrial" union [NALGO] which finds it increasingly problematic to cater for the diverse needs of all its members and is regularly criticised by them for a failure to respond to their own

sectional demands. The arguments are well-rehearsed; the lower paid clerical members of NALGO regard it as a union dominated by senior management whilst, conversely, the better paid (and often those in professional or technical positions) feel their differentials are being eroded in an attempt to satisfy the majority of the membership. On the other hand, in the manual case, we have a host of unions each looking after the interests of separate groups but failing to achieve the inter-union cooperation necessary to present a united and cohesive front to management...In other words, union cohesiveness is problematic either within or between unions..." (Marchington and Armstrong, 1982, p.45-46).

Nevertheless, looking to the future, Walsh conjectures:

"It remains to be seen how unions on the defensive in the 1980's will react, but it seems unlikely that the lessons on militant action and what it can achieve learned in the 1970s will be forgotten." (Walsh, 1982, p.16).

Whether the militancy is retained or not it seems clear that sectionalism is a forceful part of the character of UK trade unionism.

The Character Of Trade Unionism In Libraries

The issues which Marsh identified as being the major spheres of trade union interest and activity in libraries were: pay and gradings; conditions of service; physical working conditions; the role and status of libraries and librarians; and freezing of vacancies and abolition of posts (Marsh, 1980, p.19-41).

Marsh paints a picture of library trade unionists as being moderate, unaggressive and unmilitant, with expectations of their union that it will deliver an annual

pay rise and protect them as individuals, even in quite trivial matters such as the moving of office furniture, without requiring they themselves to be active (Marsh, 1980, p.51). Kaye summarises his sample of library union members as follows:

"The staff in general show no great interest in union affairs, are not specially militant and are opposed to a political stance for the union...In sum, workers in this library may be said to accept union membership rather passively. They see the need for it and accept its benefits, and they do not experience any status conflict in being union members, but few are prepared to commit themselves in an active way to the union. There is also a clear feeling that the interests of library staff are submerged by the wider needs of the union as a whole." (Kaye, 1979, p.83-84).

Kaye reports that 87% of his sample of Manchester Public Library staff stated as appropriate union aims one or more aspects of pay and conditions (ibid., p.68). While a majority of members were prepared to strike for "all NALGO members" or library staff, more than two thirds said they would disobey an instruction to strike for other groups in NALGO or members of other unions (ibid., p.71). Two thirds disagreed with strikes on principle. Qualified staff were more likely to approve. A third of respondents thought a strike of library staff on a library issue would have some effect on the outcome (ibid., p.72). Only six had ever taken part in a strike, but 31 claimed experience of other forms of industrial action. There was no correlation between militancy on this measure and a willingness to strike.

Other library literature supports the notion of a growing willingness to take industrial action. Tiernan, as a

NALGO activist, comments in 1974:

"The dangerous apathy which has been apparent for many years amongst library staffs is now showing signs of being dispersed. The stand of such officers in Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh and other cities over shift payments shows this fact in no uncertain manner." (Tiernan, 1974, p.182).

During the 1970s library staff were involved in several overtime bans, blacking of work relating to frozen or unfilled posts, refusal to work with temporary staff supplied by employment agencies and one-day strikes. Maidment (1976) chronicles the involvement of library staff in the 1974 London weighting dispute. The most militant action was in Islington, where there was a three-week strike which included library staff. Marsh (1980, p.38-39) reports a number of disputes over frozen posts, involvement of British Library staff in the 1979 Civil Service dispute, a dispute over the terms on which former British National Bibliography staff were to be absorbed into the new British Library and their right to union representation by ASTMS in 1974, and a blacking of South African materials. The Library Association Record and New Library World reported a number of instances of working to rule and strike action over cutbacks in services or reorganisation and downward grading of senior library posts ("Blacked", 1976; "How the staff battled for the chief's rights, 1977; Tomlinson, 1977a, p.85).

Backhouse (1984) reports a four-week strike of all Tower Hamlets NALGO staff over a library issue. Public Library staff had, in protest against the closure of two libraries and the loss of four posts, refused to collect

finances or charges. The Council told the staff that they "would not be allowed to continue working" if they did this. The NALGO Branch responded by deciding on a total strike, which eventually led to a reconsideration of the proposed closures. McKee (1982a, 1982b) reports a strike by library staff at Kelsterton College over non-provision of additional staff to run a new, larger library. The strike lasted seven weeks until a compromise solution was agreed. Library staff at Sunderland and Manchester Polytechnics have refused to cover for vacant posts, when posts were frozen or were cut from the establishment. Staff at Wolverhampton Polytechnic Library refused to cover for vacant posts and even caused a library to close for a period in the course of a gradings dispute.

There is therefore some evidence that library staff will become militant and active if they feel they have strong enough cause and that the issue is important enough or the likely benefits large enough to justify the costs of action. There is, however, a caution in assessing the likely costs and benefits. Taylor reports of the Islington strike:

"The strike was unanimous but protracted, and its organisers freely admitted that its strength would not have been economically feasible without the financial support of the union." (Taylor, 1977, p.88).

In their approach to industrial action library staff would appear to have a great deal in common with other white-collar groups.

HYPOTHESIS

8 That there is a cautious approach to militancy which balances likely costs against likely benefits.

In relation to sectionalism, Chapter Two indicated the very "sectionalist" approach taken by many library staff and the concentration in the library literature on what unions can do for library staff as an occupational group. The regularity of the exhortations to library staff to take an interest in their unions as a whole (see Dove (1970); Tiernan (1974) for example) is perhaps indicative of the fairly narrow instrumental view which is usually taken. This appears to match the picture derived from other occupational groups in this chapter.

HYPOTHESIS

9 That library staff take a predominantly sectional approach to trade union membership.

Trade Unions and Politics

There is evidence that as many as three quarters of both the general public and trade union members believe that unions should "stay out of politics". For example, the proportion of trade unionists voting Labour is reported to have declined to only 51% by 1979 (Taylor, 1982, p.192ff.).

The existence of unions which for many years were affiliated neither to the TUC nor to The Labour Party, such as NALGO or the bank employees, and the growth of clearly unpolitical union membership among white-collar workers led some sociologists to try to devise measures of the more or less political character of different trade union groups, and in particular of the extent to which such union membership represented a political or class consciousness. This property was dubbed "unionateness" by Blackburn (Blackburn and Prandy, 1965; Blackburn, 1967), and the concept was later refined to "society unionateness", as distinct from "enterprise unionateness" which might be equated with workplace militancy (Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1974), in response to critical comments (e.g. Bain, Coates and Ellis, 1973). Nevertheless the issue of the extent to which workers' trade unionism embodies a political commitment is a key issue in understanding its significance and character. Prandy and Blackburn's latest research suggests that in non-manual public employment society unionateness, which is the political variety, is strongest among the lower-graded workers, but that the individual's social origins - being brought up in a manual worker home and having a trade unionist father - play a large part in determining at an individual level the degree of identification with the labour movement "independently of factors concerned with the respondent's present employment. It appears also that the influence of society unionateness upon enterprise unionateness is somewhat greater than that in the reverse direction." (Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1982, p.182).

Most of this literature review would lead to the conclusion that workers such as library staff are unlikely to exhibit a very unionate perspective. And what evidence there is about library staff tends to confirm this hypothesis. Kaye reports that 90% of respondents were against trade union support of political parties and 97% thought unions should concentrate on improving the pay and conditions of their members (Kaye, 1979, p.68). The library sub-set of Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton's sample held similar views to the whole sample: 57% wanted their union branch to "confine itself to defending my job and pay level" and 57% described themselves as rightwards inclined, even in a relatively left-wing authority. It is perhaps noteworthy that in her discussion of trade union issues as perceived by library staff Marsh dismisses political issues in less than a page (Marsh, 1980, p.43-44). In the librarianship literature one writer takes a strongly anti-political line along with hostility to the closed shop (Tomlinson, 1977a, p.85).

The evidence would seem to point strongly towards a majority membership view that trade unions should not act politically.

HYPOTHESIS

10 That most library trade union members do not wish their trade union to have a political commitment.

Participation in Trade Unions

This study approaches union participation from the point of view of the attitudes relating to participation and the nature and size of the effects of membership participation on the work context, rather than in relation to issues such as union democracy and the mechanics of participation per se, which are well represented in the literature.

Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton draw attention to the partly mutually supportive and partly contrasting conclusions drawn in two summaries of research dealing with the factors associated with high levels of union participation, one by Spinrad (1960) and the other by Perline and Lorenz (1970). Both reviews emphasise the relevance of cohesive work groups with a high profile in the life of the individual, personal background, and generally pro-union/anti-management attitudes. There is disagreement about whether union participation relates to positive or negative attitudes to the work and the job (Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, 1981, p.34-38). These authors' own work suggests that:

"...the positive association between union activism and pride in the employing organization is not inconsistent when the organization's goals are sympathetic to trade unionism." (ibid., p.115)

and they further note:

"The associations between activism, status, desired participation in management decision-making, "educated radicalism" and job dissatisfaction suggest that middle and upper status employees, especially those of more radical dispositions, find the union a useful way of

crossing internal organizational boundaries of hierarchy and influence." (ibid.)

They conclude from their research:

"Union participation has not emerged as an instrumental vehicle for employees' negative feelings about job content, working conditions, and the organizational milieu, though participation is systematically connected to organizational identification, desires for influence over the management system, and anxieties about job security.

The motivational hub of this causal nexus is a system of social needs for involvement. To be active in the local union is to express shared values with others...Hence political socialization has been found to supply the origins for the greater part of the motivational energy for members' need for involvement, with parental values and educational induction providing the means for people to acquire beliefs and values about their relations with the union...it appears that the majority of union members are selectively active...for middle and upper status employees, involvement in the union is largely internally motivated via sympathetic value systems, whilst for low status workers, involvement more typically is stimulated by the external influence of union-linked social affiliations... stewards have the power to maximise members' pre-existing motivation for involvement but cannot capitalize on the mere fact of members' favourable attitudes towards the union...(ibid., p.212-213).

The evidence summarised above suggests that a very moderate level of selective participation in their trade union is characteristic of the great majority of trade union members, with only a few members regularly attending union meetings.

Turning to libraries specifically, Marsh (1980, p.47-48) reports difficulty in several libraries in finding people willing to be union representatives. Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton's data about library staff show them in most respects to be not significantly different from other members except for having a lower profile of activity: a smaller percentage of union activists (4.3% against 11.9%);

seeing union representatives less often; feeling less well informed than the average member; and taking part in union activities less frequently. These differences might or might not result from other characteristics which distinguished the library staff: being younger, having far more women (78% against 46%) and having more low-graded staff. Factors like the relatively high dispersion of library staff workplaces away from the town hall could also play a part.

Kaye (1979) quotes one respondent whom he suggests "represents perhaps a considerable silent majority":

"I do not usually take a great deal of interest in trade unions. I joined NALGO because I was asked by my representative, but I have no active involvement in it" (Kaye, 1979, p.77).

Most of Kaye's respondents said they talked only "occasionally" or "hardly ever" about union affairs (ibid., p.63), with male and qualified staff most likely to show more interest. 75% of respondents, including all the part-time staff, had never been to a union branch meeting (ibid, p.64). Those who had attended were more likely to favour library services to business or underprivileged groups as public library objectives. Attendances at departmental union meetings were higher - half the respondents had at some time attended such a meeting (ibid., p.65). Major reasons for non-attendance were (1) inconvenience (of time etc.) or (2) lack of interest. There was no correlation between job satisfaction and degree of interest in union affairs. Kaye comments:

"The general picture of interest in union affairs and participation in union activities is one of considerable apathy overall, though certain groups are more interested

than others - in particular the men as a group seem to be much more interested than the women." (ibid., p.66).

Marsh suggests that different levels of participation may apply in different unions:

"The involvement of library staff in AUT and IPCS was found to be considerably greater on the whole than in other unions ... in those other unions, particularly NALGO, active involvement seems to be confined to a very few keen unionists." (Marsh, 1980, p.87).

However the general level of participation appears not to be high.

HYPOTHESIS

11 That participation in trade union affairs will be very low.

Members' Attitudes To Their Trade Unions

As Chapter Two illustrated, trade union members' attitudes towards their trade unions are likely to be conditioned by their individual expectations and the extent to which the trade union delivers that which is sought. The expectations may or may not be realistic. Attitudes may also be influenced by general views about the role of trade unions, and it has been suggested, for example by the Glasgow University Media Group (1976; 1980) that these general views may be strongly influenced by the presentation of trade union matters by the press and television, as well as by direct political campaigning by the political parties.

Taylor (1982) in a chapter called "The myths of trade union power" illustrates the opinion poll findings of the 1960's and 1970's which confirm the existence of a widely held popular view - correct or otherwise - that trade unions are too powerful, a view prevalent even among trade union members.

The genesis of this view probably goes back to the late 1950s when, as Crouch (1979) chronicles, Governments began resisting the implementation of wages agreements negotiated between unions and employers, prior to the more explicit incomes policies of the 1960s and 1970s. From the Government viewpoint incomes policies were made necessary by the inability or unwillingness of employers to resist inflationary union claims for wage and salary increases and the institution of an annual round of such claims. In 1958 there was a formal attack on the power of the trade unions by the Inns of Court Conservative and Unionist Society, "A Giant's Strength" (Crouch, 1979, p.40ff.). Hawkins summarises the frequent public posture of Governments of all political shades in the 1960s and 1970s:

"Strikes in support of pay claims which were in breach of the prevailing norms were said, on more than one occasion, to be a direct challenge to parliamentary democracy and the ability of the government to govern. The public was frequently left with the impression that the country's entire future hinged on whether or not a particular union or group of workers would accept a given offer...The burden of much comment in the press and the media generally was, in a nutshell, that full employment had given the unions more power over society than ever before and that they were abusing it." (Hawkins, 1981, p.48).

However, it is interesting to note that a similar

opinion poll to those quoted by Taylor (1982) found in October 1985 that the proportion of trade unionists holding the view that trade unions have too much power had dropped from 73% in 1978 to 42% in 1985. Likewise the proportion of trade union members believing that most trade unions were controlled by militants, after rising to 64% in 1982, had fallen to 43% in 1985. The poll also showed a marked fall in confidence in the ability of unions to look after their members (Lipsey, 1985).

It seems that union members are able to take an independent view of the effects of trade unions on society in general, which is not related to their own membership of a trade union. As has been noted in several places earlier in this chapter, whatever the members' views about unions in general, their assessment of their own union depends on the success with which the union delivers that which they seek.

Within library work, when Kaye asked his library staff respondents for views about unions only four out of 18 comments were in favour of trade unions in general (Kaye, 1979, p.77). In relation to their own union the preoccupations with pay and status are clearly evident in the history of relationships between library staff and their trade unions reported in Chapter Two. Pay and status are of course closely intertwined but it is perhaps worth noting that even the economic issues such as pay and gradings are felt in status terms as much as in economic terms. Marsh comments:

"Of those who do take an interest in union affairs, members of AUT, NATFHE and APT...expressed the more favourable attitudes towards their unions. Some NALGO members do approve of their union, but some dissatisfaction has been felt..." (Marsh, 1979, p.88).

While it is plainly the case that the main influence on perceptions of status is pay, the unions whom Marsh reports as perceived most favourably by their members, AUT, NATFHE and APT, also represent only the high status groups within the relevant organisations: it could be that the unions are benefitting from the ability to confer high status as well as more obvious benefits.

This status issue is argued quite openly in public sector higher education, where The Library Association and many librarians would argue that it is the resulting status rather than financial rewards which have motivated the quest for teachers' gradings for librarians. (The author has sometimes mischievously wondered whether this status would still be so eagerly sought if non-teaching grades were suddenly to carry higher salaries!)

In the context of an occupation whose members tend frequently to feel themselves at the periphery of the organisations in which they are employed, this status conferral issue would clearly work against NALGO, since the union represents mostly the lower paid workers in higher education and represents all grades except the Chief Officers in Local Government. This situation would logically tend to produce less favourable attitudes in union members, regardless of the union's success or otherwise in

representing its members interests. One recalls the reluctance of senior library staff in the Australian State of Victoria who were members of the lecturers' union to join a union for para-academic staff instead (see Chapter Two).

It may also be relevant that the favoured unions all take a 'professional' approach to their role, with considerable effort put into work designed to defend the institutions employing their members and to improve the quality of the services provided. Sturmthal commented on the basis of a study of research on eight countries:

"The kind of union that many white-collar groups - particularly the professionals - in Western industrial nations find most acceptable appears to be a mixture between professional association and union. Maintenance of professional standards seems the center of union activity...its main activities and its style are quite distinct from those of a conventional blue-collar union." (Sturmthal, 1966, p.384)

While NALGO in recent years has also sought to take a broader view in defence of Local Government and has for many years offered correspondence courses designed to help its members improve their qualifications, it still has much less of the flavour of a professional association - it is perhaps too 'unionate' for many of its library members.

The sort of mismatch which arises is well illustrated by an early report of contacts between library staff and their NALGO branch. Morley, in 1961, reported that, while still supporting the idea of libraries opening long hours on social grounds, librarians had sought to obtain extra payment or extra leave in return for what is now known as 'unsocial hours' work. He says that their union colleagues

met a defence by the library staff of the importance of Saturday and evening opening as a public service "with a rather incredulous silence" and a union official described the library staff as "plain cuckoo" to tolerate such hours (Morley, 1961, p.194) . In contrast to this mismatch, in 1979 Kaye found that:

"a large majority of the respondents appear to have confidence in the union's ability to achieve the aims they consider important." (Kaye, 1979, p.66).

It is, of course, quite likely that the attitudes of library staff have changed over the intervening twenty years. Nevertheless, Morley captures rather well the traditional approach of library staff to their work: a willingness to extract recompense but a strong commitment to the value of their service and a toleration of the conditions of work required.

Union membership agreements seem on the whole unpopular. Kaye reports that 61% of his union member respondents disapproved of the union management agreement to which they were subject, and only 36% approved (Kaye, 1979, p.57). A writer in the library literature puts this opposition very strongly:

"The politically inspired principle of compulsory trade union membership is not necessarily in members' interests...The greatest objection to my mind...is that members lose the biggest sanction they have against trade union incompetence - the right to resign and refuse to pay fees." (Tomlinson, 1977a, p.85).

Webb (1976) argues against the closed shop as an erosion of personal liberty. The library literature also contains a defence of the closed shop (Taylor, 1977, p.98), but in

general there is evidence only of a minority commitment to the idea. In several organisations known to the author the idea was put forward but rejected in a ballot of union members.

The general drift of the evidence is that we should expect to find union members in libraries with reservations about the extent of the power which they wish trade unions to have, but with quite clear ideas about the limited range of "job issues" on which they judge the success of their own trade union.

HYPOTHESES

12 That many library trade union members are hostile to trade unionism in general

13 That union members will judge the success of their own union on narrow criteria of salaries, conditions and status achieved for library staff.

Union Office-Holders

In the case of unions such as the Union of Post Office Workers (Moran, 1974), the then AESD (Roberts, Loveridge, Gennard et al., 1972) and ASTMS (Carter, 1979) it is reported that the union and its office-holders may nevertheless be committed to political views which the

majority of members do not support, provided that these policies do not make any demands upon the individual member and provided also that the union delivers what the members are seeking on the issues which are important to them: salaries and conditions. This suggests a distinct divergence of attitude between the more politically inclined office-holders and the more instrumentally-minded ordinary members. Rallings puts it more strongly:

"...there is no necessary connection between the character of the union [nationally] and the opinions of its rank and file membership." (Rallings, 1973, p.71).

Bright, in studying polytechnic teachers, found:

"...that office-holders brought with them to the post a deep-rooted commitment to the "Egalitarian" perspective. In other words, people who are likely to take up Union office are also likely to have beliefs which lead them to support a more socialistic approach to Trade Union objectives and functioning." (Bright, 1979, p.475).

He also draws attention to another difference: that union office-holders may be more conservative at a practical level. He summarises research into differences of attitude between union office-holders (full-time and lay) and ordinary members (Bright, 1979, p.39-40 and p.486), and advances the hypothesis that:

"...such a deviation, where found, may be accounted for by differences in the role sets of representatives and membership. The fact that the representative interacts with different groups and individuals, or is involved in work related areas (such as negotiation) which the membership as a group do not generally experience (only at times of breakdown or settlement) or may have access to more and different types of information than the membership at large, may all work to cultivate attitudinal and perceptual differences." (Bright, 1979, p.456).

Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn report that "the higher the level of involvement [in trade unions] the greater is the

commitment to the labour movement." (Prandy, Stewart and Blackburn, 1983, p.148). Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, in studying a local government NALGO branch, found that:

"Most stewards were politically more radical, displaying an attitudinal profile bearing more similarities with their blue collar counterparts than with the mass of their own members...However...Though in a minority, there were significant numbers of "right-wing" and oppositional stewards active within the branch and well represented within the central core of branch activists." (Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton, 1981, p.217)

In general, however, it is clear that activists are likely to have a greater commitment than ordinary members to the idea of trade unions. Indeed, looked at from a practical point of view of the extra time involved in being a part-time voluntary union official and the burdens taken on without payment which, it might be argued, are not dissimilar from those of management, holding union office clearly requires very positive motivation. There may therefore be at least partial justification for the popular view of many union office-holders as left-wing "stirrers", although this is not true of all office holders, and there are usually quite close limits to the extent to which the ordinary members can be persuaded to act militantly in accord with socialist principles, or even in self-interest.

HYPOTHESIS

14 That union office-holders will exhibit both a politically more committed and a practically more enlightened approach to what they expect of their trade union.

Effects Of Trade Unions In The Work Situation

The effects of having a trade union, strong or weak, operating within the work situation is an issue of considerable practical importance to managers and employees. Lockwood commented:

"Just as bureaucratization provides a fertile ground for unionization, so unionization, once established, leads to further bureaucratization by its demands for uniformity of working conditions." (Lockwood, 1958, p.152).

Crompton and Jones add:

"Uniformity will be sought not only in respect of pay, holiday entitlements, and so on, but also in respect of that important feature of non-manual employment - access to the internal labour market." (Crompton and Jones, 1984, p.212).

Writing of local government in the United States, Stanley summarises the changes in the "tone" of the employment relationship where unionism is introduced as follows:

"...employees appear to be less acceptant [sic] and more challenging; and management is less dominant, more wary, more subject to questioning and resistance by employees, and therefore more responsible." (Stanley, 1972, p.30-31).

Stanley also mentions two long-term effects on the quality of relations: the acquisition of more guidance (and obstacles) for supervisors; and more formal and potentially more hostile employee-management relationships. In addition he suggests that the likely claims of the union to influence the management of the organisation will be modest. Even a high profile local union is far from always being a disruptive influence. Hawkins quotes the 1972 Survey of Workplace Relations which "disclosed that the overwhelming majority of senior managers and supervisors thought that stewards' demands were always, or at least usually,

reasonable, and that they made a significant contribution towards resolving problems in the workplace" (Hawkins, 1981, p.144). Marchington comments that "even in well-organised plants, reaction can be no more than adaptation...and, for most individuals, priorities centre around effort and reward, good working relations and a satisfying job" (Marchington, 1979, p.150).

There are limits to the influence which local union representatives are likely to seek, however strong the union, with the focus mainly on constraining changes which make jobs less satisfying or comfortable as much as on financial gain. Nevertheless, when compared with the traditional autocratic environment of the library, this could prove difficult for some managers (and staff?) to adjust to.

Boraston, Clegg and Rimmer (1975) concluded that a variety of influences affect the level of plant or branch union activity, including management policy (supportive or hostile), union policy on delegation, size of enterprise, size of the workplace union organisation and the strength of the union as determined by density of membership and the availability, experience and confidence of union leaders.

A number of authors have observed (see earlier in this chapter) that union activity may be linked with strong commitment to the job. Rallings found that, once the influence of general political views had been allowed for,

there were no marked differences of attitude between union members and non-members (Rallings, 1983, p.64). Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton found positive associations between union activism and work commitment. Studies of managers (see Bamber, 1986) have found that managers continue to identify with their employer even when they are union members - unless provoked into an oppositional view. This could perhaps also be true of many other categories. Certainly the balance of evidence seems to be that union activists are at least as positively interested in their work as other staff.

However, the evidence does suggest that union members will be more resistant to change by management fiat and more inclined to bargain for additional benefits in return for changes in working practices and methods sought by management.

One further factor within local government is the membership of all grades, from managers to clerks, in the same union, NALGO. Discussion above referred to the tendency in these circumstances for the workplace and union contexts to be reciprocally informed and informing. Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton (1981) pointed to the mutually helpful relationships which can characterise union-management relations. This emphasises some of the positive organisational benefits which a union can bring if accepted as part of the social organisation of the enterprise by the management. While some problems of "dual loyalty" do arise, in general the managers find ways of coping with their dual

role, ways which perhaps inevitably reinforce the cooperative view of the union.

Most library staff in the United Kingdom are employed in work contexts - local government, central government and its quangos, the universities - where bargaining over grading structures, salaries and conditions of service has long been centralised, and there are rarely locally produced profits based on income against which productivity bargains and bonus payments can be achieved. Neither is the work sufficiently standardised to permit rational use of incentives for work done (as have been employed for some local government employees, such as dustmen).

The scope for interaction at local level between managers and unions is therefore limited to the mix and number of posts and grades, to procedures for employment and redundancy, to the allocation of duties, and to the style and character of management of the enterprise. Broadly, except when change is proposed, there is a role for the union only in relation to grievances. It may therefore be only when change is suggested (by union or management), or when either side is required to act locally in support of national negotiations, that the union will have a high profile in the immediate work situation.

However, Boraston, Clegg and Rimmer (1975) found that the impact of the union in the workplace was not necessarily greatest when a "looser" national bargaining structure left

more for local negotiation. They found quite active union branches in public service settings such as the railways where there was modest scope for local negotiation, provided that both the employer and the union nationally were willing for local negotiation to be significant and provided that the union locally had the necessary resources and ability to be active.

As illustrated earlier, during the 1970s there was a growing awareness within libraries of the presence of trade unions, but no very great sense of confrontation between employees and managers. In the libraries surveyed by Marsh most of the managers accepted that the unions have a legitimate role and in several instances actually welcomed the union's activities as a way of improving communication. Likewise union representatives seemed to accept that there should be some limitations on their area of influence and that the management had sometimes to make unpopular decisions which the staff would just have to accept. In two libraries both managers and union representatives saw their interaction as a "useful partnership" which improves the running of the library. (Marsh, 1980, p.71). But in two libraries the managers "bewailed the passing of the benevolent autocrat's heyday, when things were 'much simpler'" (ibid.). In all this it appeared that the personalities concerned are important. However, even in libraries with good union/management relations, the process of union consultation was sometimes felt by management to take too long and to be invoked unnecessarily.

The general harmony may, of course, change if industrial action is taken. Maidment (1976) relates a certain amount of move and counter-move between management and union during the London Weightings dispute. Maidment does not report any lasting effects of the dispute - except perhaps that the managers had learned that in the face of "any real sign of 'toughness' by managements" union resistance tended to fade away. Marsh (1978) does not report any perception of the existence of a union having any effects on the attitudes of the library staff to their work.

Looking to the future, it may be that union-management relationships locally will have a higher profile as a result of current bargaining trends. Brown (1981) and his contributors are one of many sources which point to the shift in emphasis from the 1960s in large private firms from national multi-employer agreements to plant or company bargaining. The policy of NALGO to delete national prescriptions and prefer local bargaining (see Chapter Two) could lead both to much more awareness of and participation in the processes of trade union negotiation on the part of library staff. The role of departmental or branch representative could carry much more influence and local managers could find themselves spending more time on negotiations with trade union representatives over issues which have been effectively delegated down from national level. This is, of course, providing that the conditions outlined by Boraston, Clegg and Rimmer for effective

functioning of the local union branch all exist. In this context it might be worth remembering that Bright, Sawbridge and Rees anticipate for the immediate future a continued shift in the balance of power from unions to employers (Bright, Sawbridge and Rees, 1983, p.32).

It might be concluded that there is considerable scope for the work context itself to influence the character of the trade unionism with which managers have to deal. However, on balance it is not to be expected that in 1981-82 there will be very obvious effects in the library work situation from the existence of union membership.

HYPOTHESIS

15 That the high rates of union membership have very little effect on the work situation within libraries.

Summary

The approach taken in this study of looking at a wide range of trade union issues in a narrow occupational context has required that an attempt, however selective, be made to confront the major schools of thought and to review a large amount of potentially relevant evidence. The correlation theories of the industrial relations school and the empirical approach through studies of groups of workers leading to an instrumental view of trade unionism are in

general preferred to the class or status analysis approach.

Within this framework there has emerged more relevant evidence than was initially expected about the scale and density of union membership in libraries. In terms of reasons for trade union membership, it is suggested that a practical synthesis of the ideas derived from many of the different approaches is possible, using the concept of instrumentalism as the linking feature. There is, again, considerable evidence to provide suggestions about the character of the trade unionism to be expected in libraries and its impact on the library work context.

The main strands of the arguments discussed have been briefly expressed in the course of the chapter as a number of hypotheses against which the results of the fieldwork can be tested. For convenience the hypotheses are listed again below. The argument behind each hypothesis is fleshed out in the relevant section earlier in this chapter.

LIST OF HYPOTHESES ABOUT TRADE UNIONISM

1 That there will be a union membership density of 80% or higher in polytechnic libraries (see *The Scale and Density of Trade Union Membership*, pp.85-95)

2 That union membership density grew in the 1970s and then began to decline in the early 1980s (see *The Scale and Density of Trade Union Membership*, pp.85-95)

3 That changes in union membership density in library work are influenced by:

- employer policies and government action
- the business cycle
- establishment size

(see Correlation Theories; Employer Policies And Government Action; The Business Cycle; Industrial Structure; Correlation Theories - Summary; pp.96-110)

4 That personal characteristics of the workforce such as age, gender, and part-time or full-time employment, have no influence on union membership density, but that social background does have an effect (see Correlation Theories; Personal And Job-Related Characteristics And The Composition Of The Workforce; Correlation Theories - Summary; pp.96-110)

5 That for many trade union members in libraries trade union membership is just part of the social framework of their job and has no positive significance (see Trade Unionism and Class, pp.110-118)

6 That computerisation has had neither a de-skilling nor a proletarianising effect on the situation of library staff (see De-skilling, pp.119-122)

7 That library trade unionism is motivated by an instrumental approach focussing tightly on job issues (see Instrumentalism, pp.123-125)

8 That there is a cautious approach to militancy which balances likely costs against likely benefits (see The Character of Trade Unionism; The Character Of Trade Unionism In Libraries; pp.126-138)

9 That library staff take a predominantly sectional approach to trade union membership (see The Character of Trade Unionism; The Character Of Trade Unionism In Libraries; pp.126-138)

10 That most library trade union members do not wish their trade union to have a political commitment (Trade Unions And Politics, pp.138-140)

11 That participation in trade union affairs will be very low (see Participation In Trade Unions, pp.141-144)

12 That trade union members are hostile to trade unionism in general (see Members' Attitudes To Their Trade Unions, pp.144-150)

13 That union members will judge the success of their own union on narrow criteria of salaries, conditions and status achieved for library staff (see Members' Attitudes To Their Trade Unions, pp.144-150)

14 That union office-holders will exhibit both a politically more committed and a practically more enlightened approach to what they expect of their trade

union (see Union Office-Holders, pp.150-152).

15 That the high rate of union membership has very little effect on the work situation within libraries (see Effects Of Trade Unions In The Work Situation, pp.153-159).

It is suggested that these hypotheses and their preceding substantiation provide an appropriate structural framework for analysing the scale, density, character and effects of trade unionism within library work.

Chapter 4

Professionalism and Trade Unionism In Library Work

Introduction

This chapter deals first with whether librarianship can be considered a profession. It then looks at the role of the professional associations and explores relationships between The Library Association and the trade unions. The attitudes of library staff to their professional association are reviewed and finally the compatibility, or otherwise, of professionalism and trade union membership is discussed. As in Chapter Three, some hypotheses are developed in the course of the chapter as a way of summarising the ground covered. These are also listed together at the end of Chapter Four.

Is Librarianship a Profession?

In a classic sociological study on the subject, Goode (1961) is in no doubt at all that librarianship is not a profession and doubts that it ever will become one. He identifies two traits which he sees as central to recognition of a profession: (1) prolonged specialized training in a body of abstract knowledge; and (2) a service orientation ruled by certain collectively upheld principles rather than the expressed wants of the client. He points out

that the employers or clients must also believe in the existence of the principles. He argues that on neither crucial test does librarianship pass.

Writing in 1980, Reeves comes to a similar conclusion: librarianship is not a profession because it has not been granted by society the right to determine who can and cannot practice as a librarian and cannot therefore exercise a monopoly influence over its chosen area of work (Reeves, 1980, p.7).

Goode nevertheless concedes that librarianship is moving along the continuum which leads towards professionalization and Reeves concedes that librarians do have strong "occupational authority" and established codes of behaviour (Reeves, 1980, p.131ff.).

Some librarians such as North (1977) and Nelson (1980) have agreed that librarianship is unlikely to become accepted as a profession. However, academic views have not prevented most librarians from continuing to regard themselves as professionals. Thus, to quote just a few examples, The Library Association sees itself as "the professional body for librarians"; there is great stress on the need for professional qualification (the tests for which have been made more demanding in recent years); The Library Association's most recent report on the future of librarianship talks of a broader "library and information profession" (Library Association, 1985a, p.2); a "Code of

Professional Conduct" for librarians was introduced by The Library Association in 1983 - albeit after much debate; and the distinctions between "professional" and "non-professional" duties have been carefully defined for many years (The Library Association, 1962; The Library Association, 1974). The increasing separation between the "professional" staff and the non-professional, was described in Chapter One. These and other actions signify a growing emphasis on professionalism in librarianship. Schlachter (1976) summarises similar discussions in North America. Outside librarianship, the growing trend to professionalisation of occupations has been well documented, for example by Strauss (1963), Vollmer and Mills (1966) and Loveridge (1972).

It is concluded that the notion of professionalism is relevant to a consideration of library work. However, for professionalism to flourish, a professional body is needed to act as focus and facilitating mechanism.

The Professional Bodies

There are three main professional bodies active in the field of librarianship: The Library Association (LA), Aslib (The Association for Information Management), and the Institute of Information Scientists (IIS). Some librarians belong to two or indeed all three of these. In addition there is a variety of other professional societies and

associations, mostly without any paid officers, and with a more restricted sphere of operation. Some specialise by type of library, for example the Council of Polytechnic Librarians, the Standing Conference of National and University Librarians, the Art Libraries Society. Others have a restricted geographical boundary, for example the Circle of Sussex College Librarians or the Newcastle Libraries Joint Working Party. There are also regional branches and specialist sections within the three main bodies, for example the LA East Midlands Branch; the LA University, College and Research Section; Aslib Engineering Group; and IIS Northern Branch.

The range of activities of the different units is variable and overlapping despite the fact that some are ostensibly organisations of libraries and others are organisations of individual members. Thus most engage to a lesser or greater extent in publications, professional education and exchange of experience, and acting as a pressure group, although the balance of such activities may vary considerably. The existence of such a bewildering range of organisations is testimony to the emphasis on a professional view of work which is a strong trait within the occupation. It perhaps also reflects the scattered distribution of library work, which results in a significant minority of library staff working in employment contexts where occupationally they are very isolated within a larger organisation. Such staff seem to have particular need of a reference group of similarly situated professionals to

provide moral and practical support. This trait is suitably exemplified by the formal existence within Aslib of a One Man Bands Group.

The Library Association is the oldest and largest of all the professional organisations and is generally recognised as the pre-eminent body in the public library field. It is also relatively strong in academic libraries - least so in universities, where it has taken many years for the concept of the librarian as professional specialist to gain recognition alongside the concept of the scholar librarian. It is least strong in special libraries of other kinds, and in commercial information work. It is in these areas that Aslib and the IIS have their base.

Aslib was founded in the 1930s by special librarians dissatisfied by what they perceived as the public library domination of the LA. It was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 1948. A 1985 Aslib promotional leaflet describes the objectives of the association as follows:

"Aslib acts as a unique focal point for all those concerned with the effective management of information. Our 2000 member organisations include industrial and commercial companies, academic and research institutions, central and local government departments and international bodies.

We have working contacts in over 70 countries, and represent the views of our members at government and international levels." (Aslib, 1985).

Aslib is therefore, at least formally, primarily a corporate membership organisation, and individuals may join as Associate Members only if they work for corporate members or

are full-time students. The emphasis of activities is on services to corporate members - advice and consultancy, information, and staff recruitment - and on publications and conferences. Aslib does not offer any formal qualifications. Apart from its recruitment service, it has a low profile on trade union and industrial relations matters.

The IIS, by contrast, is an organisation for individual members and offers professional qualifications based on demonstrated achievements and experience rather than formal examination. It too offers publications, courses and conferences. It seeks to promote the discipline of information science, which is more concerned with the exploitation, repackaging and delivery of information, and the application of sophisticated computer techniques for handling discrete items of information, than with the storage and making available of books, periodicals, etc., which is the core of traditional librarianship. The IIS does recommend salary levels but has not had a high profile in relation to trade union activity. The IIS does not publish membership figures but it would be surprising if there were more than a few thousand members.

IIS has perhaps suffered from the takeover by other occupational groups such as computer staff of the term "information" in the current vogue for "information technology" and from the steady broadening in recent years of the role of librarians, as they too have espoused the handling and provision of specific information alongside the

handling of mainly published information packages which was their more limited traditional role. This is particularly the case in the Polytechnic Library sector.

For this reason and because of the much higher profile in relation to trade unionism taken by the LA, the main focus in this part of the chapter is on The Library Association, although in the formal field work an attempt is made to assess the importance of professional organisations other than the LA in the life of library staff.

The Library Association

The LA has a Royal Charter granted in 1877 and in 1985 had 23,431 personal members (information from LA Membership Officer). Excluding student, retired, unemployed and overseas members, the number of members currently employed in library work in the United Kingdom was 13,892 at the end of 1985. Of these 12,146 or 87% were chartered professional members. A further 1,204 or 9% were graduates, most of whom are likely to have been in process of qualification. It is therefore clear that, while personal membership of the LA is open to library assistants (and indeed to anyone interested in libraries), it appeals overwhelmingly to those library staff who are, or intend to be, professionals.

An approximate estimate of the density of LA membership among professional library staff can be made by

comparing LA membership figures with the numbers of staff employed in library and information work as recorded by the DES Censuses reported in Chapter One. The total LA membership, including institutional members, remained more or less steady between 1978 and 1985 at around 24,000 to 25,000, after a period of growth which led the membership regularly upwards from a base of 15,000 in 1965 (The Library Association, 1985a, p.4 and p.7). Table 4.1 suggests that

Table 4.1 Density of Library Association membership, 1981

	Staff in posts for:			LA members as a % of:	
	qualified staff	all staff	LA members	all posts for qualified staff	all posts
Public libraries	8,406	30,559	7,210	85.8%	23.6%
Academic libraries	3,983	10,105	3,042	76.4%	30.1%
Special libraries	5,475	11,386	3,478	63.5%	29.4%
Library Schools	193	270	162	83.9%	60.0%
All	18,057	52,320	13,892	77.0%	26.6%

Sources: Department of Education and Science/Office of Arts and Libraries. Census of Staff in Librarianship and Information Work in the United Kingdom 1981. Office of Arts and Libraries, 1982. p.9.

Information provided by The Library Association Membership Officer.

Statistics derived from these sources.

overall density of LA membership is around 75% of professional staff and 25% of all staff employed in libraries. Density of professional staff membership varies

from around 60% in special libraries through 75% in academic libraries to 85% in public libraries.

The first hypotheses on professionalism are as follows:

HYPOTHESES

16 That the density of Library Association membership in polytechnic libraries is around 80% for professional staff and close to zero for clerical staff.

17 That there has been little movement towards or away from membership of The Library Association.

18 That some professional staff will belong additionally or alternatively to Aslib or the Institute of Information Scientists.

The Library Association engages in a wide variety of professional activities: award of qualifications; validation of academic courses (replacing a previous heavy emphasis on conducting its own examinations); representation of the interests of libraries and of librarians; promulgation of recommended professional practice and procedure; publications; provision of the main national collections on librarianship (now by agreement administered and financed by The British Library); promotion of research into librarianship with a view to building a body of knowledge; a

benevolent fund for members; and providing continuing education opportunities through meetings, conferences and short courses.

The association is governed by a national Council and numerous national committees. There is a significant staff of paid officers, only one of whom (in Scotland) is based outside the headquarters offices. It has a network of 12 regional branches and 24 subject interest groups which provide many opportunities for members to participate in organising professional activities in addition to attendance.

The association has recently campaigned strongly on issues affecting librarianship which are subject to political decision such as VAT on books, copyright law, provision of free services in public libraries and censorship. A recent example is the LA's energetic opposition in 1986 to the tendency of some local Labour Councils, in support of the sacked News International print workers, to seek to cease purchase of The Times and its sister publications for local authority controlled libraries. (This is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.)

The Role of the Library Association in Industrial Relations

In relation to trade union and industrial relations

matters, some Library Association activities were described incidentally in Chapter Two. There is some legal justification for such activity in The Library Association's Royal Charter. The first provision is "To unite all persons engaged or interested in library work...". A second is "To promote the better administration of libraries", which can reasonably be construed to include matters relating to library staff. A third provision gives the most explicit warrant for interest in salaries and conditions of service:

"To promote whatever may tend to the improvement of the position and qualifications of Librarians." (The Library Association, 1985b, p.A35).

Until the 1950s the institutional members (ie employers of librarians) had a considerable voice in the Association, thus arguably limiting its militancy. Since the right of institutional members to vote was abolished the association has very definitely become as much a voice for librarians as for libraries.

Nevertheless, having considered the matter on several occasions, the LA is clear that it is not a trade union and cannot be one under its Royal Charter (The Library Association, 1985b, p.A34-A39). In the light of the considerations discussed in Chapter Two, the LA has also decided not to set up its own separate trade union organisation. It therefore relies on the relevant trade unions to negotiate on behalf of its members. This has not, however, prevented the LA taking a very active interest in the sort of issues which are normally the province of the trade union.

Chapter One referred to the salary guidance leaflets by which the LA attempts to influence employers and trade unions regarding salaries paid to library staff. The LA also collects and publishes information on gradings, salaries and conditions of service in the various sectors in which its members work.

Going beyond information and persuasion, the LA has also taken direct action over the salaries and grades offered, by "blacklisting" posts which it considers undergraded and by making representations to the employing authorities (e.g. Tower Hamlets, 1976; Kingston Polytechnic, 1978; Cheshire Colleges and West Glamorgan, 1979; Wirral, 1979-80; Perth and Kinross, 1979-80; Kingston-upon-Thames 1982; Highland Region, 1980; Birmingham, 1982) (source: unpublished LA internal paper, 1982). The "blacklisting" means publishing advice to members not to apply for posts considered undergraded. However, the LA has not felt able to discipline any members who ignore such advice and apply for or accept such posts, since it is thought that expulsion on such grounds would not be justified under the Royal Charter.

On other occasions such representations have been to do with the levels of staffing (e.g. McKee, 1982a; McKee, 1982b; Ruse, 1982). One such dispute, at Kelsterton College, North Wales, in 1982 illustrates the possible limitations of such an approach. A strike over inadequate staffing levels by library staff who were members of NALGO was partially

successful in its aims. McKee comments:

"And where, in all this, was the Library Association? Nowhere. The complaints politely voiced by the General Services Division were just as politely ignored by the Kelsterton management. A professional association is a valuable institution - but direct use of trade union power is a much more effective instrument when it comes to jolting into action a management which had previously refused to budge." (McKee, 1982b).

An opposing viewpoint on the effectiveness of the influence of the professional association in this case is put by the current General Services Secretary of the LA:

"The role of the Association in such a situation is to advise its members, to consult with all interested parties and to represent the views of the profession. This role was undertaken in the case of the dispute at Kelsterton and to therefore suggest that the LA was 'nowhere' in the dispute is to do the Association an injustice." (Ruse, 1982, p.136).

Ruse outlines the action taken by the Association in contacting the college on several occasions and supporting and advising the Librarian, the library staff and NALGO and concludes:

"It may well be that the Association's representations fell on deaf ears; it may also be that the concern expressed by the profession through the Association was instrumental in persuading the college authorities to improve their original proposals." (ibid.)

The college authorities, who could tell us what persuaded them to change their minds, have of course made no such public statement!

The LA also publishes several times a year a newsletter for trade union activists called "Trade Union News" and loses no opportunity to encourage LA members to be active in their trade union. Thus in 1977 the LA ran four courses on Trade Unions and Library Staff and since then has each year held a reception at the NALGO Annual Conference

for all library staff attending as branch delegates. It also sends observers to other trade union meetings relating to library matters held by AUT, NATFHE, NALGO and other unions with library members. In the case of the removal of the local authority "librarian's scale" it is probably fair to say that it was the advocacy of the LA officers which eventually persuaded librarians to accept the policy recommended by NALGO.

For the LA all this activity is carried on through a number of Committees devoted to conditions of service matters and its Manpower Department.

Relationships Between The Library Association And The Trade Unions

Haslam, former Deputy Secretary of The Library Association, writing from 28 years experience, sums up the formal relationship with the trade unions as follows:

"The relationship of the LA to Nalgo is that of expert adviser on professional library matters relating to the salaries and service conditions of library staffs working in local government in England, Wales and Scotland (the LA has similar relationships with other Trade Unions, e.g. with the Association of University Teachers for university library staff, and with the Institution of Professional Civil Servants for Government librarians)." (Haslam, 1977, p.251).

In the case of local government and NALGO, the LA, like other professional bodies with members in local government, is a member of NALGO's own Joint Consultative Committee. Haslam explains:

"The JCC has no executive power and can only make recommendations calling for Nalgo action, to their Local Government Services Committee. It is mainly concerned with service conditions, especially those which have particular application to certain groups, e.g. allowance for those, like librarians, who do shift work or have to work on Saturdays, or after normal office hours." (Haslam, 1977, p.251).

Each professional body, including the LA, also has two seats on the Local Government National Joint Council Grading Committee whenever grading or conditions affecting its local government members are to be discussed (ibid.). The main negotiations between union and employer are conducted in the National Joint Council itself, on which the professional bodies are not represented.

The Library Association and the AUT have a "spheres of influence agreement" which reads:

"The Library Association has a substantial membership amongst academic library staff and is a chartered professional body which includes among its purposes that of promoting the better administration of libraries and the improvement of the position and the qualifications of Librarians. The AUT has a professional role, and is the recognised trade union for academic library staff members in Universities in the United Kingdom. It has national and local negotiating rights on salaries and terms and conditions of service in Universities and comparable Institutions, and the AUT is therefore the appropriate trade union to represent these staff in relation to their University employment. The two associations recognise each other's respective roles and agree to co-operate and support each other in their respective responsibilities. This agreement will apply only to staff who are employed on academic or related scales and who are eligible for membership of AUT and the LA. It is agreed that the AUT and the LA should work together on matters of common concern and to this end, regular liaison should be maintained between both associations, each to ensure that the other is kept informed of developments as appropriate." (quoted in Bowden, 1982, p.2-3).

Similar relationships exist with other relevant unions such as NATFHE and IPCS. In general there seems now to be

little dispute between the unions and the LA about their respective roles and there appears to exist a shared view that they should and can work together with mutual benefit.

Thus there have been the joint statements on library gradings with the AUT, and recently it was the LA which carried out two ballots of local authority librarians which eventually produced agreement for NALGO to negotiate away the provision for a now restrictive "librarian's scale" which was part of the national conditions of service agreement for local government administrative staff. The scale and range of activity is well illustrated by a full page summary in the April 1986 Library Association Record which related current contacts with AUT, FUMPO, IPCS, NALGO and NATFHE (Trade Union Liaison, 1986).

Nevertheless, as chronicled in Chapter Two, the Association has not always been able to persuade the trade unions to adopt the policy it wished and there has sometimes been outright conflict. In 1977 the LA produced a new draft education policy which aimed, inter alia, at making librarianship an all-graduate profession. NALGO officers rapidly repudiated any such policy, arguing that it was pure elitism to which they, on behalf of all their non-graduate members, could not be party (see, for example, "The reply to NALGO", 1977; Havard-Williams and Jones, 1977). In the event the LA policy was softened to meet demands from LA members and nearly ten years later the all-graduate profession is effectively a reality anyway. There is also conflict with

NALGO over the grading of professional library staff in public sector colleges, as discussed in Chapter Two.

In North America relationships between professional bodies and trade unions representing the same groups of staff appear from reports such as those of Schlachter (1973), Commerton (1975) and Biblarz and others (1975) to be much more spiky, although a writer sympathetic to unions such as Chamot (1976) is more optimistic. But this greater tension is perhaps to be expected given the greater general hostility to trade unionism there which was documented in Chapter Three. Perhaps for similar reasons, the issue of whether academic librarians have academic or administrative status seems also to have been a much more visible pre-occupation in North America. Much of the literature is summarised by Sparks (1980). He concludes that the coincidence of more collective bargaining by teachers and the strict and logical definitions which the legalistic US collective bargaining framework leads to, may well be unhelpful in librarians' quest for "faculty status", as it is known in North America. This could lead to particularly acerbic relationships.

In the UK however it seems to be accepted by both the professional association and the trade unions, and also by the staff who are members of both, that it is appropriate for the LA to act as library matters adviser to the trade unions. For the trade unions this offers a convenient and effective communication channel with their librarian

members. For the professional association, it is able to have some influence on matters of concern to its members without compromising its status as a professional body with a Royal Charter and without having to organise its own trade union structure. For the members, they have two channels through which to air their views - if they choose to.

Attitudes of LA members

Chapter Two referred to differing views from LA members about the role of their professional body in relation to trade union matters and about the effectiveness of the Association in achieving the objectives of its members. McKee, in the quotations in this chapter, is not so much being critical of the Association as reminding it of the limitations of the channels of action used, which he accepts are the only ones open to a body which is not a trade union (McKee, 1982b).

Kaye (1979) found that two thirds of his respondents thought that the LA should not become a trade union and one quarter that it should. He comments:

"...but the reasons given...suggest that those favouring this are not fully aware of the problems that it would involve...However those against such a role were clearly more aware of the practical problems...In general therefore there is little realistic support for the Library Association in a union role. Reasons against it are realistic and pragmatic, with only vestiges of the 'professionalism' argument." (Kaye, 1979, p.69-70).

Interestingly, only two of Kaye's respondents made the central point that for the reasons outlined in Chapter Two

the LA would be unlikely to gain recognition as a trade union.

Despite the quasi-trade union activity listed above, it is a recurring theme of some LA members that their Association should be far more active in salaries and conditions of service matters (for example see Sykes, 1974; Taylor, 1977, p.99). The gap between members expectations and their perceptions of the LA appears still to continue. The most recent and considered evidence comes from the 1985 report of the LA Futures Working Party. After an extensive consultation exercise on their draft proposals for the future policies of the LA, which included 49 meetings in different parts of the UK with an estimated total attendance of at least 1700, receipt of 97 submissions from Branches and Groups of the Association, and receipt of 152 letters from individuals, the Working Party commented:

"Our meetings up and down the country have convinced us that there is an unhealthy gap between the active membership and the membership at large...we have encountered during the consultation process widespread feeling among the membership that the Association does not provide enough services to give good value for money, that it does not react quickly enough when the interests of members are threatened, in short that it is not sufficiently dynamic and effective." (Library Association, 1985, p.3).

The Working Party suggest that the problem is partly one of communicating more effectively to the membership that which is being done. There seems also to be a strong element of the same attitudes as were illustrated in Chapters Two and Three in relation to trade unions: an expectation that good salaries and conditions, high status and protection of

the individual from the slings and arrows of the harsh world will be achieved without the individual members themselves being required to be active. Some members may, as Kaye suggests, have particularly unrealistic expectations in relation to industrial relations matters. Crawshaw, an active member of both NALGO and The Library Association, comments that LA members "often press for the Association to pursue such matters too far" and that:

"...the General Services Division at the LA (responsible for manpower issues) often despairs at the number of members in trouble who are not members of a trade union and expect the LA to fill that role in taking issue with recalcitrant employers." (Crawshaw, 1982, p.21).

There might also be some relationship here with Kleingartner's comments in relation to some other occupations:

"...while engineers and technicians want their organisation to do many of the things that unions do, they do not want it to look like a union" (Kleingartner, 1968, p.89).

Tomlinson takes an apparently more traditional view:

"The Library Association by its royal charter is a professional association and in my view it should not, at any time, for any reason, be directly involved in trade union matters." (Tomlinson, 1977b, p.128).

However, his objection turns out to be on tactical rather than principled grounds: that "conducting a forceful campaign of black-listing local authorities for inadequately grading their posts" is not the best way to influence the employing authorities, who:

"if not directly challenged in a hostile manner as they were in the 1950s and 1960s, will accept that the Association can put a professional view based on wide knowledge, and can be consulted by both parties to a negotiation/dispute in a friendly, constructive manner.

This is a clear but limited role, and not what I would regard the only role or even the most important one [for the LA]. This is to create a national climate of

opinion...favourably disposed..." (Tomlinson, 1977b, p.129).

Tomlinson refers with approval to the LA's activities in publishing recommended salary scales and in supplying information to trade unions.

In general, after ten years of positive (if not always totally harmonious) relationships between the LA and the trade unions which represent its members, it seems likely that LA members would now expect the LA to exert influence on trade unions and employers on their behalf. It also appears that they may be less than satisfied with the achievements they perceive.

HYPOTHESES

19 That the members of The Library Association expect their professional body to act on industrial relations matters as well as on professional issues such as qualifications, standards and the status of the profession.

20 That members are dissatisfied with their professional body.

21 That the more active LA members will be least dissatisfied.

Reasons For Membership

There is little published evidence offering formal explanations for the scale and density of the membership of the Library Association and the other professional bodies in the field. The report of the LA Futures Working Party quoted above provides some evidence that the "ideological" or academic goals of the LA are not sufficient to motivate many of the members who, while accepting such goals, also require the LA to operate at a practical level in furthering the status, salary and conditions of its members.

One special factor contributing to the high density of membership is undoubtedly the longstanding provision within the "Purple Book" of conditions of service for local government staff which for many years, as described in Chapter Two, prescribed a minimum grade for chartered librarians carrying out appropriate duties (National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Administrative, Professional, Technical and Clerical Services, 1975, p.31). A second factor is that in many local authorities, particularly in public library services, only chartered librarians have been appointed to such posts and paid accordingly. Since the only way to become a chartered librarian is through membership of the LA, the profession and the association have been able to obtain a partial control over entry to professional posts in the United Kingdom. The lower density of LA membership in academic and special libraries probably reflects the lack of any such provision in these work contexts. In some respects

the situation is similar to that obtaining under a closed shop agreement, and the strength of membership which is produced may well have a "demonstration" effect similar to that noted in contexts where trade union membership is strong outside the group of workers being observed.

It seems likely that both the broad "professional" goals of The Library Association and its monopoly of chartered librarian status will be factors in persuading members to join. It may well be that the monopoly of chartered status is the stronger for the less active members in particular.

HYPOTHESIS

22 That members belong to the LA more in order to retain their chartered status than for professional interest.

The Effects Of Professional Association Membership On The Library Work Context

While the whole existence of professional bodies such as the LA assumes that they will have an effect - intended as a beneficial one - on libraries and librarianship, there seems to have been little formal evaluation of the connection. It is not difficult to point to LA activities which are presumed to have such an effect, for example some of the activities outlined earlier in this chapter. In

particular, the control which the LA exercises on entry to professional posts could be regarded as a very direct effect. However, the impact of this on the management of the library beyond its influence on staff selection policies is unclear. There seems to be no published examination of the effects of the LA on daily life in individual libraries. Nevertheless this is one aspect of the comparison of trade unionism and professionalism which is part of the objectives of the study and accordingly it is intended to seek evidence. For this purpose Hypothesis 23 is formulated as follows.

HYPOTHESIS

23 That the high rate of membership of the LA by professional library staff has only modest direct effects on the work situation in libraries.

The Compatibility of Professionalism and Trade Unionism

In the light of the discussion above and the many links between the professional association and the trade unions noted in Chapter Two, it seems unlikely that most library staff in the UK would find any difficulty in achieving compatibility between their profession and trade union membership.

Some writers outside librarianship view

professionalism as a distinctly negative phenomenon using various means to pursue self-interested goals like those of trade unions which seek to control entry to a particular occupation. There is Shaw's well known if cynical view that all professions are a conspiracy against the public interest. And Hartmann writes:

"As is well known from dealing with the ideology of professions, functional claims may contain more than a small dose of myth and non-rational legend" (Hartmann, 1974, p.272).

Loveridge argues:

"The desire for professional membership can be a symptom of a growing separation and conflict between management and the professionally aspiring group. The withdrawal of some previously recognized informal group status or a refusal on the part of management to co-operate in their further technical achievement tends to intensify the conflict." (Loveridge, 1972, p.364).

There are perhaps echoes here of the complaints about status which were referred to in Chapter Two. For writers such as Loveridge professionalism is itself a variety of trade unionism, which is different only in revealing a particularly strong concern for status as well as financial rewards:

"Mounting demands for militant action have forced professional bodies to set up complementary bargaining organizations, some of which have been registered as trade unions...It is notable that members of bodies which aspire to professional status, but which subsequently adopt collective bargaining tactics, are more militant in their behaviour and in their public pronouncements than would be expected from their high status position." (Loveridge, 1972, p.365).

Tuohy, speaking to a conference of Canadian librarians, suggests that:

"A growing body of opinion among labour lawyers, and to a lesser extent among professionals themselves, moreover, suggests that collective bargaining may in fact reinforce professionalism rather than threaten it. Collective bargaining, that is, may be seen not simply as an alternative way of mapping out a zone of autonomy in the workplace, but as a complementary way of enforcing professional standards." (Tuohy, 1980, p.305).

Evidence was quoted earlier in this chapter of how UK librarians have succeeded in using trade unions and collective bargaining in this way.

It is also likely that the spread of white-collar unionism and the wide array of other white-collar groups who have achieved the same accommodation have been mutually reinforcing in helping to suppress any lingering doubts among a group such as library staff that those who aspire to professional status should not belong to a trade union or take industrial action. Prandy (1965), Roberts, Loveridge, Gennard et al. (1972) and Loveridge (1972) all found similar situations with other occupational groups. Writing of teachers, Margerison and Elliott comment:

"...the reservations teachers may have had about their status being infringed by industrial action have been removed. The days of the teacher's social conscience preventing industrial action have gone. The teachers, like other bureaucratised professionals, are all workers in the manner of their industrial action, even though this is designed to preserve status and reward differentials, which they see as being eroded" (Margerison and Elliott, 1970, p.417).

These influences, and those studied by Bain and his colleagues, which were reported in Chapter Three, would all have combined to help library staff come to terms with any scruples they may have had about trade union membership and activity. Perhaps most potent of all is the fact that most

library staff are employed in heavily unionised organisations.

Yet within the context of librarianship, Taylor, writing in 1977, just prior to the LA's shift of policy towards greater participation in trade union affairs, talks of "the credibility gap that resists the option of unionisation without realising that it is that very unionisation which itself will most effectively catalyse those professional aspirations" and of "a diffusion of attitude concerning the administrators and the administered. There is a reluctance to adopt clear positions of self-interest which serves largely to inhibit preparedness to act in self interest" (Taylor, 1977, p.94). He quotes Lumley in explanation:

"Broadly speaking, most professional associations accept the claims to legitimacy of the ruling group, ie the employers. They are therefore concerned primarily with market relations and are involved with managerial relations only to the extent that they will resist any attempt to require their members to act unprofessionally. They also typically show low militancy since they rely on the reasonableness of employers to correct any shortcomings when these are pointed out. On the occasions where professional associations do use sanctions against employers, they are careful to act in ways which will cause the minimum damage to their status. They have never used strike action." (Lumley, 1973, p.94).

This sort of view was criticised in Chapter Two because it rests on an unduly simplistic view of blue collar trade unionism. It is also no longer true to say that professionals have never used strike action. The contrast of more recent events with Lumley's statement perhaps also illustrates the extent to which differences between the industrial relations actions of professionals and trade

unionists are now difficult to discern.

Taylor himself firmly rejects the notion of incompatibility between professionalism and trade unionism and on the contrary argues that "collective bargaining has already become a manifestation of professional self-assertion" (Taylor, 1977, p.95), making a similar point to that expressed by Loveridge. Taylor regards the traditional commitment to maintaining the public service as a "widespread misinterpretation of the concept of professionalism" (ibid., p.96) and refers to action taken by doctors, nurses and other groups. He treats militancy almost a professional duty:

"The absence of any well established union structure can severely inhibit and possibly damage a service standard by virtue of the resultant inaction on behalf of inadequately motivated staff" (ibid., p.97).

The results of Kaye's study of library staff in Manchester, suggest that Taylor might well be pushing at an open door. 93% of Kaye's respondents saw no conflict between union membership and professionalism. (Kaye, 1979, p.69). The professional staff were even less troubled about this than the library assistants:

"...all 23 qualified staff in the sample disagreed with both statements, thus professional staff in particular do not appear to see any status conflict in union membership." (ibid.).

There may be no status conflict but 1986 has illustrated that conflicts of other kinds can occur. The actions of some local councils and the response of The Library Association in relation to the Times Newspapers

industrial dispute have demonstrated that conflicts of obligation can arise between professional duty, loyalty to one's employer and loyalty to fellow trade unionists.

The LA view is unequivocally that a ban on purchase of certain publications for public library stocks, even as an act of support for strikers rather than because of the content of the publications, is an "unacceptable form of censorship". The LA comments:

"In our view it is manifestly not right that councillors should allow their personal opinions on a political or industrial matter to stand in the way of the right of access of the public to all publications which can reasonably be provided." (The Library Association, 1986, p.163).

Under The Library Association Code of Professional Conduct:

"Members' primary duty when acting as a librarian is to their clients, i.e. the persons or groups of persons for whose requirements and use are intended the resources and services which the members are engaged to provide." (The Library Association, 1985b, p.A88).

The LA view in this dispute was clearly supported by a large majority of members of LA Council, and, indeed, by the Local Government Committee of The Labour Party which, while recommending that local authorities cease purchase of News International publications for working purposes and cease placing advertisements in them:

"...decided, however, that News International papers should continue to be made available in public libraries. The Committee considered that however strongly we as a Labour movement feel about the conduct of the dispute by Rupert Murdoch, it would not be right to be seen to censor public access to the newspapers concerned." (The Labour Party, 1986).

Nevertheless, the March, April and May 1986 issues of the Library Association Record have seen a lively

correspondence, with some members taking alternative views, for example that it is the first duty of library staff as trade union members to support fellow trade unionists, or that it is the primary duty of library staff simply to implement instructions from their employers. One correspondent sums up the dilemma as follows:

"The average librarian owes allegiance to his profession, his employer, and his trade union. Included in his role set we therefore find the three roles of professional, employee, and trade unionist. Unfortunately these three roles are not always totally compatible and, despite efforts to find compromises, role conflict is sometimes inevitable. When this happens the librarian has to make a choice..." (Bourner, 1986).

In the correspondence different librarians justify different choices depending on which role they give priority to.

Such conflicts of role have, however, been rare. It might be argued that in this case the conflict mainly arises from the determination of a minority of members to see trade union membership as a political commitment, a perspective which Chapter Three showed is not as common among trade unionists as popular rhetoric might suggest. In general, the limited evidence available supports the view that by the late 1970s most library staff in the United Kingdom seemed not to have any difficulty in achieving a compatibility between their professional claims and goals and membership of trade unions. It is therefore to be expected that the staff interviewed in fieldwork for this study will find little difficulty in making compatible their professionalism and their trade union membership. Indeed, they may be expected to see their professional association and their

trade union as having some similar functions and to be willing to use either to achieve desired goals.

HYPOTHESIS

24 That library staff find no incompatibility between professionalism and being a trade union member.

Summary

In the first section of this chapter it was concluded that, despite academic doubts about the status of librarianship, the notion of professionalism is relevant to library work. The nature and activities of the relevant professional bodies was reviewed, and it was noted that the major body in relation to the professionalism of the individual and in relation to industrial relations is The Library Association. Therefore, while data on other bodies was collected in the fieldwork, the main focus is on The Library Association and its relationships with trade unions.

The remaining literature review and analysis permits the formulation of a number of hypotheses continuing and parallel to those which concluded Chapter Three. These hypotheses, and the section of the chapter where supporting argument was developed, are as follows:

LIST OF HYPOTHESES ABOUT PROFESSIONALISM

16 That the density of Library Association membership in polytechnic libraries is around 80% for professional staff and close to zero for clerical staff (see The Library Association, pp.170-172)

17 That there has been little movement towards or away from membership of The Library Association (see The Library Association, pp.170-172)

18 That some professional staff will belong additionally or alternatively to Aslib or the Institute of Information Scientists (see The Professional Bodies, pp.166-172)

19 That the members of The Library Association expect their professional body to act on industrial relations matters as well as on professional issues such as qualifications, standards and the status of the profession (see Attitudes of LA members, pp.181-184)

20 That members are dissatisfied with their professional body (Attitudes of LA members, pp.181-184)

21 That the more active LA members will be least dissatisfied (Attitudes of LA members, pp.181-184)

22 That members belong to the LA more in order to retain their chartered status than for professional interest or

development (Reasons for membership, pp.185-186)

23 That the high rate of membership of the LA by professional staff has only modest direct effects on the work situation in libraries (The Effects Of Professional Association Membership On The Library Work Context, pp.186-187)

24 That library staff find no incompatibility between professionalism and being a trade union member (The Compatibility of Professionalism and Trade Unionism, pp.187-194).

Chapter 5

Fieldwork Methodology

Introduction

The earlier chapters have assembled and analysed data from various sources, mainly published, which may cast light on trade unionism in libraries. The outcome provides a useful initial picture of the scale, nature and impact of trade unionism and professionalism among library staff, placed in the context of what is known about trade unionism among other occupational groups and in the community at large. The picture of library staff trade unionism and professionalism is summarised in a number of hypotheses or propositions in Chapters Three and Four. There is, however, relatively little direct empirical data, and there is none which looks at the occupational context in the thorough, in-depth way in which, for example, Goldthorpe and his colleagues studied workers in Luton.

The intention of the second part of this study was therefore to conduct an empirical study using a sample of library staff to test the propositions set out in earlier chapters, with a particular emphasis on assessing the significance of trade unionism to the individual members of staff and its impact on the work context, rather than on studying the workings of the relevant trade unions. Chapter Five discusses the sample population, the general method

used for data collection and the construction of the interview schedule. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight report the results obtained and relate them to the hypotheses which were put forward in Chapters One to Four. Chapter 9 draws the threads together and offers some conclusions to the whole study.

The Survey Population

An initial thought was to try to assemble a sample representative of the whole range of libraries and library staff. However, as Chapters One and Two show, libraries operate in a wide variety of contexts and library staff are members of several different trade unions. Given the size and variety, to cover the whole range at all adequately would have required a very large sample - far larger than one part-time researcher could hope to cope with. Therefore, early in the whole study, it was decided in view of the breadth of the topic and the potential population size that the survey population must be limited to a definable sub-population within the total of some 55,000 staff employed in librarianship in the United Kingdom.

One approach would have been to exclude whole categories (e.g. professional staff or clerical staff, men or women, those employed outside a specific geographical area). Given the division of library work by type of library which is such a strong feature of the occupation, it was

decided that the most helpful course would be to limit the fieldwork population to staff in one type of library.

Polytechnic libraries were selected on a number of grounds: they represent a middle ground, sharing academic goals with university libraries, and sharing local government control and industrial relations frameworks and multiple site operation with public libraries; they are yet a small, distinct group of some 30 institutions, all operating within the same pattern of funding, purpose and social control; the limited range of staff size from around 30 to around 80 gives them a reasonable homogeneity from that point of view; statistical data about the whole group were available to the writer; the Polytechnic libraries are known to have recruited staff from a wide variety of other types of library; in 1980 the writer had 8 years experience of work in a polytechnic library; and personal connections and the writer's status as a senior member of the staff of a polytechnic library were likely to be helpful in persuading institutions to grant access to their staff during working hours, which would facilitate data collection.

It was therefore concluded that the staff of polytechnic libraries would make an appropriate survey population.

Survey Method

In order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the role of trade unions in the life of individual members of staff and in the work context, it was necessary to acquire a large amount of information and responses for each individual.

The initial approach was to prepare a pilot instrument with a view to testing the detailed design and also to assess the suitability for this project of interviews or questionnaires. Some possible attitude statements and some generalised questions were included to test the effectiveness of the different approaches. It quickly became clear that lack of knowledge, interest and previous thought about trade union membership on the part of respondents were likely to be a problem. In some cases respondents produced a very high proportion of "don't knows". In others, the pilot respondents revealed in post-interview discussion that responses to questions in the form "Do you agree with the following statements?" were sometimes being answered with an apparent confidence which disguised a total lack of previous consideration of the subject and that some of the responses were almost random. It was therefore concluded that the areas which could reliably be explored in depth by such methods would be severely limited.

This conclusion tilted the methodological balance firmly in favour of interviews rather than a questionnaire, even though this would inevitably limit the size of the

sample which could be dealt with. Another benefit of the approach is that the analysis to a fair extent records what was uppermost in the respondents' own minds rather than their response to ideas and views put to them. Given the low interest in trade unionism exhibited by pilot subjects, this was felt to be important. For the same reason considerable care was taken in sequencing the questions to minimise the possibility of giving later questions a context for respondents which was not desired. Thus, for example, respondents' views of their current union were dealt with before asking about their previous union membership and their general views on trade unions.

An interview schedule was therefore developed through some seven drafts, the last two of which were again piloted. The schedule was tightly structured to assist with analysis but the questions were designed to be open-ended wherever appropriate in order to allow collection of as much (or as little) information as respondents were willing and able to give. Use of "yes/no/don't know" responses was limited to questions about perceived fact - "Does the union hold branch meetings? Does the library management consult the union?". Attitudes were generally explored by open-ended questions - "What are your general views about trade unions? Why do you think your colleagues might join professional organisations?" - in order to discover what suggestions respondents would themselves make, rather than to obtain reactions to predetermined suggestions.

The schedule begins with factual questions about present trade union membership (or non-membership) and participation and then moves on to views about the respondent's own union and its effects in this library, previous union membership and trade unions generally. Similar questions are asked about professional organisations particularly The Library Association. The schedule concludes by seeking personal details and information about the respondent's job, job satisfaction, career, etc.

The wide range of topics to be explored resulted in a schedule of 123, sometimes inter-related, questions, covering 23 pages and producing over 200 variables. The full schedule is contained in Appendix A.

Given the limited resources available to a single part-time researcher, the length of the schedule, combined with the work already reported in Chapters One to Four, necessitated limiting the size of the sample. A target of 50 to 70 respondents was set. It was felt that it was important to try to obtain an in-depth picture of people's attitudes and motivations, if necessary at the cost of number of interviews.

This modest sample size had the disadvantage of limiting the statistical analysis which can reasonably be applied to the results. It had the advantage of allowing a long interview schedule to be used, thereby obtaining a more rounded view of the respondents' attitudes to trade unionism

and to their work. Had the results from Kaye (1979) and Nicholson, Ursell and Blyton (1981) been available when the fieldwork was being planned, the choice might have been less stark, but the limitations of questionnaire responses which cannot be further probed would remain. It may, however, be appropriate to regard the evidence reported as a case study, to be used in an indicative and illuminative way, rather than as the results of a formal survey, although tests of statistical significance and correlation were carried out where applicable.

The pilot interviews had suggested that a significant minority of library staff belong to several professional groups, and so questions to collect information about at least two organisations from each respondent were included in the schedule. The full-scale fieldwork soon showed that the minority was in fact very small. And so use of questions 65 to 80 was discontinued and no analysis was made of the few detailed responses obtained about organisations other than The Library Association.

Selection Of The Sample

The Council of Polytechnic Librarians' unpublished annual surveys of library staff in post in polytechnic libraries provided a convenient source of data about the survey population, giving data about numbers of staff and grades - including whether professional staff were graded as

teachers or as administrative staff, and therefore likely to be represented by NATFHE or NALGO.

It was decided to select respondents from a sample of libraries, rather than all 30. This approach was more appropriate for a case study. It also simplified data collection and allowed fuller assessment of the industrial relations situation in the libraries surveyed than if the respondents had been scattered through many libraries. Five libraries were approached and four agreed to participate.

The geographical distribution of the four libraries is not given here because to provide it would allow the libraries to be identified and would, bearing in mind the considerable use of direct quotation, infringe the guarantee of anonymity given to both libraries and individuals in order to encourage a full and frank response. The four libraries are however quite representative of the group as a whole: one is large, two are near average size and the fourth has a relatively small staff, in each case reflecting the size of the parent polytechnic. The libraries are also typical in having staff spread across several sites or buildings. Nevertheless, it is inevitable that the survey libraries will each exhibit particular characteristics which are more singular than typical. Chapter Six includes a brief cameo of each library.

Within each library it was intended to try to interview a cross-section of staff, including those who were

not trade union members. The means adopted was a simple type of stratified sample. From each library a list of staff names and grades was obtained. The names (excluding the Chief Librarian) were then arranged by seniority of grade and every fourth name was selected, beginning in each library with one of the first four names selected at random. In addition, in each library the Chief Librarian was interviewed in order to gauge the management view. The results of the one-in-four approach were reviewed for each library to ensure that all "bands" of staff were represented. In no case were there any gaps. Each library was then visited on two or three days to carry out the interviews.

The final sample from four libraries consisted of 52 persons. Of these 51 were successfully interviewed. The one exception was due to illness. The high response rate provides one positive benefit of the survey method adopted: there were no self-selected non-respondents. The importance of this was demonstrated at interviews in every library with staff who needed a little persuading even then that they had anything of value to say about trade unions. These people would almost certainly have failed to return a questionnaire, thus biasing the results in relation to strength of feeling, if in no other way.

Extending the survey to other libraries in order to increase the number of respondents was considered but after some thirty interviews had been completed it was concluded

that the marginal return in terms of fresh insight or clarification obtained from each interview was becoming smaller. Since the four libraries had covered the likely range of union recognition situations and since it was quite beyond reach to achieve (still less to analyse) the 200 or more interviews which would be needed to allow more sophisticated statistical analysis, it was concluded that insufficient benefit would be obtained from further extending the interviews beyond the 51 achieved.

It is possible to assess on certain criteria the representativeness of the final sample in relation to all staff in the libraries visited and in polytechnic libraries as a whole. Table 5.1 shows that the sample is a good match in terms of distribution between professional and clerical staff.

Table 5.1 Polytechnic Library Staff: Comparison Of Sample With Population

staff category	percentage of sample (N=51)	percentage of staff in the four sample libraries (N=213)	percentage of staff in all polytechnic libraries (N=1670)
professional	43%	43%	45%
clerical	57%	57%	55%

Table 5.2 shows that staff employed on teachers' grades are over-represented among the professional staff. This is largely because of the inclusion of all four Chief Librarians, who are the only level of polytechnic library

staff invariably on teachers' grades.

Table 5.2 Type Of Grading On Which Professional Staff Are Employed

grading type	percentage of sample (N=22)	percentage of staff in the four sample libraries (N=91)	percentage of staff in all poly-technic libraries (N=742)
teachers'	45%	33%	34%
administrative	55%	67%	66%

If an adjustment is made for this by removing three of the staff graded as teachers from the sample, the proportion of professional staff on teachers' grades falls from 9 out of 22 (41%) to 6 out of 19 (32%), close to the figure for all Polytechnics.

No data regarding gender, age or other characteristics of the survey population was available at the time in order to allow these possibly relevant features to be taken into account. Nevertheless it seems reasonable to conclude that the sample is as representative as could be obtained and that there is no reason to suppose that it will provide an unreliable indicator of the characteristics and views of the survey population of polytechnic library staff.

Data Collection And Analysis

The interviews lasted between twenty minutes and two hours. The procedure adopted was to tape record each interview while writing down at the time those responses which were easily noted. All the respondents were willing to be tape-recorded on the understanding that the tape would be wiped as soon as the data had been transcribed. The tape-recording had no obviously inhibiting effect on interviewees, who seemed soon to become absorbed in the subject of the interviews, and noone suggested any adverse affect. The interview tapes were subsequently replayed to allow verbatim recording on the schedule of all responses and checking earlier written notes for accuracy.

The schedule was designed to allow its use also as the data input form for computer analysis of responses using the SPSS statistical package. Straightforward numerical responses (e.g. number of years of union membership, age) and responses recorded against predetermined categories (e.g. participation in various types of union activity, degree of satisfaction with union) were coded directly on the schedule. Responses to open-ended questions (e.g. reasons for joining the union) were first of all subjected to content analysis. Then the responses were categorized and coded according to coding schemes derived from the actual pattern of responses to each question. While introducing a more subjective element into the analysis this procedure has the benefit of allowing fuller use of the substantive

content of the responses than a predetermined coding scheme, which would inevitably have "wasted" data through inappropriate categorization based on expected responses. In this process the SPSS "Multiple Response" facility was very useful. To have left scope for the maximum number of responses from all respondents - perhaps ten dichotomous variables per open question - would have greatly increased the data preparation and computer storage needed for the data while introducing a great many more empty cells. The "Multiple Response" facility allows conflation of several parallel variables into one frequency distribution if the same categorization has been used in each. This solution was adopted.

The large number of variables provides a large number of frequency distributions. All the frequency distributions were obtained using the SPSS statistical package and then studied. In addition there was available the content analysis of the responses to open-ended questions. Finally interesting and typical quotations were extracted from all responses as a way of capturing the full flavour and emphasis of the respondents' own views. SPSS was again used to produce cross-tabulations for variables which the analysis reported in Chapters One to Four or inspection of the frequency tables or the content analysis or the quotations from verbatim responses suggested could be related. Tests of statistical significance and strength of correlation were run where applicable. The degree of statistical significance is measured using one of the tests

below depending on the character of the variable:

Variable type	Frequencies	Crosstabulations	Correlation
Nominal:			
dichotomous	Chi-square* (Binomial for small nos.)	Chi-square (Fisher for small'nos.)	Phi
others	Chi-square*	Chi-square	Kramer's V
Ordinal:	Kolmogorov -Smirnov	Kolmogorov -Smirnov	Kendall's tau

The choice of tests is based on criteria given in Siegel (1956) and Levin (1983). The results are given in the text in the form (chi-square = 22.974 $p < 0.001$). The proportion used as the breakpoint in Binomial tests is indicated thus: Binomial (.157). Kolmogorov-Smirnov is abbreviated to K-S, with (U) indicating a test against a uniform distribution as null hypothesis and (N) a test against a normal distribution where alternatives are available.

In the case of the open-ended questions analysed using the "Multiple Response" facility, formal measures of statistical significance are not available within SPSS for frequency distributions. To overcome this, consideration was given to transforming the "Multiple Response" variables into standard dichotomous variables and using, for example, the Binomial Test. However, it is difficult to establish a suitable null hypothesis against which to test the frequencies found in the sample, given that the categories used for analysis have been suggested by the data and that individual respondents may have mentioned one, none, or several of the points. Using zero as the "expected" score

for each point would provide an independent null hypothesis but then the measure of statistical significance simply reflects the magnitude of the frequency being tested. Advice sought from statisticians was that it was more appropriate to regard the analysis of the open-ended questions just as subjective content analysis for which the frequency distributions and cross-tabulations obtained provide supportive evidence about the relative importance or popularity of different points made in answer to a particular question. Further corroboration is sometimes provided by the "cross-check" questions included at different points in the schedule (e.g. "What were your reasons for joining the union?" "Why do you think you colleagues join the union?").

Presentation Of Results

Given the limitations arising from the sample size and the volume of variables, the results are reported only very selectively in the following chapters. Care has been taken to base interpretation only on relatively robust differences. Where results which are not statistically significant or for which measures of significance are not available are reported their status is made clear.

Chapter Six deals with the context of library work and the library staff as individuals. Chapter Seven covers reasons for and the character of the trade unionism of the

library staff, together with its impact on the libraries.
Chapter Eight explores the professionalism of the library
staff and its inter-relationship with their trade unionism.

Chapter 6

The Polytechnic Library Staff And Their Jobs

Introduction

This chapter brings together those results which provide a description of the personal characteristics of the staff interviewed, their jobs and their work attitudes. The chapter begins with a short industrial relations cameo of each library.

The Four Libraries

Library A

Library A is in a small-to-medium sized polytechnic with three sites within the same town. There is a library at each site. Two cover specific subject areas. The third serves all remaining subjects taught in the polytechnic and functions also as the central library. The institution encourages union membership in the staff letter of appointment; the library management was more neutral, although the Chief Librarian is himself a union member. A few of the more senior staff are on teachers' grades but the majority of the professional staff are on administrative scales. The process of management in this library seemed to

be a fairly low-profile activity. The staff structure was fairly conventional with professional staff mainly divided between Subject Librarians (on teachers' grades) and librarians with functional responsibilities for acquisitions, cataloguing, circulation etc. There was not a very obtrusive professional hierarchy and there was less automation than in most polytechnic libraries. During interviews some staff commented on the flatness of the staff structure and the inadequacy of communication between site libraries.

Library B

Library B is in one of the smaller polytechnics, with just two sites, one of which is clearly the main library. The Chief Librarian had a strong presence here, reflected in the fact that while unions were officially recognised the library management clearly discouraged union participation in the library. Again, a few subject staff were on teachers' grades but most of the professional staff had functional responsibilities and were paid on administrative scales. Despite some conflict over union matters morale was generally good.

Library C

Library C is in one of the largest polytechnics, which

is spread over several sites within the same town. There is a large central library plus site libraries. This polytechnic is within a local authority which operates a closed shop policy. The Librarian is supportive of trade unions. There was a feeling of strong direction from senior library management about this library. The library appeared to have a relatively high status and profile in the institution.

Library D

Library D is in a medium-sized polytechnic and has two libraries not far apart. Union membership is encouraged officially and by the library management. Almost all the staff, including subject librarians, were employed on administrative grades. This was the library where there seemed the most obviously participative style of management, including good communication between library management and union representatives.

An important aspect of representativeness for this study is the situation regarding trade union recognition. It is clear from Chapter Two that in the early 1980's virtually all local authorities and universities recognised trade unions. This was the case in all four libraries. What is less clear from existing sources is the extent to which, across the country, union membership is required or

encouraged. The four sample libraries each represented a different degree of encouragement to union membership, with Library C offering a closed shop and positively sympathetic management, Library B official recognition tempered by opposition from the library management, and Libraries A and D occupying intermediate positions between these two:

- Library C: Closed shop; library management supportive of trade union membership
- Library D: Union membership encouraged officially and by library management
- Library A: Union membership encouraged in staff letter of appointment; library management neutral
- Library B: Union officially recognised; library management discourage trade unionism

The situations provide sufficient variation to cast some light on how important the degree of union recognition is in forming staff attitudes. From informal conversations over many years and knowledge of most of the Chief Librarians of polytechnic libraries, the range is also felt to reflect the overall situation of general union recognition at local authority level reasonably representatively.

The events reported in the libraries - frozen or abolished posts - modified the picture shown in the DES Censuses of academic libraries resisting the economic downturn and continuing to expand. Clearly by 1981-1982 the recession had caught up with polytechnic libraries, suggesting a high point of growth and expansion in the late

1970's. The resulting industrial relations activity which was reported in the sample libraries illustrates at least one possible interaction between the business cycle and trade unionism in a public sector context.

The Staff As Individuals

The respondents from the sample libraries proved fairly similar to the general picture drawn in Chapter One. Forty-five percent of the respondents were professionals (Q96). The percentage is not statistically significant but is neatly poised between the national average for all types of library - 40% - and that for all academic libraries - 47%. It also matches fairly closely the actual percentage of professional staff in the libraries surveyed and in all the polytechnic libraries (see Chapter Five).

Gender

Seventy-eight percent of those interviewed were women (Q92) ($E=78.08719\%$ $\chi^2=0.020$ $p>.80$), close to the percentage for the occupation as a whole as revealed by the DES Censuses (see Table 1.3). The high proportion of men occupying more senior posts is even more marked. Men occupied 69% of the professional (senior and better paid) posts (Q96) ($\phi=.579$ $\chi^2=14.364$ $p<.001$). The more senior the post, the higher the proportion of men. The (lower graded) clerical posts were occupied solely by women.

Table 6.1 illustrates the starkness of this difference.

Table 6.1 Seniority of post by gender

	Male	Female
Chief/Deputy Librarian	5	0
Senior Librarian	6	5
Assistant Librarian	0	7
Senior Library Assistant	0	5
Library Assistant	0	20
Other	0	3
Total	11	40

tau=-0.617 p < .001

Curiously, in discussion about the merits and frustrations of their jobs, this inequality was not mentioned.

Age

The age spread of the sample was from 18 to 61, with 57% of staff 35 or younger, 26% between 36 and 50, and 18% above 50 (Q95) (K-S(U) Z=4.061 p<.001), again similar to that reported in the DES Censuses. The mean age was 35 and the median age was 33. The men tended to be older (tau=-0.278 p<.02), with a median age of 41 compared with a median age of 31 for the women. The youngest man was 33. This fact of greater age could reasonably account for at least some of the gender inequality illustrated above. There tends to be a considerable gap in age between the most senior staff and the other professionals. This perhaps arises from the rapid

expansion of librarianship - and polytechnic libraries in particular - during the 1970s. Among the clerical staff there was no such pattern matching age with seniority.

Family status

Two thirds of the sample were married (Q93) but less than half the respondents had any children (Q94). None of those under 31 had any children. Those in their early thirties were evenly divided between those with and without children. Of older staff 80% had children. This correlation is statistically significant using the grouped age distribution described above ($\tau=0.689$ $p < .001$). It is interesting to speculate if this merely represents a natural progression or whether it indicates a current trend towards deferment of child-bearing and the general downturn in the birthrate.

Qualifications

Table 6.2 shows that the sample were quite well qualified (Q101) and exemplified the move towards a graduate profession which was reported in Chapter One. 43% were graduates and a further 50% had CSE, GCE Ordinary Level or GCE Advanced Level qualifications. Only 8% had no formal qualifications at all.

Table 6.2 Highest general educational qualification of respondents

	(N=51)
Higher degree	6%
First degree	37%
GCE Advanced Level	28%
GCE Ordinary Level	18%
CSE	4%
None	8%
	$\overline{101\%}$

Forty-five percent had passed Library Association examinations or had other degree-level librarianship qualifications; 8% possessed the City & Guilds Library Assistant's Certificate; 47% had passed no librarianship examinations of any kind.

Thirty-nine percent of the staff had a Library Association professional qualification (ALA or FLA) (Q101) and 83% of the staff in professional posts (N=22) had a Library Association qualification. All four professional staff without an ALA or FLA were at the lower levels (Cramer's $V=.632$ but the numbers are too small to be reliable). Two were members in the process of acquiring the post-examination work experience which is required prior to qualification. All the staff in professional posts had some sort of appropriate librarianship qualification and only one professionally qualified person was employed as a library assistant, giving

a very strong correlation between qualifications and professional posts ($\phi = .806$ $\chi^2 = 29.860$ $p < .001$).

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents were currently studying part-time for a further qualification (not necessarily in librarianship) (Q102)

and a further 61% said they would be willing to undertake part-time study in the future (Q103).

This, then, is a well-educated group with a strong motivation towards education. The survey provides further evidence of the grip which The Library Association still has on professional qualifications and of its influence on entry to professional posts, even though it no longer does much examining itself.

Social Class

Of the people interviewed 88% believed or strongly believed in the existence of social classes (Q116),

Of these three-quarters described themselves as upper class (2), middle class (20) or lower middle class (9) as against lower/working class (10) (Q117),

Professional staff were more likely to describe themselves as middle class (not significant). Using the six JICNARS categories (see Monk, 1985), parents' occupations suggested working class or lower middle class origins for three quarters of the sample (Q118)

(K-S(N) $Z=2.030$ $p=.001$). There was a tempting apparent difference here between library assistants and librarians, as Table 6.3 shows.

Table 6.3 Parent's occupation

JICNARS category	Clerical Staff	Librarians
A or B	7	4
C1	13	8
C2 or D	8	11

(not significant)

Note: An explanation of the JICNARS categories is contained in Monk (1985).

The distribution of assistants is almost symmetrical, concentrating around the C1 group in which assistants are themselves classified. However, relatively few of the librarians come from the upper A class or the professional B category in which professional librarianship is classified. Half the librarians come from C2 and D working class backgrounds, and a further third from C1 clerical backgrounds. This would be consistent with the suggestion that the professional grades in libraries contain many upwardly mobile people of working class origins and few from the traditional professional middle classes. The two persons in the sample with class A upper class parents were both library assistants. However the evidence is not quite strong enough to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

This general picture regarding social origins, and

perhaps even the difference between the two categories of employees, could be relevant to attitudes to trade unionism if there is a general correlation between social background and attitudes to trade unionism.

Politics

The social background might also have some bearing on voting patterns (Q115). Sixty percent of those who indicated voting affiliations (43 of the 51 respondents) were Labour supporters, 21% Liberal and 19% Conservative.

In terms of amount of interest in politics (Q114), the group was roughly evenly divided. Fifty-two percent claimed a moderate or strong interest in politics and 48% said they had little or no interest (not significant). Men and older staff were less likely to be Labour voters. Union members were more interested in politics and were more likely to vote Labour than were non-members. However, none of these correlations was significant at the 0.05 level.

Trade Union Background

Sixty-eight percent of respondents said that there was or had been a trade union member in their immediate family (Q119) (Binomial (.5) $p=.002$). Twenty-five percent had an active trade unionist in the family (Q120) (Binomial (.5)

not significant). Fifty-seven percent said that half or more of their friends were trade union members (Q122) (K-S(N) $Z=2.830$ $p<.001$), compared with 35% who said that half or more of their friends worked in the library (Q121) (K-S(N) $Z=2.286$ $p<.001$). This appears to indicate some friends outside work who are trade unionists too.

The Staff And Their Jobs

Nature of jobs

From the interviewees' own descriptions of their jobs (Q98), 61% were classified as working primarily with library users, 26% were in technical services (that is cataloguing, acquisitions and other material-based functions), and 14% worked mainly in management or administration.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents said that their work was entirely or mostly supervised; 26% said it was largely independent of colleagues and 30% described their work as mainly or wholly supervisory.

Ninety-two percent of the sample were employed full-time.

The small number of part-time staff (three) made it impossible to assess whether employment full-time or part-time is a significant factor in attitudes to trade unionism among the library staff.

Salaries

Each respondent was asked his or her grade (Q97). The corresponding salary scales (as at January 1982) were then allocated to broad salary bands. Ten percent of respondents came in the bands above £12,000 p.a., 37% in the band up to £4,000. The remaining 45% were spread evenly between (K-S(N) $Z=1.579$ $p=.014$). Only 10% of women came in the bands above £8,000, compared with 100% of the men ($\tau=-0.656$ $p<.001$). These results echo the correlation between grade and gender noted earlier.

Seventy-seven percent of the sample regarded their salary as fair (Q109) (K-S(N) $Z=3.238$ $p<.001$). Twenty-two percent (all union members) thought their salary was too low for the work they did but there was no statistically significant correlation between union membership and views on this). The majority view was that there had been no significant change in the fairness of salary levels relative to other occupations during the last three years (Q110) (K-S(N) $Z=2.031$ $p=.001$).

This view reflects accurately the objective situation as measured by the New Earnings Survey data reported in Chapter One, which suggested a small increase in the real earnings of library staff over the period 1974 to 1984. Library staff seem not to have been greatly affected by the improvement in average female earnings in the 1970's, perhaps because, on the one hand, there were not separate

lower rates of pay for women in libraries, and, on the other, senior posts remain held predominantly by men.

Conditions of service

Ninety percent of the respondents were satisfied or well satisfied with their conditions of service (Q111) (K-S(N) $Z=2.016$ $p=.001$). Six of the nine staff graded as teachers for salary purposes were employed under NJC conditions of service.

Attitudes To Jobs

Ninety-four percent of respondents claimed to like their job (Q104) including 39% who liked their job a lot, and only 6% disliked their job (K-S(N) $Z=2.301$ $p<.00()$). No significant differences between different categories of staff emerged.

Eighty-eight percent of the sample were able to quote particular features of their work as good points. The most popular feature, especially with younger staff, was contact with library users, mentioned spontaneously by 35% of respondents. Other aspects of a particular job (e.g. dealing with computers, organising things, independence) were mentioned by 71% of respondents.

Asked about bad points (also Q105), 20% said that there were none at all. However, 39% of all respondents

mentioned monotony or boredom, including 74% of Library Assistants and 60% of Senior Library Assistants ($\chi^2=14.121$ $p<.001$). Twenty percent of the sample, mostly senior staff, mentioned lack of time and junior staff mentioned "tedious work" and being "restricted in what I can do". However these differences were not statistically significant.

Staff attitudes to the library in which they work were even more favourable (Q106): 94% of respondents liked working in the library, including 51% who liked doing so a lot. Only 4% disliked working in this library. (K-S(N) $Z=2.369$ $p<.001$). There were differences between the libraries. In two libraries 70% of the staff liked working there a lot, but the numbers in each group were too small to show reliable significance.

Asked about the good points of working in their library (Q107) 50% mentioned their colleagues and 37% the social atmosphere, while 22% were in some way proud of the library. Typical comments included:

"Very good atmosphere"

"Pleasant colleagues"

"The staff work so well together"

"Good working atmosphere, dynamic".

Twenty-two percent of respondents said there were no bad points. There were no very frequently repeated complaints. However, 18% mentioned communication and 14% suggested that the organisation or staff structure could be

improved, with comments such as:

"Library management is remote"

"Senior staff badly organised"

"Them and us"

"This particular library doesn't seem to have much of a structure"

"Split sites, staff structure inadequate, organisation of subject specialisation"

"Hierarchy is unapproachable".

Forty-three percent of respondents could think of no ways in which their job could be improved (Q108). There were no very frequently recurring ideas. Suggestions offered by several people were more communication, more participation in running the library, more responsibility, better status and better training. Notably there was no marked pressure for higher salaries. Some responses were:

"If one felt trusted and respected more - able to act on one's own initiative"

"More demanding work"

"Variety"

"More involvement in management"

"More go in the library to remove frustration"

"If professionals weren't so snooty".

It seems fair to infer from these responses quite positive attitudes to their work from almost all the staff - willing to be stretched more in their work. Also that the staff felt that not all the libraries were well organised and well managed. The responses were not prompted beyond the generalised request for good or bad points.

The nature of jobs done and staff attitudes to them revealed by the survey of polytechnic library staff matches in most respects the picture drawn in Sergean's Sheffield Manpower Survey (Sergean, 1976) (see Chapter One). Sixty-four percent of respondents described their work as independent or supervised as against "almost two thirds of posts are almost entirely practitioner" in the Sheffield Survey. There was a similar emphasis on variety, on contact with people and on independence as positive features of the jobs. Sergean's finding of some dissatisfaction with working conditions and terms and conditions of employment was not replicated with anything like the same strength, but Sergean noted that this was strongest in public libraries rather than academic ones. This difference perhaps also explains the even more positive attitudes to work which the survey of polytechnic library staff found. The people described fit very well Moore and Kempson's summary of a workforce who "are content with their jobs and gain satisfaction from intrinsic aspects of their jobs" (Moore and Kempson, 1985b, p.140).

Despite emphasis by many respondents on the pleasantness of colleagues as individuals, the growing divide between professional and non-professional staff suggested in Chapter One was evident in the responses of some clerical staff. While all the polytechnic libraries were to various extents computerised there were, as had been anticipated, no obvious signs of discontent over the de-skilling effects of automation.

Career development

The mean average length of time in current post was 3.3 years, with a median time of 2.5 years (Q99). (K-S(U) for the distribution is significant: $Z=3.221$ $p<.001$), Mean average employment in this library (Q100) was 4.3 years and the median figure was 2.7 years. (K-S(N) for the distribution was $Z=1.611$ $p=.011$.) These figures may reflect the youth of Polytechnics, which were founded around 1970 and have expanded gradually over the following fifteen years, as well as normal staff turnover patterns in libraries, where, given the high proportion of married women, some staff movement at all levels is normally due to partners changing jobs and to maternity as well as to job-related reasons.

Seventy-one percent of staff had had two or more previous jobs (Q100), mostly in libraries. Mean time in previous posts was three years in the last and four and a half in others (difference not significant).

Asked how they expected their career to develop (Q112), 34% of respondents said they expected to stay in their present job, 14% thought they might obtain promotion in this library and 34% thought they might move for promotion. Twenty-eight percent were intending to go into full-time education and 19% were contemplating a change to a non-library job. (The percentages add to more than 100

because respondents were able to name more than one possibility.) This therefore seems to be a reasonably mobile workforce, looking for career progression both within their present employment and by changing employer.

When asked about constraints on career development (Q113) 51% of people mentioned family ties of some sort and 24% lack of opportunity; 18% said they had no constraints.

Men were more concerned about lack of opportunity than women and were more likely to be considering a change of job outside this library (not significant). Younger staff were more likely to anticipate going into full-time education (Cramer's $V=.347$ chi-square=6.141 $p=.046$) and moving for promotion (not significant). Older staff were less likely to anticipate possible change.

Chapter 7

The Trade Unionism of the Polytechnic Library Staff

Introduction

This chapter deals with those results from the polytechnic library survey which relate to the hypotheses advanced in Chapter Three. Each section begins with a restatement of the hypotheses which are relevant to it and concludes with an assessment of whether they have been confirmed or not.

The Scale And Density Of Trade Union Membership

Hypothesis 1 That there will be a union membership density of 80% or higher in polytechnic libraries

Hypothesis 2 That union membership density grew in the 1970s and then began to decline in the early 1980s

Eighty-eight percent of the sample were union members (Q1).

Five out of the six non-members were professional staff (not significant). Four out of the six non-members had belonged to unions previously compared with 27 out of 45 members - i.e. nearly the same proportion. All but three of the union members (82% of the sample)

belonged to NALGO. There were two NATFHE members and one member of APT. This situation perhaps reflected the fact that only three of the sample were employed on full teachers' conditions, with six more employed on teachers' salary scales with local government administrative staff conditions

Sixty-one percent of respondents had belonged to unions previously (Q30), including most of the current union members (not significant), and including 20 people who had belonged to other NALGO branches, seven who had belonged to more than one union and 16 who had belonged to more than one union branch (Q31). The respondents had belonged to 16 different unions previously. Fifty-one percent of the sample had more than five years union membership prior to this employment, including 15% with more than ten years previous union membership (K-S(U) $Z=2.814$ $p<.001$). The median total years of previous membership was 6.7 years. The men were more likely to have been union members previously ($\phi=.421$ $\chi^2=7.072$ $p=.008$), a result not explained just by their greater age, since the direct correlation between previous union membership and age was smaller (Cramer's $V=.317$) and not significant ($\chi^2=5.131$ $p=.077$). Curiously, staff who were not currently union members tended to have had more experience of unions than those who were currently members but this difference was not statistically significant.

Without time-series data it is not possible to

demonstrate conclusively whether density of union membership did grow in the 1970s and begin to decline in the early 1980s, as suggested in Hypothesis 2. Nevertheless the interviews provide some circumstantial evidence. Firstly the close correspondence between median and mean years employment in this library (Q99 and Q100) - 2.7 years and 4.3 years - and median and mean years membership of this union branch (Q3) - 2.5 years and 4.1 years - suggests that union membership had been for most staff an immediate corollary of joining the library. If evidence of lower membership density prior to the 1970s quoted in Chapter Three is accepted, this would imply growing union membership density during the 1970s. Secondly, several members, presumably those who had not joined immediately they were appointed, referred to events during the 1970s which had persuaded them to join. However, four of the six non-members had previously belonged to trade unions and been officers or representatives, suggesting at least the possibility that the trade union movement may be finding it less easy to convert trade union members into life-long trade unionists and to carry over previous membership to membership in the current employment. However, the evidence is too slender to justify any positive assertion.

The density of union membership in polytechnic libraries, at 88%, proved to be very much that which was anticipated (80% or higher) in Hypothesis 1 in Chapter Three. Union membership is clearly an established part of life and even most of the non-members had at some time been union

members in previous employment.

The polytechnic library survey data is consistent with Hypothesis 2, concerning changes in density of union membership, but insufficient to confirm the hypothesis.

Explanations Of Union Membership

Hypothesis 3 That changes in union membership density in library work are influenced by:

- employer policies and government action
- the business cycle
- establishment size

Hypothesis 4 That personal characteristics of the workforce such as age, gender, and part-time or full-time employment, have no influence on union membership density, but that social background does have an effect

Hypothesis 5 That for many trade union members in libraries trade union membership is just part of the social framework of their job and has no positive significance

Hypothesis 6 That computerisation has had neither a de-skilling nor a proletarianising effect on the situation of library staff

Hypothesis 7 That library trade unionism is motivated by an instrumental approach focussing tightly on job issues

Union members were asked why they themselves had joined the union (Q4) and all respondents were asked what they thought were the strongest influences encouraging employees to join a trade union (Q39). The reasons were not prompted in any way by the interviewer. The answers to both questions are summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Reasons For Joining The Union

own reasons (N=45)	others' reasons (N=47)
38% encouraged by employer (including closed shop)	30%
22% protection	34%
20% previous membership	-
18% colleagues were members	23%
- to improve salaries	23%
9% belief in unions	-
- because receive benefits negotiated by the union	6%
20% other	32%

While there is in general broad agreement between the answers to the two questions, previous membership and belief in unions only figure among the list of "own" reasons, perhaps because one rarely knows about a colleague's previous union membership or beliefs. In contrast, improving

salaries and receipt of benefits negotiated by the union appear only in the checklist of others' reasons, pointing up a nice variation between our views of our own motives and those of other people.

In both sets of answers, employer encouragement is the most common explanation offered for union membership. In this connection it is interesting that the proportion of staff who were union members varied between libraries and appeared to correlate with the amount of encouragement given to union membership. The proportion of union members varied from 100% in the closed shop library to 63% in the library where union activity was least encouraged, as shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Proportion of staff who are union members by library

Library	Union members	Non-members	membership density
C	18	0	100%
A	10	1	91%
D	12	2	86%
B	5	3	63%

(Cramer's $V=0.388$ chi-square=7.666 $p=.054$ but the numbers of non-members are too small to be reliable)

The two next most favoured reasons for union membership were protection and the fact that colleagues were members. The sort of motives summarised under the protection heading are made more specific in these comments from professional

staff:

"The situation in the Poly was getting delicate - the...[senior polytechnic manager] was throwing his weight around"

"Basically, I felt that my position as a librarian on academic scales was in some jeopardy; and I felt I might need the support of a union..."

Clerical staff were more likely to see protection in terms of protection from arbitrary or unfair treatment by their supervisors. The following comments illustrate how union membership being a social norm is a powerful force:

"Because everyone belongs"

"I was taken into the Staffing Librarian's office and told, "Sign here" "

"Where I had worked before I was not a member. I had felt in rather an awkward position when there was a strike"

There is an instrumental tone about most of the reasons offered. There were just four union members who offered belief in trade unions as a reason.

Since the responses to these questions were unprompted it is likely, had respondents been presented with a list of statements with which to agree or disagree, that rather higher positive percentages would have been recorded. Thus an attempt to gauge responses to prompted reasons for union membership (Q40) produced a higher and statistically significant but unenlighteningly similar response for each of five factors: social background, the employee's own views about unions, employer recognition of the union, management attitudes and a dispute arising. While there were some variations in the strength of feeling, in all five cases approximately 70% of the sample responded positively and 30%

responded "don't know" or that the factors would have little or no influence (K-S(N) $Z=2.98$ to 3.26 $p<.001$). It is concluded that in terms of substantive information this question was not very informative, whereas the unprompted questions did successfully show up some differences in strength of feeling about particular reasons, because they record the items which were uppermost in people's minds at the time.

There was also an attempt to measure how much the staff were aware of the legislative encouragement for trade union recognition and trade union participation in the work context which existed at the time (subsequently reduced by legislation passed under a Conservative Government). Question 38 asked: "Are there any matters over which an employer is legally required to consult a trade union?". Sixty-one percent of respondents did not know and 6% thought the employer has no obligation at all.

Knowledge about what the employer must consult about was sketchy even among the 33% who did answer affirmatively.

The instrumentalism emerges again in answers to the question "What do you yourself expect a union to do?" (Q37). Table 7.3 reports the emphasis on protection and job issues:

Table 7.3 What Do You Expect A Union To Do?

(N=49)	
look after its members	61%
negotiate pay and conditions	50%
give job security	20%
other items	25%

Stress was also placed by many respondents on an element of "reasonableness" and an abstinence from politics, as these comments demonstrate:

"To negotiate nationally salary levels. At the branch level it ought to be supportive of individuals...it ought to provide legal backup etc. to uphold the reasonable rights of the individual against the institution"

"Negotiate a reasonable pay rise as frequently as it can manage; protect my job"

"To ensure that you get paid adequately for the type of job you do; that your conditions are such that they can reasonably be asked of you for the job; and not to instigate excessive demands"

"To serve its individual members; not to adopt a political role"

"To stand up for the employees, but only as far as justice goes. I don't want to see the union acting as managers"

The concerns revealed in replies about industrial

Table 7.4 Actual Industrial Action Issues

(N=21)	
staff replacement	76%
job security	57%
salaries	14%
other	10%

action actually taken (Q44) are not dissimilar (Table

7.4). Those who had never taken industrial action were asked "Are there any issues over which you can imagine yourself taking industrial action?" (Q45).

Table 7.5 Potential Industrial Action Issues

	(N=27)
job security	48%
other	26%
would never strike	41%

As Table 7.5 shows, job security figures highly again. Respondents were selective about the issues over which they felt industrial action might be appropriate:

"If decisions were made which undermined the service or the staff"

"Something really big - that I thought was very wrong. Not just a pay rise"

"Yes - unfair dismissal"

"Solidarity with the staff"

"Yes, as a last resort: jobs threatened very specifically or a major breakdown between the central management and the union".

There is little apparent support for industrial action over pay in the past or the future. Those who had struck over salaries had done so in the context of a gradings claim relative to other staff in an organisation rather than in a straight bid for more pay. Staff replacement figures high in the list of actual issues but seems not to have been envisaged by any of those without experience of industrial action as a potential issue. Clearly job security is seen as the main issue for industrial action.

There were only six non-members so not too much can reasonably be made of their views as a distinct group. It is, however, interesting that four of the six had been union members and one had been a union official in previous employment. Their reasons for current non-membership (Q20) and whether there were any circumstances in which they could envisage themselves joining (Q21 and Q22) become thereby more intriguing.

Only one non-member claimed to be "against trade unions in principle". Two were affected by their management role and two were just not impressed with the recognised union. The circumstances in which they might join the union were not dissimilar from those which motivated union members:

"Vulnerability of jobs"

"Guilty because the union negotiates pay rises"

"May need protection for hybrid post" [a post on academic scales with administrative conditions of service]

"If we had to go on strike - but we never talk about it".

The responses also raise the issue of a union for librarians:

"I would like to see a library trade union"

"If there were a professional union for librarians then yes, that would have much more appeal for me"

and finally the conflict between the role of being a senior manager and being a union member arises again:

"As Librarian I have a place within the hierarchy of the Polytechnic and my job as Chief is to fight within the bounds of my sphere of influence - via access to Academic Board, Assistant Directors, etc. I feel that I can fight for my staff better that way than by involving a union with the City Council"

"Imagine the Chief Librarian being on strike and the staff not...".

It would seem that union members and non-members are motivated by similar feelings and ideas: the difference is in individual judgements about how best to achieve those aims, and how circumstances are perceived to impinge on the individual. There would seem to be only one of the sample who would be unlikely ever to join a union.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that union density is influenced by the business cycle, employer policies and government action, and establishment size. In the polytechnic libraries the reported reasons for union membership were overwhelmingly to do with the immediate environment - principally encouragement by the employer, previous membership or the fact that colleagues were members, together with a need for personal protection, notably in relation to job security. Publicly-funded libraries are only indirectly affected by the business cycle but there was certainly evidence that respondents viewed their union as a defence against job cuts and it is also clear that for this group frozen posts and the threat of possible redundancies had in the short term at least led to an increase in union membership rather as Hawkins suggests. There can be no doubt of the importance of employer policies in encouraging union membership. This study even suggests some evidence of the possibilities for managers to discourage union activity, and possibly union membership, when the employer officially recognises the unions. The

effects of government policies relating to trade unions (as distinct from policies on higher education and its funding) emerge only indirectly in staff responses. There appeared to be little awareness of specific legislative requirements helpful to unions, but, given the force of social norms in encouraging union membership, it seems likely that the general climate created by the government can have a contributory effect. All the libraries were under the control of relatively large employers, hence the high union membership density at least provided no contrary evidence to the notion that large establishments encourage union membership.

In relation to Hypothesis 4, the small number of non-members makes it impossible to come to conclusions whether personal characteristics such as age, gender and part-time or full-time employment have a strong effect on levels of union membership. The few non-members were scattered among the sample when analysed by age, gender and grade. Both the two part-time respondents were union members. Certainly there was no positive evidence to suggest that such factors are important. There was some evidence that a management role is felt by some staff to inhibit union membership. Findings relating to social class of the respondents were reported in Chapter Six and in particular the upward mobility of many of the professional librarians was noted. With few non-members deduction would be optimistic. Several respondents voluntarily drew attention to their own lower commitment to trade unionism than their

parents'. It is however clear that for this group of workers there is no feeling at all that there might be any stigma attached to union membership. It must therefore be concluded that the negative part of Hypothesis 4 - that there would be no correlation between union membership and variables such as age, gender and part-time or full-time employment - was consistent with the evidence produced. The positive part of the hypothesis - that there would be a correlation with social origins - was not. Respondents' replies suggested that a different factor - having been a union member before - may help to persuade staff to join a union in the absence of particular motivations working against joining.

Hypothesis 5, that trade union membership may be just part of the social framework of the the job and has no positive significance, seems to be justified. A large number of respondents suggested social norms as a reason for union membership.

Hypothesis 6 was a negative hypothesis with regard to the de-skilling and proletarianisation which is sometimes claimed to be associated with increasing automation. No respondent offered any suggestion that they felt that their work was being de-skilled. The only comments in relation to computerisation related to increased job satisfaction. With regard to proletarianisation, there seemed if anything to be a distancing from working class origins at work - a process which might be termed deproletarianisation - regardless of high levels of union membership and of computerisation. Many

of the staff came from what might be regarded traditionally as proletarian backgrounds, but now saw themselves as middle class rather than part of a working class. There was a quite strong perception of a class system, but little evidence of a Marxist view of it, even though there were some socialist leanings.

Hypothesis 7 was that the trade unionism would be motivated by an instrumental approach focussing tightly on job issues. This was amply confirmed.

The overall picture with regard to explanations of union membership is, with some modifications, as suggested in Chapter Three: individual decisions about trade union membership are apparently the outcome of the combination of the positive factors identified by Bain. It seems that the weight of different factors varies not only between individuals and between work locations, but also from time to time in the light of events. In times of growth of employment and prosperity the more passive features - the social framework, employer encouragement and establishment size, and a new factor, previous membership - are in practice the main motivators for individuals deciding to take up union membership. The business cycle does not directly affect publicly-funded activities but government policies which in part reflect the business cycle may. Reduced funds have effects on job availability similar to those of an economic downturn, and frozen posts and the threat of possible redundancies seemed to have been

effective motivators for trade union membership among those members of the polytechnic library staff who were least likely to join the union. Government policy seems always to be an important feature for polytechnic libraries because government policy decisions about funding have a direct impact on employment security prospects and industrial relations, but government policy towards trade unions, via enabling legislation favouring their influence, has little direct impact on the union members. It is perhaps of more importance to the activity minority of trade unionists in making it easier for them to establish and extend the influence of the trade union. The motivation of the ordinary members is very instrumental and not at all class conscious.

The Character Of The Trade Unionism

Hypothesis 8 That there is a cautious approach to militancy which balances likely costs against likely benefits

Hypothesis 9 That library staff take a predominantly sectional approach to trade union membership

Hypothesis 10 That most library trade union members do not wish their trade union to have a political commitment

An emphasis on "reasonableness" in trade union behaviour has already been noted. Replies to questions

about general attitudes to trade unionism and satisfaction with respondents' present union analysed fully in a later section also confirm this. These are not trade unionists looking for a militant approach, nor a political one. Their union membership, in so far as it is not conditioned by the work environment, the power of which was illustrated earlier, is characterised by a seeking after "justice" and "fairness" with a sometimes reluctant acceptance of solidarity. To assess the character of union members' commitment to their union, they were asked what they thought were their own duties as union members (Q16). Table 7.6 summarises the responses.

Table 7.6 Union Members' Perceptions
Of Their Duties As Members

	(N=45)
to support union decisions	41%
to participate in the union	36%
to support other members	21%
other	9%
none	21%

The concept of solidarity emerges in many of the comments, for example:

"I should stand by them. I should support them"

"To go along with what's decided"

"If anyone was sacked here in the library, I would strike" (a Chief Librarian)

However, some fears, doubts and reservations also emerge:

"Beyond being absolutely terrified of going on strike,

support, I suppose. solidarity is about the only thing I really worry about"

"Yes, I do, but I think I have a stronger duty to myself when it comes down to it. I tend not to take part in strikes etc. for personal financial reasons" (one-parent family)

"I have a sense of guilt about being so apathetic - but not enough to make me do anything".

"I begrudge giving up my work time to it".

As noted earlier in this chapter there is a reluctance to use industrial action except for "really big" issues such as the threat of job losses. There had been industrial action in three libraries reflecting such issues - in the first the non-filling of posts and, in the last two, threats to job security stemming from Government cutbacks. There were no reports of industrial activity in the library where union activity is least encouraged while the highest levels are in the one with a closed shop. One assistant related the circumstances of some industrial action she had taken part in at another library:

"Six of us were told we had progressed to Senior Assistant through the Bar and therefore would receive an increment. But it was denied us because of finance. So we refused to do above the Bar duties. The next day letters promising progression arrived. The union officer was not very successful. I took informal legal advice and presented my own case."

This is perhaps typical of the sort of "justice" issue which the staff seemed to expect their union to deal with, albeit in this case it was primarily action by the individuals which won their case.

In all this there is a cautious balancing of benefits and costs. It is doubtful, for instance, if NALGO could ever

in 1981-82 have persuaded a majority of its polytechnic library members to vote for a strike over pay.

There is also a narrowly sectional approach. Several respondents made comments about the union not understanding libraries and librarians, being too political or not concentrating enough on local bread and butter issues, for example:

"Political emphasis on national and international things instead of the nitty gritty for our members."

Some members were unhappy about what they saw as a too militant approach - "The union is more militant than its members" but another respondent commented that "in practice the radical ideas are not implemented". Several members commented unfavourably on the idea of a closed shop. Others expressed a feeling of being peripheral to and not properly understood by their union:

[Of NATFHE] "They have trouble coping with our problems, which are different from those of the rest of the membership...[problems relating to hours, lecture preparation time]...the Branch Secretary said we ought to try to work more to our [teachers'] conditions, but it just doesn't fit in in a library situation: the library has to be manned..."

"NALGO is essentially the union for local government workers - town hall type workers. I don't really think it's a union for librarians or in fact even understands very deeply how librarians differ from other local government workers."

One assistant put the blame firmly on the library staff themselves:

"It's just the library - the people have got to believe in the union. Here you just join, pay your money and keep your mouth shut, and that's it. I don't think they know enough about the union"

but no other respondents wished for their union or their

colleagues to be militant or political.

The final question of the interview (Q123) asked respondents for other comments and some took the opportunity to state or restate points of view about trade unionism or themselves:

"People here aren't specially union militants. We consider ourselves very privileged"

"I am in a union because I have to be. I don't take much notice of the union"

"I don't think politics and the union should be joined"

"My father was a...shop steward. Any trouble, he's in there. I'm not interested".

The survey evidence perhaps suggested at one level a greater sense of militancy than Hypothesis 8 envisaged, with its emphasis on cautious balancing of costs and benefits. The industrial action was however tied mostly to the particular issue of job cuts and job security. It was perhaps, as one Chief Librarian suggested, the recent higher education cutbacks which had played a large part in making the library union members a little more militant than expected. Nevertheless the majority of union members said that they were not interested in industrial action in relation to salaries. The industrial action which members had taken had been very selective, perhaps reflecting after all the cautious balancing of likely costs and likely benefits which the hypothesis had predicted.

The sectional approach to trade unionism which had

been anticipated in Hypothesis 9 was also fully justified. Respondents seemed to have neither knowledge of nor interest in the functioning of the union outside the library and the unions were criticised for not understanding the particular problems and situation of library staff.

The results strongly supported Hypothesis 10, that library trade union members do not wish their unions to have a political commitment. While the concept of solidarity in relation to immediate colleagues was understood and accepted as a part of trade union membership by the majority of respondents the idea of solidarity with the working classes or the labour movement received very little support.

Participation In Trade Union Affairs

Hypothesis 11 That participation in trade union affairs will be very low

Union activity occupied only a tiny part of most union members' lives. Eighty-four percent of members estimated their activity at one hour per month or less, including 20 people who suggested zero hours, and only seven claimed more (K-S(U) $Z=2.981$ $p<.001$)(Q7). With the exception of one respondent who spent several hours per month playing football for a NALGO team, all those spending more than two

hours per month on union affairs were union representatives. There was no evidence of any overall trend of change towards more or less activity (Q8).

Three of the members were currently union representatives or officers (Q2) and a further seven had previously held such offices in this or other employment (Q2 and Q32) (distributions not statistically significant). A third of members were willing to consider being union representatives in future (Q17) but usually only if needed (Q18). None seemed positively keen. A typical comment was:

"If the situation arose where we needed a rep and there was noone else willing".

In the library where union activity was discouraged there seemed to be rather stronger inhibitions:

"No. I'd expect another 20,000 a year."

"In a different situation, because management here make life difficult...We had two representatives (nobody would do it unless we had two) and in the end they both gave up doing it because they were just being picked on."

Those people who had been union members for more than six months were presented with a list of possible union activities and asked whether in the last twelve months these activities had been offered to them (Q5) and whether they had participated in the activities (Q6). The percentages answering yes are tabulated in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7 Union Activities In The Last Six Months

	Yes, activity was offered by union		Yes, activity was taken part in	
	(N=38)	Binomial (.5) p=	(N=38)	Binomial (.5) p=
union notices	100%	<.001	95%	<.001
elections	92%	<.001	74%	.005
branch meetings	95%	<.001	68%	.034
referenda	82%	.001	58%	not sig.
industrial action	68%	.034	29%	.014
demonstrations	74%	.005	21%	.001
social activity	26%	.005	11%	.001
departmental meetings	11%	<.001	8%	<.001
other	8%	-	5%	-

The apparently high rates of participation should be set against the small amount of time per month which most respondents estimated that they spent on union activity. The participation in reading union notices and voting is not very time-consuming. The respondents needed only to have done each activity once in the last year to be able honestly to answer yes to the relevant question. In addition, in reply to other questions, 34% of members said that they had raised one or more issues with a union representative in the last twelve months (Q13) (K-S(N) $Z=2.420$ $p<.001$) and 41% said that they had at some time taken industrial action (Q43) (not significant). Forty-two percent had at some time used union services (Q42) (not significant), usually just discount purchase schemes on one or two occasions.

The figures for participation in industrial action and

demonstrations are linked with events discussed above and would no doubt have been much lower two or three years earlier before vacancy freezes and threats of job loss had become so prominent. The number of people who reported being offered and taking part in demonstrations and industrial action in the last twelve months also varied between libraries as Table 7.8 shows.

Table 7.8 Certain Union Activities In Last Twelve Months By Library

	Library			
	1 (N=9)	2 (N=5)	3 (N=13)	4 (N=11)
demonstration offered (chi-square=24.429 p<.001)	50%	0%	100%	100%
industrial action offered (chi-square=24.536 p<.001)	33%	0%	100%	91%
demonstration taken part in (chi-square=6.360 p=.095 - not significant)	0%	0%	39%	27%
industrial action taken part in (chi-square=6.773 p=.080 - not significant)	22%	0%	54%	18%

While the numbers are small the solidity of the differences over all the measures is still impressive.

As a further indicator of levels of union impact on their members, union members were asked to name a union departmental representative or shop steward (Q10), a branch officer (Q10) and a national officer (Q11). The results are shown in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9 Percentage of union members able to name union officials correctly

	(N=45)	Binomial (.5) p=
departmental representative	100%	<.001
branch officer	49%	not sig.
national officer	31%	.016

The geographically closest union representatives make the strongest impact.

Table 7.10 summarises the answers to an open question asking what, if anything, limits participation in the union (Q9).

Table 7.10 Constraints On Union Activity

(N=45)

	percentage of union members
lack of interest	38%
personal constraints	31%
lack of information/opportunity	27%
work constraints	18%
union approach/policy	7%
nothing	5%

The results might well be interpreted as confirming a lack of interest and commitment to the union. A member of NATFHE commented that:

"I don't feel librarians are accepted very happily by other members of academic staff."

Worried managers may be reassured by the number of staff who

stressed work constraints. There was just one assistant who was very critical of her colleagues on this account:

"One day the heating was not up to the limit, even by 11 o'clock, and we should have walked out, but all you get is 'you can't leave the counter, the counter'."

However, more typical comments were:

"I don't like militancy"

"I don't believe in terribly active participation: it's a bit of a 'sit back and leave it to others' attitude".

Some senior staff felt constrained from being active by their management position. This feeling was even stronger in relation to becoming a union representative (Q17 and Q18). Some of the clerical staff felt insufficiently equipped to take on a representative role:

"Because you have to have a basis in politics to start with. It's much more complicated than just a clerical job."

General levels of participation in trade union activity were as low as expected in Hypothesis 11. The trade union simply does not fill a very large part of the respondents' lives, except when they have some important job issue to deal with. In general "the union" is expected to deal adequately with salary and conditions of service issues and to "see fair play" without asking much in return from the individual member.

Attitudes To Trade Unions

Hypothesis 12 That trade union members are hostile to trade unionism in general

Hypothesis 13 That union members will judge the success of their own union on narrow criteria of salaries, conditions and status achieved for library staff

Asked "What are your general feelings about trade unions?" (Q36), 96% of respondents offered criticisms of unions generally, most frequently that the unions are too powerful, too greedy or too political. However, 92% also offered pro-union comments, most often that unions are needed to protect their members. A common feeling was that unions were valuable, or had been so in the past, but had in recent years acquired too much power and used it in undesirably aggressive ways. The spectrum of views ranged from the solidly pro-union:

"My husband is an active trade union member. It is your duty to join. Unions are a good thing."

to the firmly hostile:

"They always seem to be causing a lot of bother over nothing".

The majority of replies balanced fundamental support for the idea of unions with criticism of particular perceived characteristics of contemporary trade unionism, for example:

"...very mixed; often necessary, often too powerful. Don't agree with the closed shop"

"I was brought up against unions. Does protect you in a large place. The big ones are ruining the country"

"There is a need for them. I am not sure that now they haven't become autonomous, all-powerful bodies that people don't really want them to be. Now they control people to as much of an extent as other people did before they were there"

"They tend to act for fairly selfish motives rather than with any real sense of social injustice, but I also realise that I owe my present prosperity to activities in the past, so I couldn't feel hostile"

"They can be helpful in some ways - as security and to represent you against management. I disagree with lots of strikes"

"Very important and useful for the workforce. If they don't go too far and the management are reasonable it can work out very well. But some unions have a lot of power and go too far, and sometimes management can be unreasonable"

"I have very mixed feelings. I come from a working class background, with a miner father, with parents who remember the bad old days. You can imagine the loyalty there is to the miners' union. I have a much more moderate view. I have never really felt I had a hard deal from my employers"

"Unions should view themselves on a local basis"

"They frighten me a bit...I don't like the fact that it's compulsory to be a member, although I would be a member anyway"

"The strength of a union branch is the lengths it will go to to fight for an individual person's rights"

"I don't like the closed shop"

"Very much in favour. They protect the weak against the strong in society. On occasion they misuse their power but they need that power"

"A good thing when they started. Now they have too much power - especially Executives. Too connected with politics"

"They are often unfairly blamed. They get a bad press. It's only the bad cases you hear of. Where they work away and do good work it never gets noticed".

A large number of these comments are quoted because they give very well the general feel of respondents' attitudes both to trade unions in general and to other specific issues. The general question sparked off replies of several sentences in most respondents, indicating perhaps that here was a subject on which most had some quite strong views.

Non-members tended to be slightly more critical than those who were currently union members but there was

substantial overlap of views between the two groups and no statistically significant differences were discernible between them, with chi-square results mostly below 1.0 offering $p = .5$ upwards.

Sixty-four percent of union members were satisfied with their union (Q14). Only 22% were not satisfied. (K-S(N) $Z = 2.372$ $p < .001$). More of those satisfied cited the approach of the union as a reason (Q15) (Cramer's $V = .328$). Those who were not satisfied were more likely to mention communication (Cramer's $V = .414$), other members' attitudes (Cramer's $V = .496$) and the union's understanding of libraries (Cramer's $V = .672$, but none of these differences are statistically reliable due to the small numbers. Salaries, the union approach and communication seemed to be the major issues. One respondent made a number of points mentioned by others:

"I don't really have very strong con or pro feelings about it. Like a lot of people I have got very mixed up feelings about the union anyway. It doesn't seem to be a particularly strong or very militant union, but then I'm not sure that I would go along with very militant action even if it was so. It perhaps kind of suits my middle-of-the-roadness, not being militant and being reasonable, and doing the best it can as regards conditions of service and pay negotiations."

Another simply condemned the union as "boring". Most criticism of positive union actions related to activity not focussed on narrow instrumental issues. Criticism of omissions in union activity focussed on failings in local support:

"They were no help when I wanted day release."
"Local organisation and communication".

Ninety-three percent of members were satisfied with how easy it was to contact a union representative (Q12) (K-S(N)

Z=3.204 p=.0).

Of those who had belonged to a union before, 32% thought that there were no differences between this union branch and that which they had previously belonged to (Q34). 29% regarded their previous branch more favourably and only 10% less favourably (29% don't know/no reply) (not statistically significant). Once again the emphasis in comparisons was on the local profile of the union and its effectiveness on bread and butter issues:

[now a NATFHE member] "I feel slightly more involved, nearer the centre, see Branch officers regularly, whereas NALGO was always very distant."

[of NALGO in a previous job as compared to NALGO in the present job] "I was more encouraged to be involved - going to meetings was an accepted part of the job."

[of CPSA in a previous job] "...more forceful than NALGO - especially in London. I saw more activity, there were more meetings."

The feeling of library staff being peripheral also emerges here:

"The people from the town hall were very into the union. I always felt the library was a little onto the sidelines".

Hypothesis 12 suggested that the library trade union members would be somewhat hostile to trade unions in general, influenced by the presentation of news and current affairs by politicians and the media. While a study such as this could not provide more than circumstantial evidence on this issue, the view which respondents held of trade unions in general bore considerable resemblance to that which is put forward by much of the media: trade unions have become too powerful, too greedy etc. This influence could explain

how the respondents came to hold this general view simultaneously with a quite positive view of their own union membership, but this study did not establish any direct causal connection.

Hypothesis 13 argued that the trade union members judge the success of their own union on narrow criteria of salaries, conditions and status achieved for library staff. The survey of polytechnic library staff strongly confirmed this hypothesis.

Union Office-holders

Hypothesis 14 That union office-holders will exhibit both a politically more committed and a practically more enlightened approach to what they expect of their trade union

The sample contained three current union representatives, one of whom was chairman of the staff side of a polytechnic joint negotiating committee, and seven people who had previously been union representatives (one of whom was no longer a union member).

Because of the small number any correlations are not statistically reliable, but there were in any case few apparent differences between those who had been union representatives and the rest of the sample. In reply to the question about their own reasons for joining the union the

union representatives were apparently more likely to mention previous membership and less likely to mention encouragement by the employer. The union representatives were also more likely to mention salaries in discussing reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the union. They were less likely to see loss of job loyalty as an effect of union membership.

The union office-holders were not all strongly politically committed to trade unionism as Hypothesis 14 had, perhaps over simply, suggested, nor was there much evidence of them being practically more realistic in what they expect the union to achieve, since the ordinary members were not notably impractical. The lack of militancy again surfaces in an integrative approach in which the current representatives sought to foresee and avoid trouble rather than provoking confrontation. The office-holders were very similar to other staff.

The Impact Of Trade Unionism On The Libraries

Hypothesis 15 That the high rate of union membership has very little effect on the work situation within libraries

One of the main aims of the interviews was to find out what impact having a union has on life in the library. It should be borne in mind that the remoteness of national pay negotiations and the bureaucratic system of which the libraries are part remove direct authority over areas which

are central to most union-management relationships from both the local union branch and the library management. Pay is determined locally only via gradings for particular duties. Service conditions are largely nationally agreed, with some local supplementation on an organisational basis. The relationship in the library is therefore mostly about the interpretation of national and local agreements, working conditions, relating duties and responsibilities to posts, and styles of management.

Sixty-three percent of respondents thought that having a union branch had no effect at all on the attitude of the library management to the staff (Q28). A few felt that having a union branch makes the management a little more careful how they treat people. Typical of such comments were:

"They know it's there; prevents contentious action"

Some respondents saw the effects in a more positive light:

"No, they are not frightened of the union. They appreciate their role"

"Yes, a body to talk to, to get feedback from".

Some senior staff claimed specific effects of having a union:

"Some professional staff take unprofessional attitudes"

"Voluntary labour refused because of union objections"

"Just a tiny bit of the confidence that one has in individuals is eroded...creates a certian tension. Sometimes the union puts pressure on the library management which is opposed to pressures coming from other directions"

and in one library other staff reported specific effects:

"Yes, the union reps have had rather a rough ride"

"Yes, the management don't like people being associated with the unions"

"When people are active in the union they are pressurised by management".

It should, however, be borne in mind that such views were very much minority ones and that most of the staff seemed not to be aware of the tensions which are suggested.

Sixty-four percent of respondents said that belonging to a union had no effect on the staff (Q27) but some felt that belonging to a union brought a feeling of greater security. Such comments included:

"Yes, it means there can be an area of negotiation about the job - rules are not just conferred on you from above"

"Yes, particularly juniors. It gives a feeling of support. It gives a library assistant somewhere to go if they feel aggrieved".

The notion of the union having a larger influence in some circumstances was also raised:

"In general I don't think so, but they suddenly identify themselves with the union when there is an issue on hand. Membership becomes a more active ingredient in their life for however long that particular situation lasts"

"Most of the time the library staff are doing their job uninfluenced by the union, but when the union intervenes in some way or other I think there are very few staff who are prepared to stand back and ask "Is the union correct?". Senior staff who are members of NALGO find themselves sometimes in real difficulty...they, too, are reluctant to be seen to be doing things which are against union branch policy".

Senior staff held differing views on this last issue:

"[Staff] do experience a conflict of interest between what the union as a branch is asking them to do and what they as individuals regard as being in the best interests of their clients in the library"

"If they know they are likely to be fairly treated they have some security. They can perform their jobs better with that background"

"For half, marginally, yes. For 25% a reverse effect".

A union representative put the majority staff view:

"No, all levels of staff have a very professional attitude. There are one or two fairly hard-line right wingers, some who profess to have left wing views, but when it comes to it they put doing the job and staff and students first".

With regard to consultation between management and union representatives in the library 49% of respondents did not know whether union reps were consulted by the management or not (Q25) (not significant) and 59% did not know whether their union reps had ever raised any issues with the library management (Q23) (not significant). Those who believed that there was some consultation suggested working conditions, grievances, duties and gradings as issues (Q23 and Q26). Similar issues were suggested as those which reps ought to raise (Q24). However, the main impression given was one of little consultation. One respondent suggested that consultation was through staff meetings. Another suggested that "the union should be seen only as a sort of fire brigade" and another thought that "in most cases there should be no need for it".

The character of the actual relationship between union reps and library management varied in the four libraries.

In Library A there were "few contentious issues between the library management and the staff...perhaps not a very strong library management image".

In Library B the Chief Librarian said that he

consulted the union "as little as I can" and described the union attitude as "opposing efficiency". But it was interesting that he added that such opposition to efficiency had decreased in the last year following a change of union secretary. A member of staff in the same library commented that "the last two NALGO union reps resigned because they felt they didn't interface too well with the Librarian".

In Library C a member of staff described the relationship as follows:

"There is very little which is contentious. The Librarian would consult, e.g. when the computerisation was being introduced one of the shop stewards was herself involved in introducing it so there were no problems".

Another member of staff was a little more cynical and suggested that the library management consults "when it thinks it's going to get the reply it wants to get, when it knows the union will support what it wants".

In Library D the Chief Librarian said consultation took place "whenever we think there could be a union view" and commented that consultation was "frequently informal". The union rep bore out that consultation did take place on "any matters which affect the staff" :

"I was asked for staff views about your presence today...Consultation occurs anyway because I'm a member of the senior management team. I'm never quite sure if the Librarian takes it for read that I'm wearing my union hat for some of the discussions"

"We have a sympathetic management. What I tend to do if I see a groundswell is to raise it before it gets any further, so that something sensible is done"

"We have a very good staff set-up, with a good working relationship right across the board. It's difficult to divorce personal relationships from working methods".

All the Chief Librarians and union representatives interviewed said that there was some consultation by both sides, often very informally. In two libraries both Chief Librarian and union representative suggested (independently) that they operated constructively together, swapping information for the benefit of the staff and the library and trying to sort out potential problems before serious conflict develops, but this was not true elsewhere.

The question "Has the amount of union influence in the library changed at all in the last three years?" (Q29) produced a 60% response in favour of no change, with roughly 20% suggesting more influence and 20% less (K-S(N) $Z=1.892$ $p=.002$). Replies supported the notion that the amount of union influence depended on the emergence of particular issues and on personalities:

"Very evident presence when there were regrading problems, so I suppose less now"

"Has fluctuated depending on the reps...[less now because there were] important issues previously - regradings"

"We had a more vigorous rep before"

"[More now] When you ask them [the reps] something, they act immediately. We didn't used to have a rep in the building and then we just used to let things go on and on and not bother to contact them"

"Depends on personalities".

Chief Librarians seemed to feel the union influence had become stronger:

"As times have got harder, the amount of union influence has increased"

"I have to fight my corner pretty determinedly to show that I do not agree with upper management who tend to

take the easy way out by listening to the unions rather than to departmental managers"

"The members are more aware of the union".

Forty-five percent of those with previous union experience thought that their previous union had more influence with the employer and 23% less (Q35) (K-S(N) $Z=1.753$ $p=.004$).

In all the polytechnics there was also management-union consultation at institutional and local authority level. This was however remote and mentioned very little by staff other than union reps and chief librarians.

The impact within the libraries of union recognition and a high density of membership was modest as predicted in Hypothesis 15. This is partly because of the relatively tight national bargaining system but reflects also the limited expectations which the members have of their union. Indeed, as generally committed workers it is doubtful if the library staff would in general wish the union to take a very militant approach to the running of the library. It was however clear that there is some effect: a somewhat greater care on the part of management to consider the staff point of view and perhaps rather more confidence on the part of the staff in resisting management proposals which are not liked.

Chapter 8

The Professionalism of the Polytechnic Library Staff

Introduction

This chapter deals with those results from the polytechnic library survey which relate to the hypotheses advanced in Chapter Four. Each section begins with a restatement of the relevant hypotheses and concludes with an assessment of whether they have been confirmed or not.

The original aim of the sections of the interview schedule concerned with professionalism had been to collect information about views of professionalism generally, and about the main professional organisations active in librarianship and information work. However, it became clear that The Library Association dominated the professional organisation membership of the staff interviewed even more than had been expected, so much so that membership of other bodies was limited to a small number in total and was also very scattered. The section of the schedule concerning detail of membership participation etc. for other organisations was therefore abandoned. Thus there is no analysis of questions 65 to 86. Evidence about professional activity is largely based on respondents comments about The Library Association.

The Scale And Density Of Professional Association Membership

Hypothesis 16 That the density of Library Association membership in polytechnic libraries is around 80% for professional staff and close to zero for clerical staff

Hypothesis 17 That there has been little movement towards or away from membership of The Library Association

Hypothesis 18 That some professional staff will belong additionally or alternatively to Aslib or the Institute of Information Scientists

Forty-three percent of the sample were members of The Library Association (LA) (Q46) (Binomial (.5) not significant). Ten percent belonged to other professional organisations connected with librarianship (Binomial (.5) $p < .001$). The LA members were exclusively professional staff, except for one trainee. No permanent non-professional staff were members. Two basic grade professionals were not LA members. The four members of other professional organisations were all senior professionals. Membership of the LA was generally of longer standing than of the current union, with a median period of membership of 12 years (Q49) (K-S(U) $Z=1.706$ $p.006$). This is not surprising given the greater number of unions representing librarians and the rate of job change noted above.

When asked "Do you belong to any LA Branches, Sections or Groups ?" (Q47) respondents' answers were as given in Table 8.1. Despite the wording of the question, some respondents may have felt it unnecessary to mention their Branch since membership of the local Branch is automatic.

Table 8.1 LA Members: Reported Membership Of Parts Of The LA

	(N=22)
Local Branch	24%
One or more Groups and Sections	95%
University College and Research Section	59%
Cataloguing And Indexing Group	36%
Audiovisual Group	32%
Association Of Assistant Librarians	29%
International & Comparative Librarianship Group	14%
All Others	38%

Nevertheless, the very low response does not suggest a strong identification with the local Branch. Members are free to choose which (and how many) Groups and Sections they join, receiving membership of two free. A previous unpublished analysis by the writer of group memberships for a sample of LA members (data from LA Membership Officer) gave an average of 2.1. The responses shown above total to give an average figure of 1.9 groups per member, suggesting that LA members relate much more consciously to the groups

which they choose to join than to their Branch.

Comment has already been made on the committed, professional approach of most of the library staff at all grades. In the narrower sense of seeing themselves as professionals, this was certainly true of most of the qualified staff. Most of them, as predicted in Hypothesis 16, were members of The Library Association, while, again as predicted, none of the clerical staff (except those intending to become professionals) were members. There were few signs of change in the density of professional association membership, again as predicted in Hypothesis 17, although all the professional staff who were not LA members were relatively young, possibly indicating a less strong adherence to the LA among younger staff. A significant proportion of the professional staff belonged also to other specialist professional groups but the expected additional membership of Aslib or the Institute of Information Scientists did not in general materialise as foreshadowed in Hypothesis 18.

Attitudes To The Library Association

Hypothesis 19: That the members of The Library Association expect their professional body to act on industrial relations matters as well as on professional issues such as qualifications, standards and the status of the profession

Hypothesis 20: That members are dissatisfied with their professional body

Hypothesis 21: That the more active LA members will be least dissatisfied

Hypothesis 22: That members belong to the LA more in order to retain their chartered status than for professional interest or development

Fifty percent of LA members estimated that they spend more than one hour per month on LA activities (Q53) - a rather higher proportion than of union members - and only two members reported zero hours (K-S(U) $Z=2.345$ $p<.001$). There was again no evidence of any overall trend to more or less activity (Q54). Twenty-seven percent of LA members, again rather higher than for union members, had been or were officers of the organisation or its parts (Q48) (Binomial (.5) $p=.053$). Two thirds, again a higher percentage, were willing to consider being an officer in future (Q64) (Binomial (.5) not significant).

Presented with a list of activities over the last twelve months similar to that which was offered to union members (Q51 and Q52), LA members responded as shown in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 LA activities Of LA Members During The Last 12 Months

	Activity was offered by the LA (N=22) Binomial (.5) p=		Activity was taken part in (N=22) Binomial (.5) p=	
periodicals, circulars	100%	<.00\	100%	<.00\
elections	96%	<.00\	59%	not sig.
local meetings	91%	<.001	50%	not sig.
other meetings	100%	<.00\	41%	not sig.
referenda	55%	not sig.	27%	not sig.
social activity	36%	not sig.	9%	<.001
other activity	8%	<.001	5%	<.001

Put in these terms of proportions of members undertaking particular activities, the levels of activity are slightly lower than for union members, with the exception of reading periodicals etc. This exception and the higher estimates of time spent on LA activity may be due largely to the arrival through the home letter box of a monthly journal plus various other more intermittent communications.

Twenty-three percent of LA members claimed to have contacted an LA representative once or more in the last twelve months (Q59) (K-S(U) $Z=3.491$ $p<.00\)$ and 32% had at some time sought help or advice from the LA (Q60) (Binomial (.5) not significant).

With only 22 members in the sample subset, the numbers in any age group, grade, job or library are in general too small to support reliable inferences of correlations with

these factors. However, there does seem to be a consistent variation between men and women in patterns of participation. As shown in Table 8.3, in all the aspects of participation measured in question 52 - reading, voting, attending meetings etc. - men had a higher score (except for reading where both scored 100%) but none of the individual differences were significant statistically.

Table 8.3 Participation in LA Activities By Gender

	men (N=11)	women (N=11)
read periodicals etc.	100%	100%
voted in elections	64%	55%
attended local meetings	64%	37%
attended other meetings	55%	27%
voted in referenda	50%	10%
attended social activity	18%	-
attended other activity	18%	-

In addition 63% of men but only 36% of women claimed to spend more than one hour per month on LA activities (not significant) and half the men but none of the women had contacted an LA representative in the last twelve months ($\phi=0.586$ but small numbers make this unreliable)

This same pattern is implied by ability to name LA officials (Q56 and Q57), as shown in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Percentage Of LA Members Able To Name Officials

a local officer			
	men	women	all
	(N=11)	(N=11)	(N=22)
gave a correct name	73%	27%	59%
could not give name	27%	55%	41%
	(not signif.)		Binomial (.5)p<.001
a national officer			
	men	women	all
	(N=11)	(N=11)	(N=22)
gave a correct name	73%	36%	55%
could not give name	27%	64%	45%
	(noit signif.)		Binomial (.5)p<.001

In contrast with the situation regarding union officials, LA national officers are as well known as local officers, suggesting a different pattern of participation in which the local unit has a lower profile.

Regarding constraints on professional activity, Table 8.5 summarises the answers to an open question which asked "What limits your participation in LA affairs?" (Q55). The pattern of responses is similar to that for the responses to the same question asked about union participation, with the exception that none of the LA members mentioned lack of information or opportunity.

Table 8.5 Limitations On Professional Activity

(N=22)

personal constraints (eg lack of time)	46%
lack of interest	41%
work constraints	32%
LA policy or approach	14%
nothing	5%

There would seem to be a similar lack of interest and commitment on the part of many members. One member commented:

"I would be much more ready to go to a librarianship meeting"

but another said:

"The LA is so public-library oriented that it is useless for academic librarians"

Once again, there are striking differences in the responses of men and women: 64% of women but only 9% of men quoted lack of interest as a limitation on their professional activity.

Thirty-two percent of LA members were satisfied or very satisfied with the LA and 50% were not (Q61) (K-S(N) $Z=1.53$ $p=.018$). Effectiveness (or lack of it) and LA policies were the most often cited reasons, approximately equally by those who were satisfied and dissatisfied (Q62). Only the satisfied group mentioned communication. Only the dissatisfied group were concerned about the LA's control of professional qualification and the value and cost of membership (subscriptions are based on salary). (Cells are

too small to be significant.) 89% of men but only 22% of women mentioned LA effectiveness as a reason for satisfaction or dissatisfaction ($\tau=0.341$ $\chi^2=4.037$ $p=.045$). Men were also more concerned about LA control of qualifications ($\tau=.379$ $\chi^2=4.299$ $p=.038$). Typical comments from those satisfied were:

"Doing a good job for the profession"

"It fulfils its stated function to enhance the quality of libraries and librarianship".

There were many more comments of dissatisfaction, for example:

"It's absolutely powerless to do anything for librarians"

"I feel that in a lot of ways I'm paying £50 a year just for the letters ALA after my name, and that's a lot"

"Not fighting for reasonable wage structures"

"The LA does not impinge on one's life unless you want it to"

"Don't look after members - for example accountants control the number of qualified accountants and hence salaries"

"Very little members' services - gave away the LA Library. Too much publishing - takes up revenue and does little for members. Has given up examining"

"Doesn't interest me"

and of recent policy decisions concerned with education and qualifications for librarianship and other matters two members commented on:

"LA efforts to revamp education for librarians, assuming that educational qualifications equal status...code of discipline...bureaucratic apparatus is excessive"

"My personal qualification was sold up the river. My ALA suddenly seemed worthless. I am annoyed that the LA has relinquished the examining function and the giving of qualifications. It irritated me that I had to do another qualification [obtaining a degree], not necessarily from choice, to move freely in the profession. It doesn't seem to have a proper role since it lost its examining and

qualification-awarding function. It gave away its library more or less, it doesn't act as a trade union. I'm not sure what it does for me really...I feel I have lost my sense of loyalty to the professional association"

Forty-five percent of LA members thought it easy to contact an LA representative (Q58) (K-S(N) Z=1.100 not significant).

All respondents were asked what they expected a professional organisation such as the LA to do (Q89). The results are summarised in Table 8.6.

Table 8.6 Expectations Of Professional Organisations
all respondents
(N=51)

protect members	41%
maintain standards	35%
provide literature and information	27%
represent profession	25%
training and education	25%
other	14%
dont know	20%

The purely professional expectations were represented by the LA members who answered:

"To be responsible for ensuring that standards of education and training for the profession are adequate; to establish standards of professional work; to represent the profession at a national level"

"To bring together like-minded people"

"To set professional standards, to stand behind you if

you are in trouble",

but there were rather more comments suggesting expectations not very different from those of a union:

"The major thing is concentrating on getting some sort of wage structure and conditions. We get very little recognition for the hours we work"

"Like the unions it would look after members interests"

"To be responsible to members - supportive, more of a trade union role"

"To represent the views of members at a national level. Pay and conditions"

"Similar to a union. Looks after members pay and conditions"

There was one sizeable statistically significant difference between LA members and non-members: 50% of members but only 7% of non-members mentioned representing the profession ($\phi=0.490$ $\chi^2=10.073$ $p=.002$). Otherwise, one third of non-members were "don't know" whereas all the LA members had some ideas. Bearing this in mind the expectations of the two groups did not vary greatly.

LA members were asked "As LA members do you feel that you have any duties towards the LA or other members?" (Q63). 45% responded "none". The duties most frequently cited were to participate (27%) and to adopt professional standards (18%). Typical comments from those who thought that they had some duties were:

"Keep up the standards of the profession: more the profession than the Association"

"Yes, to participate in a professional cooperative venture - obviously it embodies the profession. In some ways I feel a duty towards The Library Association because it is the only thing we've got"

"Yes, to participate. You get out what you put in"

"Yes, to support it".

Far more of those who were satisfied with the LA mentioned participation.

LA members were asked why they themselves had joined (Q50). All respondents were asked why they thought their colleagues joined organisations such as the LA (Q90). The answers are summarised in Table 8.7.

Table 8.7 Reasons For Joining Professional Organisations

own reasons (LA members only) (N=22)		others' reasons LA members non- members (N=22) (N=29)	
86%	charter required for job	91%	45%
9%	colleagues were members	14%	17%
9%	professional interest	9%	21%
5%	to protect job	-	-%
-	for status	9%	31%
-	to improve salaries and conditions	5%	7%

The main reason for joining the LA is clearly that being a Chartered Librarian is thought to be required (formally or informally) for obtaining a professional job. Fewer non-members (45%) perceived this but 35% of non-members offered maintenance of status as a reason for membership (while no members offered this reason). It is clear that some non-members were not sympathetic to the notion of professionalism. There was often an emphasis on professionalism being concerned with exclusion of

non-members from that status. Typical of these responses were:

"It's their little clique, their profession"

"Everybody likes to be part of a group - it makes you feel important".

While the (clerical) non-members saw the Association mainly in terms of purely professional issues such as qualifications, standards and representing members, the members of The Library Association put a higher priority on protecting members and representing the profession of librarianship. These last two aims may in many respects come to the same thing: a concern with status based on the benefits which are thought to arise from high status.

It was clear that many members of the LA do expect their professional body to act on industrial relations matters as well as on professional issues, as foreshadowed in Hypothesis 19. There is a difficulty here for the LA that, for the reasons outlined in Chapter Two, it cannot represent its members directly, even if it wished to. The association has an urgent job of communication with its members both to inform them of the actions it is taking and to educate them into the realities of what it can achieve.

Half the members were dissatisfied with the Association, as predicted in Hypothesis 20, a considerable proportion feeling either that they did not receive value for their subscription or that they were forced to remain members by the LA's control of the recognised professional

qualification. This dissatisfaction is not surprising given the expectations of many of the members, but could be a future problem. If those younger professional staff who are not members are part of a growing trend it will be difficult for the LA to retain the membership base which provides much of the income to provide the services - services which some members already find inadequate. At present membership remains steady, but whether that means a steady density of membership of course rests on unknown employment trends.

It was the case, as suggested in Hypothesis 21, that the least active members were the most dissatisfied.

Eighty-six percent of LA members offered the need for their professional qualification as a reason for joining the professional association, a high proportion as predicted in Hypothesis 22.

The LA In The Library

Hypothesis 23 That the high rate of membership of the LA by professional staff has only modest direct effects on the work situation in libraries

Thirty-six percent of all respondents thought that the LA had no influence on the library (Q86), 27% thought that it helped to spread ideas, 21% suggested maintenance of

standards and 18% training and education as areas of influence. In general a larger (but not statistically significant) proportion of LA members than non-members made these suggestions. Seventeen percent of non-members (and no members) said that the influence of the LA tended to segregate professional and non-professional staff (again not significant). Some comments received were:

"Inculcates concepts of professionalism"

"Tends to segregate professionals and non-professionals"

"Changing the nature of jobs has involved LA suggestions in management discussions"

"Policies which all libraries conform to within general areas of work"

Two comments from Chief Librarians may be illuminating:

"Stress on standards can lead to frustration: omits the difficulty of getting resources"

"Appointees here must be members".

Thirty-eight percent of all respondents thought that the LA had no effect on the attitudes of their colleagues to their jobs (Q87), but 29% mentioned professionalism and 17% exclusiveness. Again, it was non-members who mentioned exclusiveness. Comments included:

"Yes, they see themselves as professionals"

"I must say no, because they are all professionals enough to have the same sort of attitude whether or not they were members of a professional organisation"

"More in the way they view themselves. Gives them a sense of their own importance, so that they might consider that the mundane sort of things they have to do are beneath them, but belong to an elite which shouldn't have to soil their hands"

"Knowledge of the outside world, critical ideas"

"Yes, immensely - a strongly professional view of what they do"

"Yes, they are professionals - more qualified to speak on library matters"

"Fosters a professional approach"

Eighty-seven percent of those who gave a positive answer felt that there had been no change in the amount of influence wielded by professional organisations in the last three years (Q88) (K-S (N) $Z=2.695$ $p<.001$).

While there was not evidence of very strong influence in the libraries on the part of the LA, there were some staff who perceived a stronger effect than was anticipated in Hypothesis 23. The effect of a professional body is perhaps mostly indirect, affecting general attitudes rather than specific issues. This is rather the opposite of the effects found for the trade unions, where there was little evidence of changes of attitude to people's work, but good evidence of effects on particular issues and in particular situations.

The Compatibility Of Professionalism And Trade Unionism

Hypothesis 24 That library staff find no incompatibility between professionalism and being a trade union member.

All the respondents were asked "Do you feel that membership of a professional organisation, like the LA, and of a trade union are conflicting or complementary?" (Q91). Sixty-one percent said that they were wholly or mostly

complementary and 26% said that they were wholly or mostly conflicting ($K-S(N) Z=2.616 p<.00\backslash$). Those who saw conflict offered reasons such as:

"In theory the LA protects standards and does professional things like examinations while obviously the union does not give a fig about that sort of thing..."

"I should think they are analogous in some respects: they're organisations, one of which protects people up the social scale, which would tend to emphasise divisions between employees"

"When industrial action is proposed I personally have felt in a dilemma between supporting the union and that one ought to be doing one's duties to the students"

"Union strike call versus services to students".

Those who saw the two bodies as complementary said:

"Complementary, because there has not been much overlap in the 30 years I've been in both. A good working relationship between the LA and NALGO, even though 20 years ago NALGO didn't get a minimum of AP4 for chartered librarians, which I thought was a disgrace"

"Depends on the trade union. No conflict because NALGO is not very militant".

There were no differences of view between sub-sets of the sample strong enough to support clear correlations.

Hypothesis 24, on the basis of evidence cited in Chapter Four, had expected that respondents would have no difficulty in seeing professionalism and trade union membership as compatible. While clearly at a practical level respondents did have little difficulty, it is interesting that a third saw some conflict. This perhaps reflects the conflict which many union members in service occupations may on some occasions feel between their obligation to their clients and their obligations to themselves.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

Chapter Six (pp.213-231) described the staff and their jobs. Seventy-eight percent were women, but men occupied a high proportion of senior posts. The mean age was 35. The group was well-educated with a strong motivation towards more education. The Library Association was shown still to have a strong grip on professional qualification. Professional staff were upwardly mobile, coming from predominantly working class backgrounds. Among all the staff Labour voters were strongly represented and two-thirds of the sample had a family background of trade union membership. The staff were generally content or positively satisfied with their work, with emphasis on contact with library users and the social atmosphere of the workplace as positive features. The workforce is nevertheless quite mobile, with a high proportion looking for change or promotion.

In Chapter Seven it was shown that union recognition and membership are clearly an established feature of life in the libraries surveyed. Eighty-eight percent of the sample were union members, rather as predicted in Hypothesis 1. Only one respondent out of 51 disapproved of trade unions on principle. There was considerable previous experience of union membership. The data was also consistent with Hypothesis 2, concerning changes in the density of union

membership, but insufficient to confirm the hypothesis (pp.232-235).

Hypothesis 3 suggested that union membership density is influenced by the business cycle, employer policies and government action, and establishment size. There was evidence to support all these influences (pp.235-244), with the business cycle operating via threats of job cuts arising from reduced Government funding. Two additional factors appear to play some part: previous union membership (conditionally) and the fact that colleagues are members. The small number of non-members (six) made it difficult to verify whether the factors mentioned in Hypothesis 4 - age, gender, part-time or full-time employment, and social class - have an influence on membership density (pp.235-245). Overwhelmingly, reasons for union membership relate to the attitude of the immediate working environment towards union membership rather than broader political concerns. Hence Hypothesis 5, that trade union membership may be just part of the social framework of the job, was justified (pp.235-245). As predicted in Hypothesis 6, no evidence was found of de-skilling as an influence (pp.235-246). Hypothesis 7, that union membership would be motivated by an instrumental approach focussed tightly on job issues was amply confirmed (pp.235-246).

There was a generally cautious approach to militancy, as suggested in Hypothesis 8, but staff were quite militant when faced with job losses (pp.247-251). Hypothesis 9,

predicting a predominantly sectional approach to trade union membership, and Hypothesis 10, rejecting the idea of political commitment associated with trade union membership, were strongly supported (pp.247-252). Levels of trade union participation were generally low, as forecast in Hypothesis 11 (pp.252-257).

There was considerable hostility to some aspects of trade unionism in general, as proposed in Hypothesis 12, but the hostility was balanced by an appreciation of the value of trade unions (pp.257-262). Union members did judge the success of their own union on narrow criteria of salaries, conditions and status for library staff, as predicted in Hypothesis 13 (pp.258-262). Hypothesis 14, that union office-holders would be more politically committed and more realistic than ordinary members, was not supported. Office-holders were very similar to other staff (pp.262-263).

The high rate of union membership density had, as predicted in Hypothesis 15, very little effect on the work situation in their libraries. However there were some mild effects: a greater caution on the part of management and a greater confidence on the part of the staff in resisting management proposals which they did not like (pp.263-269).

In Chapter Eight it was shown (pp.271-273) that membership of The Library Association by professional staff was as high as predicted in Hypothesis 16, and membership by

clerical staff as negligible. As forecast in Hypothesis 17, there was little evidence of changes in membership density. The expected additional and alternative memberships of Aslib and the Institute of Information Scientists did not materialise as predicted in Hypothesis 18.

The LA members did, as predicted in Hypothesis 19, expect their professional body to act on industrial relations matters as well as professional ones. Half the members were dissatisfied with the LA, as foreshadowed in Hypothesis 20. The least active members, as suggested in Hypothesis 21, were the most dissatisfied. Members belonged predominantly in order to retain their qualification as predicted in Hypothesis 22 (pp.273-283).

The high rate of membership by professional staff had only modest effects on the work situation, as proposed in Hypothesis 23, although there was some evidence of effects on particular issues (pp.284-286). While clearly at a practical level the staff found little difficulty in reconciling their professionalism and their trade union membership, a third saw some conflict (pp.286-287).

This study was begun in 1979 in a national context of apparently growing trade union influence and power. The context is very different only seven years later in 1986, with union membership dropping, various curbs on trade union rights and powers introduced by a Conservative Government, and some commentators predicting a sharp reduction in the

extent of trade union power.

In some respects the length of time it has taken to complete this project makes it more difficult to draw threads together, since the fieldwork was carried out against a background already different from that which had accompanied its planning, and since the context has changed even more thereafter. This makes it necessary to use caution in drawing conclusions for the late 1980s from evidence from 1981 or before. In other respects the lengthy time-scale combined with the dramatic changes which have taken place in the context make the study more interesting.

The study was initiated because of considerable perplexity among both library managers and the library staff about the situation of strong trade union influence which confronted them and about its causes. The aim was to discover what had fuelled the growth in apparent influence and to see what its effects really were. Harder times in the early 1980's have served to put into sharper focus than would otherwise have been the case the character of the trade unionism of library staff, since members have been confronted with tests of their support for the policies which their trade unions are pursuing on their behalf.

The extent of trade unionism in libraries, most of which are in the public sector, is undoubtedly considerable. This study brings together sufficient evidence to assert that there remains a high density of union membership. There

is no firm evidence yet of any falling off, but perhaps some indicators which could be the first signs.

The effects of that high membership density are however modest, reflecting the attitudes of the members and the dependence on factors external to libraries. The members remain as committed as ever to their work and there are signs that to the extent that libraries develop a wider and more dynamic role the commitment of the staff increases from the already high levels.

There is no evidence that the existence of well-established unions has introduced a strongly confrontational relationship between library managers and their staff. On the contrary, both parties seem in general to use the existence of the union in an integrative way for the benefit of both staff and library. At the local level the trade union in such public sector areas is only rarely at loggerheads with the management who, after all, bear little resemblance to the "capitalists" envisaged in some class analysis: the managers are in no sense seeking to increase their stock of capital. They tend to have a strong loyalty to the same professional goals as their staff and a sympathy with the aspirations of the staff. Hence it is only in a situation of financial constraint, of differing personal interpretation of the professional goals or straightforward personality clash that it is likely that major conflict may arise. Both management and staff are concerned to defend the library service, a defence which may

be difficult to disentangle in a labour-intensive occupation from defence of the interests of the staff. Even in times of cutbacks it is usually a question of managers being forced reluctantly to implement staff reductions, so that disagreement between managers and staff is likely to be more about the extent of resistance which is practical and about the strategy for handling the situation than about objectives. This could, of course, change if public authorities were to change their policies regarding redundancy: selective compulsory redundancies would be a situation which would be difficult to handle in a cooperative way.

Whether such situations will arise, if, for example, "automated librarians" became a reality, remains to be seen, but the calls made on libraries by their users seem well able to soak up whatever staff time is released by use of more efficient methods in functional processes, and as yet it is only in these processes that computerisation has been widespread. The existence of well-established trade unions has then in no way undermined relationships between managers and managed.

This is probably because the growth of trade union membership is mainly to do with encouragement from the employing authorities and the general legal and social environment. The members become members not in order to frustrate or defeat some iniquitous owner but primarily because the union is a part of the social fabric of the

enterprise and offers one way of pursuing individual and occupational job-related goals. The evidence from this study supports Blackburn, Prandy and Stewart's view that public sector trade unionism is different from private sector trade unionism. In the generally supportive public sector situation trade union membership has little connection either with "the Labour movement" or with a developing class consciousness. It is an expression of sectional (occupational) interest which is to a considerable extent shared by the relevant managers. The expression takes the form of enterprise-wide trade unions because that is the agency which is recognised by the employer and is therefore likely to be most effective. For most library staff, belonging to NALGO or NATFHE is very much a matter of an alliance for particular benefits. There are signs on the part of some library staff of a wishful longing that their professional association could achieve the same ends, but in general there is simply an acceptance of the realities of the situation. Only a minority have a strong loyalty either to the union or to the labour movement, although the concept is (sometimes fearfully) well understood.

Given this approach, the trade unionism should not be difficult for managers to deal with: only bad, inconsiderate or deliberately provocative management is likely to provoke conflict. Even in a context of cutbacks, trade union opposition may not be wholly unwelcome to the library manager.

There is no sense in which the right of managers to manage is being seriously challenged. A unionised staff may make more determined demands in respect to the manner in which they are treated. But this may be no more than a reflection of the participative climate of our times, with its emphasis on the rights of the individual rather than his obligations.

For the staff there is no danger of being swept along by extreme policies, provided that they participate to some extent in union activity. It is likely that when it really matters such participation will be forthcoming.

This view of trade unionism also explains why there is relatively little practical conflict between trade union membership and professionalism, despite a stronger than expected awareness of possibilities of conflict. It is instructive to consider the causes of conflict in the News International dispute. A serious problem of internal role conflict arises only for those library staff who put their role as trade union members above any other. Very few library staff take such a view.

Finally it is worth considering whether the field of librarianship offers any modest insights which may be helpful in the broader study of industrial relations.

One which emerges very clearly from this study is the strong influence of history on the pattern of union

organisation. While some library staff might prefer a different pattern of trade union representation to that which exists, the established pattern is difficult to alter. Once a union has successfully gained recognition for a group of workers it is very difficult for another union to gain recognition. The key conditions for such a change seem either to be that the "natural boundaries" of the area of employment are redrawn (eg changes in the controlling body or its methods of handling industrial relations, as in the Victorian example quoted in Chapter Two) or that the existing union has not consolidated its hold and has not achieved high density of membership. The natural boundaries particularly in public sector employment, often follow employer boundaries, so a widely scattered occupational group such as library staff have simply to come to terms with working through whatever variety of unions are recognised in the many employment contexts in which they are employed.

The professional association in such a context is forced by its members into a quasi-trade union role as a pressure group on the relevant trade unions, employers and on government, attempting to persuade them to deal more favourably with the claims of the particular professional group. The distinction between professional bodies and trade unions is increasingly one of degree rather than kind. As trade unions seek to represent their claims as being also on behalf of the users of the service or the product produced by their members, so professional associations have

intensified their interest in salaries, conditions of service and job protection. Both types of organisation, in their different ways, seek to gain recognition as the representative of the group concerned. However, given their respective strengths and weaknesses - the trade union has recognition by the employer but the professional body has better knowledge about and communication with its members - they can usually operate in a complementary fashion with mutual benefit.

A second point which emerges clearly is that what the trade union members are seeking from their union is a fairly narrow defence of sectional interest and protection of the individual. There is little or no sense of joining a "labour movement" along with the individual union. The approach of library staff is as instrumental as that of most other groups. Far from being proletarianised, the professional library staff in particular offered evidence of a reverse process. Some were conscious that they were modifying the attitude to work and to unionism which their parents had held and identified their different employment experience as the reason.

A third point to emphasise is this importance of environmental factors on the growth (or decline) of trade unionism. Perhaps because the sort of trade unionism described in this study is easily achieved and does not spring from struggle based on belief, commitment and harsh work experiences, such trade unionism may prove a tender

plant dependent on a favourable climate provided by employers, government and economic circumstances. It is tempting to wonder how solid the membership would prove if employers simply ceased operating the "check off" system under which union subscriptions are deducted at source by the employer from salaries, let alone if the employers applied any positive anti-union pressure.

Overall it seems clear that the most powerful determinants of the fate of trade unionism in libraries in the future will be environmental factors. A continuingly unsympathetic Government and unfavourable economic circumstances, the noticeable shift in the external environment to one in which the newer and growing industries tend to have no unions or "tame" unions which have signed "no strike" agreements, all these factors will tend to make trade union membership less common in the community at large. There is some evidence from this study both that previous union membership can have a pro-union effect and also that the trade union movement is not always good at retaining members who switch jobs, even when the new environment offers a union.

A contrary view might argue that once having had the experience of union membership, and particularly experience of industrial action, even the most instrumentally motivated of union members are to an extent turned into hardened cadres, who will not readily accept a return to a non-union situation. In support of this is the fact that each stage of

industrial action taken is for the members a psychological barrier crossed which next time will be less difficult to confront. There are also local influences within publicly funded employment which may serve to give the union a higher profile. The most notable is the shift towards a larger proportion of local bargaining, following in the case of local authority libraries from the abolition of the national grading prescription for a basic grade for librarians. There is increasing evidence that in this "deregulated" environment the unions are frequently able to negotiate better grades while local management can also achieve some of its objectives in regard to apportionment of work and staff structures. In addition, this study shows a much greater sense of the presence of the union in circumstances where jobs are threatened. These features would tend to give the union a higher local profile, provided that it is recognised by the employer and remains strong enough to be effective.

It also seems possible that trade unions will seek to achieve yet more respectability by professionalising their approach still further and seeking to embrace the interests of the purchasers or consumers of public services, while retaining the hard cutting edge of industrial action.

For the professional association it seems that the policy of a higher profile on industrial relations matters adopted by The Library Association in 1979 is the correct one in terms of responding to members' desires, although the

fruits of that policy in terms of more favourable attitudes from members were not yet apparent at the time of the interviews in 1981-82. The Report of the LA Futures Working Party is clearly also right in stressing the need to communicate what is being done on behalf of the members. The LA needs to work hard to find further ways of embedding itself in the industrial relations process following the removal of the local government grading prescription which ties grading to possession of an LA approved qualification. The survey showed very strongly the importance of this link in the reasoning of many LA members for belonging to the association. Its loss, combined with the cessation of direct examining by the LA, may well, in due course, undermine the more or less automatic membership of the LA by library staff in public libraries and public sector academic libraries. The example of lower membership density in university and special libraries makes the point. If density of membership should fall there would also be a comparable reduction in the "demonstration" effect in all areas of librarianship which applies as much to professional associations as to trade unions.

Looking beyond traditional libraries, the library profession (and The Library Association) will have to defend and to seek to extend its territory of influence in the face of the steadily changing character and balance of information transfer. While there is growing recognition of the importance of information (encapsulated in phrases such as "information is power" and "the information age") and

increasing use of information, librarians need to expand into the resulting new territory, both in new employment contexts and within established ones. The comments from respondents about the dynamism of the libraries in which they work were not wholly encouraging in this area. Not only would failure represent an opportunity missed. It could also lead to a diminution of relative influence if the area of knowledge transfer "owned" by librarians were to become even relatively a smaller part of the whole and other groups and organisations were to gain a larger foothold.

This study has characterised the scale, density and nature of the trade unionism of library staff and has cast some light on the motivations and dynamics which underly these characteristics and the relationship with professionalism. In the process it has also produced more support for the "instrumental" approach to trade unionism, and for the view that the trade unionism of the staff is very strongly influenced by environmental factors, some of which the local manager can influence. The individual members of staff appear to have a reasonably accurate idea of what trade unionism can deliver for them. They are perhaps less realistic in their expectations of their professional body. Both unions and the LA need to expend more effort on successful communication with their members about what they are doing if the bodies wish to avoid being misunderstood.

Finally, the dramatic changes which have occurred in

the world at large outside libraries in the seven years since this study was begun should warn us not to underestimate the extent of changes which are possible in the union situation, even in a relatively short time, given changing conditions and a determined government or employer.

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LIBRARY STAFF AND TRADE UNIONISM

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Ed. 7C February 1982

	Card Number	Card 1 Column
991		1
001 Interview Number	Interview Number	2-3
002 Library Type:		4
003 Library Name:		5
<hr/>		
1. <u>Trade Unions</u>		
A. <u>Current membership</u>		
1. Are you currently a member of a trade union? (Prompt: union and branch)		
004	NALGO NATFHE OTHER(specify) 1 2 7	6
005	Branch: IF 'NONE' GO TO Q. 19 (page 4)	7-8
2. Do you hold or have you ever held office in this union branch?		
006	NOW NEVER PREVIOUSLY 1 7 3	9
Details of offices and dates:		
3. How long have you been a member of this union branch?		
007	Number of years:	10-11

4. What were your reasons for joining?

(Note reply)

501-504
MR

12-15

5. Would you please tell me which of these activities the union has offered in the last twelve months?

(Coding: YES = 1; NO = 7; DONT KNOW = 8)

009	Union notices or newsletters?	16
010	elections?	17
011	ballots or referenda?	18
012	Branch meetings?	19
013	Departmental union meetings?	20
014	Social activities?	21
015	Demonstrations?	22
016	Industrial action?	23
017	Others? (specify)	24

6. What activities have you taken part in in the last twelve months?

(Coding: YES = 1; NO = 7; DON'T KNOW = 8)

018	read union communications?	25
019	voted in elections?	26
020	voted in ballots?	27
021	attended Branch meetings?	28
022	attended departmental union meetings?	29
023	attended social activities?	30
024	taken part in demonstrations?	31
025	taken part in industrial action?	32
026	any others? (specify)	33

7. Approximately how many hours per month do you spend on union affairs?

027 Number of hours:

34-36

8. Did you take more or less part in union activities in previous years?

028 more the same less
 1 2 3

37

9. What limits your participation in union affairs?
(note reply)

511-514
MR

38-41

10. Can you tell me who your departmental union reps and branch officers are?
(note names for checking)

030 department rep.

42

031 branch officer

43

11. Can you tell me the names of any national union officers?
(note names for checking)

032 names:

44

12. How easy is it to contact a union representative?

033 very easy satisfactory not entirely difficult dont know
 1 2 satisfactory 3 4 8

45

13. How many times have you done so in the last year?

034 number:

46-47

B. View of this union

14. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your union?

035	very		not	very			
	satisfied	satisfied	satisfied	dissatisfied	dont know	indifferent	
	1	2	3	4	8	7	

48

15. Why is that?
(note reply)

521-523
MR

49-51

16. As a union member, do you feel you have any duties to the union or to other members?
(note reply)

531-533
MR

52-54

17. Would you be willing to consider being a departmental representative?

038	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
	1	2	8

55

IF NO GO TO Q. 23 (page 5)

18. What circumstances would influence your willingness?

541-543
MR

56-58

GO TO Q. 23 (page 5)

C. Non-membership

19. Were you asked to join the union?

040	YES	NO	DONT KNOW
	1	7	8

59

20. Do you have any particular reason for not joining?

551-553 (note reply)
MR

60-62

21. Can you ever envisage yourself joining?

042 Never Unlikely Possibly Likely Dont know
 1 2 3 4 8

63

22. What circumstances might influence you in favour of joining?

561-563 (note reply)
MR

64-66

D. Effect of unions on the Library

23. What issues, if any, do the union representatives bring up
up with the library management?

(note reply)

571-573
MR

67-69

24. What issues, if any, ought the union representative to bring up?

(note reply)

581-583
MR

70-72

25. Does the library management consult the union?

046 YES NO DONT KNOW
 1 7 8

73

IF NO GO TO Q.27

26. What sort of things does the library management consult the union about?
(note reply)

591-593
MR

74-76

27. Does belonging to a union have any effect on the way your colleagues view their job? (Prompt - what effect?)
(note reply)

601-603
MR

77-79

Blank

80

992
049

Card
Interview Number

Card 2
Column

1

2-3

28. Does having a union branch have any effect on the attitude of library management to the library staff? (Prompt - what effect?)
(note reply)

611-613
MR

4-6

29. Has the amount of union influence in the library changed at all in the last three years?

051

more no change less dont know
1 2 3 8

7

(note details):

E. Previous membership

30. Have you ever belonged to a union before?

052	YES	NO
	1	7

8

IF NO GO TO Q. 36 (page 8)

31. Can you give me details?

(note reply)

053 & 054	Unions:
--------------	---------

9-11

055	Branches:
-----	-----------

12-13

056	dates:
-----	--------

14-15

32. Did you hold union office?

057	YES	NO
	1	7

16

33. Were you more or less active than you are now? (Note reply)

1 = more; 2 = no change; 3 = less; 8 = dont know

058

17

34. What were your impressions of the union in any previous employments compared to your present union?

059	more favourable	no change	less favourable	dont know
	1	2	3	8

18

35. Did the union have more or less influence there?

060	more	no change	less	dont know
	1	2	3	8

19

F. Trade Unions generally

36. What are your general feelings about trade unions?
(note reply)
- 621-623
MR
- 20-22
37. What do you yourself expect a union to do?
(note reply)
- 631-633
MR
- 23-25
38. Are there any matters over which an employer is legally
required to consult a trade union?
- 063
- | YES | NO | DONT KNOW |
|-----|----|-----------|
| 1 | 7 | 8 |
- 26
- If yes, specify:
39. What are the strongest influences encouraging employees
to join a trade union?
(note reply)
- 641-643
MR
- 27-29
40. How much do the following factors influence staff to join
a union?
(1 = much; 2 = some; 3 = little; 4 = not at all; 8 = dont know)
- | | | |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 065 | the employee's own social background | 1 2 3 4 8 |
| 066 | the employee's views about trade unions generally | 1 2 3 4 8 |
| 067 | recognition of the union by the employer | 1 2 3 4 8 |
| 068 | the management's attitude to the staff | 1 2 3 4 8 |
| 069 | a dispute having taken place | 1 2 3 4 8 |
- 30-34

41. Have you ever sought or received help or advice from the union?
(note reply)

651-653
MR

35-37

42. Have you ever made use of any personal services provided by
the union?

071

discount purchases insurance holidays education
1 2 3 4
other (specify)

38

43. Have you ever taken industrial action?

072

YES NO DONT KNOW
1 7 8

39

IF NO GO TO Q. 45

44. What were the issues? (note reply)

661-663
MR

40-42

GO TO Q. 46

45. Are there any issues over which you can imagine yourself
taking industrial action?
(note reply)

671-673
MR

43-45

2. Librarianship and other professional organisations

A. Current membership: general

46. Are you currently a member of any librarianship or other professional organisations? (Prompt: names)

681-684 MR	LA	IIS	OTHER: specify	None
	1	2		7

46-49

IF 'NONE' GO TO Q. 81 (page 16)

IF 'NOT LA' GO TO Q. 65 (page 13)

B. Library Association current membership

47. Do you belong to any Branches, Sections or Groups? (Prompt: which?)

691-693 MR	1.
	2.
	3.
	4.
	5.

50-55

48. Do you hold or have you ever held office in the LA?

777	NOW	NEVER	PREVIOUSLY
	1	7	3

56

--

Details of offices and dates:

49. How long have you been a member of the LA?

778	Number of years:
-----	------------------

57-58

50. What were your reasons for joining? (note reply)

701-704 4R

59-62

51. What activities has the LA offered in the last twelve months?
(Coding 1 = Yes; 7 = No; 8 = Dont Know)

- 080 periodicals, circulars?
- 081 elections?
- 082 ballots, referenda?
- 083 local meetings, courses?
- 084 other meetings, conferences?
- 085 social activities?
- 086 others? (Specify)

63-69

52. What activities have you taken part in in the last twelve months?
(Coding 1 = Yes; 7 = No; 8 = Dont Know)

- 087 read periodicals, circulars?
- 088 voted in elections?
- 089 voted in ballots, referenda?
- 090 attended meetings locally?
- 091 attended other meetings?
- 092 attended social activities?
- 093 others? (Specify)

70-76

53. Approximately how many hours per month do you spend on LA affairs?

094 Number of hours:

77-79

54. Did you take more or less part in LA activities in previous years?

095 more the same less

 1 2 3

80

--

Card 3
Column

993
096

Interview Number

1
2-3

3

55. What limits your participation in LA affairs? (Note reply)

711-714
MR

4-7

63. As a member do you feel you have any duties towards the LA or other members?
(note reply)

741-743
MR

21-23



64. Would you be willing to consider being an officer in the future?

106

YES NO DONT KNOW
1 2 8

24



IF INTERVIEWEE ONLY BELONGS TO LA GO TO Q.81 (page 16)

D. Other librarianship or professional organisations

IF INTERVIEWEE ONLY BELONGS TO ONE ENTER THIS FOR Q.65 AND
~~SO~~ TO Q.66.

65. Which organisation other than the LA are you most active in?

107

- IIS
1 2

25



66. Do you hold or have you ever held office in (the organisation)?

108

NOW NEVER PREVIOUSLY
1 7 2

26



Details of offices and dates:

67. How long have you been a member of (the organisation)?

109

Number of years:

27-28



68. What were your reasons for joining? (Note reply)

751-754
MR

29-32

0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

69. What activities has (the organisation) offered in the last twelve months?

(Coding: 1 = YES; 7 = NO; 8 = DONT KNOW)

111 periodicals, circulars
112 elections
113 ballots, referenda
114 local meetings, courses
115 other meetings, conferences
116 social activities
117 others (specify)

33-39

0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

70. What activities have you taken part in in the last twelve months?

(Coding: 1 = YES; 7 = NO; 8 = DONT KNOW)

118 read periodicals, circulars
119 voted in election
120 voted in ballots, referenda
121 attended meetings locally
122 attended meetings elsewhere
123 attended social activities
124 others (specify)

40-46

0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

71. Approximately how many hours per month do you spend on (the organisation) affairs?

125 Number of hours:

47

0

72. Did you take more or less part in activities in previous years?

126 more the same less
1 2 3

48

0

73. What limits your participation in (the organisation) activities? (Note reply)

921-924
MR

49-52

74. Can you tell me the names of any officers of (the organisation)? (Note names for checking)

128

53

75. How easy is it to contact an (organisation) representative?

129

54

very easy	satisfactory	not entirely satisfactory	difficult	dont know
1	2	3	4	8

76. Have you ever sought or received help or advice from (the organisation)? (Note reply)

761-763
MR

55-57

77. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with (the organisation)?

131

58

very satisfied	satisfied	not satisfied	very dissatisfied	dont know
1	2	3	4	8

78. Why is that? (Note reply)

771-773
MR

59-61

79. As a member, do you feel you have any duties towards (the organisation) or its members? (Note reply)

781-782
MR

62-63

80. Would you be willing to consider being an officer in the future?

134 YES NO DONT KNOW
 1 2 8

64

E. Lapsed membership and non-membership

81. Were you ever a member of any (other) professional organisation?

135 LA IIS none
 1 2 7

65

IF NO GO TO Q.83

82. Why did you leave? (Note reply)

791-793
MR

66-68

GO TO Q.85

83. Were you ever asked to join one?

157 YES NO DONT KNOW
 1 7 8

69

IF NO GO TO Q.85

84. Do you have any particular reason for not joining?

801-803
MR

70-72

85. Can you ever envisage yourself joining/rejoining?

139

Never	Unlikely	Possibly	Likely	Dont Know
1	2	3	4	8

73

F. Effect of professional organisations in the Library

86. Are there any ways in which professional organisations influence the library and your work there? (Note reply)

811-813
MR

74-76

87. Does belonging to a professional organisation have any effect on the way your colleagues view their job?
(Note reply)

821-823
MR

77-79

88. Has the amount of influence professional organisations have in the library changed at all in the last three years?

142

More	No change	Less	Dont Know
1	2	3	8

80

(Note details)

994
143

Card Number
Interview Number

Card 4
Column

1
2-3

4

F. Professional organisations generally

89. What do you expect a professional organisation to do?
(note reply)

831-833
MR

4-6

90. Why do you think your colleagues join professional organisations? (note reply)

841-843
MR

7-9

91. Do you feel that membership of a professional association, like the Library Association, and of a trade union are conflicting or complementary?

146

Conflicting ^{mostly} Conflicting ^{mostly} Complementary Complementary Dont Know
1 2 3 4 8

10

(Note details).

3. Personal Details

92. (M or F?)

147

M F
1 2

11

148

93. Are you married 1 single 2 divorced/separated 3

12

149

94. Do you have any children? (note no.)

13

95. Would you please tell me your age?
Number:

150

14-15

96. What is your post called? (note reply)

151

16

97. What is the grade of your post? (note reply)

152

17

98. Would you please briefly describe your duties? (note reply)

153 &
154

18-19

99. How long have you held this post?

155

No. of years:

20-21

100. What previous posts have you held, here or elsewhere?
(Prompt) (note reply)

156-158
159-161
162-164

Post Grade Employer Dates

22-25

26-29

30-33

101. What educational qualifications do you hold? (note reply)

165

general: None CSE 'O' level 'A' level degree further degree
 0 1 2 3 4 5

34

166	<u>librarianship:</u>	C&G	LA exams	degree	Diploma	Master's	35-36
		1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
167	<u>qualification:</u>	ALA	FLA				<input type="checkbox"/>
		1	2				

102. Are you studying for more qualifications?

	YES	NO
168	1	2

(Note details)

IF YES GO TO Q.104

103. Would you ever want to?

169	YES	NO	DONT KNOW	38
	1	2	8	<input type="checkbox"/>

104. Do you like your present job?

170	strongly like	like	dislike	strongly dislike	dont know	39
	1	2	3	4	8	<input type="checkbox"/>

105. Can you tell me about the good and bad points? (note reply)

851-853	Good:	40-42
MR		<input type="checkbox"/>

861-863	Bad:	43-45
MR		<input type="checkbox"/>

106. Do you like working in this library system?

173	strongly like	like	dislike	strongly dislike	dont know	46
	1	2	3	4	8	<input type="checkbox"/>

107. Can you tell me about the good and bad points?

(note reply)

871-873	Good:	47-49
MR		<input type="checkbox"/>

881-883	Bad:	50-52
MR		<input type="checkbox"/>

108. Can you suggest ways in which your job could be made more interesting or satisfying, - without requiring a higher grade or salary?

891-893
MR

53-55

109. Do you feel that for the work you do your salary is fair, too high or too low?

177	Too high	Fair	Too low	Dont know	56
	1	2	3	8	

110. Has the fairness of your salary, relative to pay for other jobs, changed in the last year or two.

178	become higher	Stayed same	become lower	Dont know	57
	1	2	3	8	

111. Do you feel your conditions of service - hours of work, leave arrangements etc. - are satisfactory?

179	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Dont know	58
	1	2	3	4	8	

112. How do you see your career developing? (note reply)

901-902
MR

59-60

113. What constraints may affect your career? (note reply)

911-913
MR

61-63

114. How strong is your interest in politics?
- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|----------|------|------|-----------|----|--------------------------|
| 182 | Strong | Moderate | Weak | None | Dont know | 64 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 | | |
115. How do you normally vote in national elections?
- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|---------|-------|-------|-----------|----|--------------------------|
| 183 | Labour | Liberal | Cons. | Other | Not voted | 65 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 5 | | |
116. Some people think there are different social classes in Britain. Do you agree?
- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|-----------|----|--------------------------|
| 184 | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Dont know | 66 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8 | | |
117. Where do you feel you fit?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------------|-----------|----|--------------------------|
| 185 | Upper | Upper middle | Middle | Lower middle | Lower Working | Dont know | 67 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8 | | |
118. What is or was your parent's job? (note reply)
- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--|--|--|-------|--------------------------|
| 186 | | | | | | 68-69 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----|--|--|--|--|--|-------|--------------------------|
119. Are any of your family trade union members?
- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----------|----|--------------------------|
| 187 | Yes | No | Dont know | 70 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 | 2 | 8 | | |
120. Are any of them active in their trade union?
- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----------|----|--------------------------|
| 188 | Yes | No | Dont know | 71 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 | 2 | 8 | | |
121. Roughly what proportion of your friends work in the Library?
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|-----------|----|--------------------------|
| 189 | 0 | 1-20 | 21-40 | 41-60 | 61-80 | 81-100 | none | dont know | 72 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | | |
122. Roughly what proportion of your friends are union members?
- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|-----------|----|--------------------------|
| 190 | 0 | 1-20 | 21-40 | 41-60 | 61-80 | 81-100 | none | dont know | 73 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | | |

123. Finally, are there any other comments you would like to make about the subjects we have covered or about the interviews? (note reply)

74-80

