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MEN IN MID-CAREER

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Men in mid-career:
a study of British managers
and technical specialists

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A sabbatical semester in the Yale Departments of Sociology and Administrative Sciences gave me the time to write several of the chapters and the stimulating comments of colleagues and students. I am indebted to members of the Personnel Departments of the three firms I have called Autoline, British Chemicals and Octane for purposes of this book, who have given me unstinting help. My deepest debt, of course, is to the eighty-one managers and technical specialists at Autoline and Novoplast who were respondents in field interviews on their careers.

Preface

This monograph is a product of a research programme which has been carried out since 1963 within the Management Studies group of the Department of Engineering at Cambridge University.

One set of projects in this programme began in 1964 with an exploratory study of middle-level executives and technical specialists in a large oil company, which I shall call the Octane company, carried out in collaboration with social scientists from two other universities.[1] Our study was overseen by a committee formed between the social scientists and a small group of Octane senior executives—including the head of the Personnel Department (who initiated this activity), the research and development manager, the chief medical officer and the manager of the Marketing Department. After a series of discussions between us we decided to focus on the 'preoccupations' of men at middle-level at head-quarters so far as their work and their employment with the company was concerned. We decided that we would try to do this in a way designed mainly to elicit the concerns of the staff *as spontaneously expressed* rather than secure precise answers to precise questions that we would frame in advance. A summary of the findings is presented in Chapter 1 as an introduction to the set of problems with which I am presently concerned.

The main interest of this study lay in its indications of factors governing commitment to work and of ways in which work in a large organization influences the individual's conception of himself. Our respondents did not feel that their personal resources were wanted or fully utilized or that the appraisal system of their employing organization identified and developed the most able. It appeared that several had entered their careers with over-high expectations and clear that their disappointment cast doubt on the correctness of their original job choice or the wisdom of continuing with it. On the side of the organization, it appeared that the large scale, complexity and interdependence of operations made it

[1] Professor H. Himmelweit and Professor A. Stuart, London School of Economics; Dr M. Argyle, Oxford University; and myself. At a later stage Mr R. Holmes of the London School of Economics was added to the panel. The fieldwork was conducted by Professor Himmelweit, Dr Argyle, Mr Holmes and myself.

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difficult to identify individual contributions, while the impersonality of modern 'bureaucratic' forms of administration and the highly developed division of labour made it difficult to identify with a common task or see whole tasks through to a conclusion. The results of this study were reminiscent of the alienation reported of industrial manual workers.

This exploratory project posed questions of the place of work in the personal 'identity' of the executive and specialist and the relation of work to other aspects of his life; the functions of careers as organizing themes in the life course of persons; the personal philosophies and group ideologies developed by colleagues to 'explain' their organizational fate; the interplay between the new graduate entrant into a large firm and those with whom he interacts and the significance of this for subsequent commitment to personal career and to the particular employer.

This project raised several crucial issues in my mind concerning the place of work in the life of the middle-level manager in the large organization and, in some cases, provided stimulating leads toward possible answers. But the material had the defect that it was based on a sample extremely heterogeneous in composition, ranging from men in their late twenties to men in their late forties and from men earning £1,800 per annum to those earning £3,000 per annum.[1] In addition, the main material was derived from group discussions. Rich though such discussions can be, they are often disproportionately influenced by the more vocal or articulate of those present. In these circumstances I felt that I needed to conduct a more formal investigation, starting anew in other companies, in which the population studied would be more closely specified and where there could be more systematic and detailed exploration with each respondent of the relations between his career history, the content and social context of his current job, the aspects he felt most deeply involved in, his main relations with colleagues, what he liked and disliked about his job, how far he could shape his work around his personal inclinations, what changes he might like in the content of his work, how he felt about his past career decisions, what his wishes and intentions were for the future, what his main interests were outside his job and how his job fitted into the overall pattern.

At the same time as I was working on the Octane study, my colleague Peter Duncan, Assistant Director of Research in the Management Studies group of the Cambridge University Engineering Department, was developing, with my help, a separate study of scientists in large-scale

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[1] Persons in the equivalent positions in the United States would probably be within the salary range $12,000–$20,000.

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organizations. This work was started in 1965 as a five-year project. Duncan's main aim was to study some of the consequences of the increasing employment of university-trained scientists in industrial and other applied-science work situations. He was interested in the consequences of such employment for the organizations in which scientists are employed; in the consequences for scientists as salaried employees (including possible changes of outlook, problems of adjusting aspirations to actual career opportunities, and problems of achieving adequate satisfaction); and in the effects of the growth of applied science on the development of basic science. He developed a programme of organizational case studies and individual interviews to collect first-hand field data. This was combined with a documentary study of the nationwide distribution of science graduates in different types of employment; of attitudes (as expressed in journals, periodicals, etc.) on such issues as the proper utilization of scientsts; and of career preoccupations of scientists and other technical specialists as publicly expressed.

Our interests and objectives overlapped and our shared preoccupations were the subject of constant discussion and reciprocal influence. One dominant theme in our discussions became the pressures on the employed scientist or professional in the large bureaucratically-organized industrial firm to identify himself with the applied and commercial side of the firm and his apparent willingness to do so. Our experience appeared to some extent to contradict findings of such investigators as Kornhauser and Marcson about the extent to which felt conflicts of interest and interpersonal relations existed between scientists and their administrative colleagues. This growing impression did not mean that we were reassured (as citizens) by lack of conflict: on the contrary it seemed likely to us that complete 'capture' of the scientist or professional by his employer might result in the loss of a potentially productive tension between wider social and more parochial needs.

During 1965 and 1966 I began a series of discussions with two leading industrial companies about our shared interests and the possibilities of collaboration. One, Autoline, was a large motor manufacturing firm with a famous American parent company. The other, British Chemicals Ltd, was a large, decentralized concern with whose plastics division, Novoplast, our university department already had close contact.

Autoline had originally contacted me to ask for advice on what research in industrial sociology to support and our conversations developed around the experiences they had had with social research workers and around their feeling that such research workers as they had contacted had been mainly

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motivated to try to expose them as bad employers. Meanwhile, they said, they had several internal personnel problems at the level of prospective and established executives which could conceivably be illuminated by objective study.

At about the same time, members of British Chemicals, who had known of applied projects I had undertaken with industrial firms when I was on the staff of the Tavistock Institute (1954 to 1963) approached me to ask if I could act as a consultant to them in applied behavioural science or collaborate with them in some other mutually beneficial way.

From these discussions emerged the proposal that we, on the university side, should take the opportunity of their interest to undertake at Autoline and Novoplast the more formal study of executives that seemed indicated by the 1964–5 study at Octane. This would enable us to pursue more systematically the problem of the relations of the executive and technical specialist[1] to their jobs, as adumbrated in that study, and at the same time further to examine some of the issues arising in Duncan's study. Such an investigation is, of course, not simply a matter of approaching suitable companies and asking for opportunities to study their managers. Such a study requires a high level of collaboration, a preparedness on the side of the host organization to take trouble and incur costs in time on behalf of the research workers, and a conviction that the work is both scientifically and potentially capable of producing useful, or at least thought-provoking, results. We needed considerable and intimate access to people in the organizations and could not have obtained this without very considerable investment and goodwill on both sides. It is partly because co-operation of this type is rare that systematic knowledge of executives is sparse.

We agreed that it was desirable that the work should be financed mainly by the university (in the sense of salaries of the main research workers being met) but that each company should make some financial contribution as a token of its investment in the success of the work. Accordingly, Autoline agreed to finance a junior research fellowship (which we were in the event unable to fill with a suitable candidate) and British Chemicals agreed to contribute £1,000 per annum for five years to be spent at my discretion. For our part, we agreed, in exchange for access and the collaboration described, to supply reports on findings

[1] From this point I use the term 'technical specialist' as far as possible. This is a more neutral label than 'scientist' or 'professional' and refers to formal qualification or content of job rather than occupational orientation. We wished to discover the latter rather than start by assuming or implying it.

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whenever potentially useful or interesting results became available and to discuss them with the two companies.

Neither company at any time dictated the subject of our study nor the methods we used or put any pressure on us to pursue some matter of more immediate interest or usefulness to them than issues which we ourselves chose to explore. Our likely and actual subject matter became, however, clearer and clearer as our discussions with them grew first into negotiations and then into agreement and it was abundantly clear that the topics on which we sought illumination would be of shared interest.

In one sense the choice of the two companies as research sites was fortuitous in that both had approached us. On the other hand, we had had somewhat comparable contacts during the same period with a variety of industrial and governmental organizations and it was these two relations which appeared to us to offer the best prospects for productive research.

The reasons were as follows. First, as already explained, both were prepared to offer us an unusual amount of access and collaboration. Second, both were leaders in their fields (household names in fact) and magnets for graduates seeking industrial careers. Third, both were geographically accessible to Cambridge. Fourth, both had well-known and clearly explicated personnel institutions with formal structures and operations it would be possible quickly to ascertain.

At the same time there were significant differences between the companies that would lend themselves to useful comparison. Autoline is predominantly a manufacturing company, operating an established technology. It epitomizes mass production technology where techniques are well established and usually modified only marginally from year to year. British Chemicals, on the other hand, is a science-based company which lives on the discovery and exploitation of new products and processes. It is more than science-based; in many ways it is a company of scientists. Further than this, Autoline's American parentage, and its complete takeover by its American parent some years ago, make it the epitome of the British-based company being rationalized and Americanized in its methods to fit more closely with the pattern of its parent and to make it more effective in the competitive and increasingly tough market of the motor industry. It is to Autoline that the young British graduate goes if he wants to remain in his home country but at the same time to be trained in American business methods. British Chemicals, on the other hand, is one of the first names that come to mind in England when one is thinking of prosperous, successful, secure, well established, progressive and

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'decent' industrial firms. While famous for its inventions, its new products and processes, its liberality in dealings with universities, its employment of intellectuals, its enlightened attitudes toward its workers and so on, its public reputation is for stability and security rather than for dynamism or competitive edge. In this it is a contrast with Autoline. British Chemicals are very much part of the British establishment: Autoline is part of the 'Americanizing' sector of British-based industry.

In developing a research programme on careers in large organizations my colleagues and I also thought it desirable to have a look at new graduate entrants to the same organizations, to obtain a systematic picture of the choices they were making between alternative employments, the basis on which they had made the decision to join the particular firm they had chosen, their expectations of the firm and the work, their induction period and their reaction to early experiences with the firm. It would be inaccurate directly to compare these young men with the middle-aged, middle-level managers as if the latter were the same people twenty years on, since social circumstances, opportunities, education, firms, jobs and so on have all changed so much since the older men were new recruits in their late teens or early twenties. Nevertheless, the study of the younger men would have a value in its own right and might suggest some of the changes likely to occur in a man during industrial careers of the type studied. A study of this nature was accordingly developed and undertaken by Mr R. Mansfield, a member of our group, initially under my direction and subsequently independently by him with myself, among others, in the role of advisor. He also helped throughout the study of the older men.[1]

Mansfield and I together built up descriptions of the organizational structures of the two companies and of the methods they use to attract graduates, select between those who apply, induct them, place them and appraise their subsequent progress. We then carried out pilot interviews with thirteen middle-level executives and specialists and forty-one new graduate recruits. We made a report on the results to respondents and to the two personnel departments collaborating with us.

As a next step in the study of the senior men, Professor I. L. Janis of the Department of Psychology at Yale University and I developed in detail an interview schedule for use by him and myself with these men. Professor Janis and I have worked together in the past on group influence on the individual. We share interests in what I would describe as social psychological aspects of personality and personal behaviour. Since my

[1] Mansfield was first a research assistant and then Foundation for Management Education Teaching Fellow.

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academic training is in sociology and his is in psychology our outlooks tend to complement each other. He has a central interest in the subject of the resolution of post-decisional conflict and saw an opportunity here to study the thinking and circumstances of men coping with the consequences of past moves and decisions and presumably thinking out what contingencies lie ahead and how they may best meet them.[1] Professor Janis and I exchanged drafts of the interview schedule and met several times to discuss the design of the research and finalize the detailed questions and their order. We began the interview programme together in July 1967, setting out to interview representative samples of about forty salaried men aged 35–40 in each firm. He interviewed twenty-two of the eighty-one men and I the other fifty-nine. This division of labour was occasioned purely by the fact that he was able to spend only a month in the U.K. during 1967 while I could continue to interview over the remainder of the year. Since we conducted the first wave of interviews together, making certain of our own technical decisions as we went, his contribution to the actual interviews was much greater than sheer numbers suggest.

Our interview schedule is reproduced in Appendix I. Our essential approach was to invite each respondent to describe his job history, the nature of his current post and the relationships involved and to go on to discuss the positive and negative aspects of his work, the extent to which he could shape this to his own interests, the changes he would like to make in his job, the extent to which he felt his company had him rightly placed, his ambitions and expectations for the future, the steps he felt he could take to move in the direction he desired, and the place of his work in the overall pattern of his life.

In studying the results of our interviews, readers may be helped by knowing what field problems we expected and encountered and what steps we took to try to deal with these.

Our access to the firms had been carefully negotiated so as to minimize misunderstandings about our objectives and methods. But these negotiations were, of course, conducted with only a small number of managers and these were mainly men senior to those whom we were going to interview. The main field problems would naturally lie in the relationship with our actual respondents. One of our central concerns was to avoid respondents identifying us with their managements, and particularly with personnel staff who might be regarded as particularly important so far as

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[1] His findings on these aspects of the study will be published separately.

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promotion opportunities were concerned. This could result in deliberate or, more likely, unwitting attempts by the men to impress us with their abilities and promotability or to avoid criticisms which could conceivably boomerang on them. We wanted to manifest our independence as research workers. But at the same time we wanted to indicate that our study had the support of management. The fact that we did have their support would be obvious from the very fact that they were giving us access and arranging the interviews. The issue, however, was exactly what type of support we were receiving from management and what the implications were for the way in which the men would behave. The main steps we took to anticipate problems were as follows. First, we drafted a letter to go to each potential respondent and stated in it the aim of the study and the nature of our institutional bases. Second, when we interviewed, Professor Janis and I had notices on our doors which were headed 'Cambridge University Management Studies Group' and then either 'Professor I. L. Janis' or 'Dr C. Sofer'. Third, we repeated in our introductory remarks at the start of each interview, the aims of the study and the relative roles of the management and ourselves. We tried to communicate the fact that we were independent and that our objective was to contribute to scientific knowledge of managers and technical specialists in large firms. If necessary we spent up to about twenty minutes getting this quite clear. We explained that the major costs of the study were being borne by Cambridge University but that their firms had made contributions to our research funds as an expression of their interest in our work. Their senior managements and we hoped that our results would have some long-term operational implications for them but it was not our central task to produce useful information for immediate action, nor had we been called in as consultants to deal with some specific problem. Fourth, we had, of course, tried to design our interview schedule and assumed that we could conduct our interviews in a way that would make it clear that we would be equally receptive to whatever information and attitudes the respondent would care to volunteer— whether or not it was the sort of thing his management might like to hear him say. We allowed up to about half an hour at the end of the interview for an open discussion of anything the man himself wanted to bring up. Finally, we assured each respondent that what he said would not be reported in a way that would make it possible for him to be identified and undertook to circulate to him a document that would report our major findings.

We felt that on the whole we achieved a reasonable degree of objec-

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tivity, given the problems attendant on fieldwork of this type. Certainly the great majority of respondents seemed quite relaxed as the interview proceeded, even if they did show some doubt or tension at the start. We think that this was partly a result of what we actually said and what we communicated implicitly in our behaviour but was a response also to the sequence of the questions in the interview, which was increasingly to encourage the respondent to view his work within the framework of his life course. This seemed to succeed in making it clear that our central aim was to understand the place of work and career when viewed as part of a person's total range of activities, rather than to assess the person or to study attitudes specific to Autoline and Novoplast.

We had rather more problems in the Autoline fieldwork than at Novoplast. We had to work a little harder there to distinguish ourselves from management and to convince the men that we were not going to emerge with specific recommendations or comment on them personally. It is possible that we did not altogether succeed in this and that our results were slightly biased by the felt need to convince us that they were ambitious and company-centred. My own feeling, however, is that such distortion was marginal. I base these conclusions partly on the relationship we appeared to achieve with the men, but largely on the internal consistency in central themes of the records of the interviews when we analysed them. A second field difficulty at Autoline was that, despite internal rehearsals and a pilot run, some of our questions proved a little too abstract for the men and required on-the-spot elaboration and greater specification. A final special problem in the Autoline interviews was that several of the men were keenly conscious of recent redundancies at management level, and worried by a coming reorganization which, they felt, could affect them closely. One result may have been a tendency to be especially critical of the firm. These circumstances did have one obvious specific effect. Our question 'Do you expect to continue in your present position?' had been intended mainly to inform the interviewer whether the man was talking about his work from the viewpoint of someone beginning, in the middle of, or coming toward the end of an assignment. Instead it yielded the information for several of the Autoline men that they were fearful that they might lose their jobs. Another specific feature of the Autoline interviews was that these reflected the preoccupations of many of the men with the implications for them of the company's recently-instituted policy of recruiting graduate management trainees. Fortunately, our invitation to the men toward the end of the formal part of the interview to draw our attention to any matter so far not taken

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adequately into account provided a suitable opening for this and the extra half-hour provided for open discussion was often devoted mainly to this subject.

At Novoplast we were helped somewhat by the fact that so many of our respondents were, or had been, research workers themselves. This meant that they were sympathetic in principle to scientific inquiry, though, like many physical scientists, sometimes sceptical of the procedures or outcome of social research.

The structure of this book is as follows. Chapter 1 consists of a precis of findings in the exploration at Octane. This sets the stage for the types of problems encountered by those whose task it is to staff large organizations and those who work in them.

I have brought together in Chapters 2–7 the leading social science literature bearing on the use of people as organizational resources, the career as a personal experience, the bureaucratized organization as a work environment, the functions and significance of work for the person and the notion of commonalities in the personalities of executives. That framework should help the reader to evaluate the significance of the empirical data later reported and particularly to help him decide how general the reported phenomena are likely to be and how far they are specific to the three organizations studied because of their own special characteristics. This material was assembled before the completion of the analysis of the empirical studies of Autoline and Novoplast.

The scope of the review of the literature is broader than that of the empirical inquiry at Autoline and Novoplast and I do not draw in my discussion of findings on everything that has gone before. For several reasons I have decided to present the literature review fairly fully. First, it is as much a product of my studies as the field material. Secondly, I think that the extended review I present is necessary to understand careers in large organizations. Thirdly, I want the reader to have the opportunity to relate the field data I report to parts of the theory of the subject other than those I finally emphasize if he feels these are more relevant or offer more economical explanations.

Chapter 8 and those that follow consist of a description of the Autoline and Novoplast companies and a report on the two representative samples of managers and technical specialists which we studied in each of them.[1]

[1] In discussing the statistical results yielded by the studies at Autoline and Novoplast I refer at several points to the existence of a relationship between two attributes in one of these samples or to a difference between the results obtained in the two companies. In some

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In the light of the pilot study at Octane and the review of relevant literature it is possible to say broadly what I expected to find in those firms, where my expectations were correct, where they proved to be wrong, and, in some cases, to suggest explanations for the differences.

My expectations were as follows. Apart from their instrumental function in providing income their jobs would matter deeply to the men and would be perceived and experienced by them as an important part of their lives.

The aspects of their work that they found particularly important would include self-expression (validation of identity), control over and responsibility for tasks and resources, membership of an occupational community or group of interacting colleagues, opportunities for recognition, learning, growth and self-actualization. The men would be actively concerned to make an impact on their work environment or on their wider social environments through their employing organizations.

Problems would be experienced by them in relating their work inputs to organizational outputs and in having such contributions appreciated by colleagues and seniors.

The men would be actively concerned with the fit or absence of fit between what they felt their abilities, capacities and interests to be, the type of work actually made available to them in their jobs, and the extent to which they could control what they did. Because of the importance of self-expression this would be a central factor in their evaluation of their jobs and in their efforts to determine their placements.

In regard to relations with seniors those men in line positions would tend to identify themselves with them but technical specialists would complain about closeness of control. In relations with peers, rivalry and competitiveness would be apparent alongside expressions of appreciation of group life. Relations with subordinates and juniors would be seen mainly as instrumental to the tasks of the men in the sample: a detached and impersonal view would be taken of them.

The men would evaluate their work experience within a time perspective that would include a review of the past and an assessment of what the future would hold for them. In making this evaluation they would emphasize the importance to them of having moved or being able in the future to move to work which was intrinsically rewarding or in which

cases the relationship is obvious from inspection. In other cases, where I state that a significant relationship exists this means that I have reworked the data into a 2×2 contingency table and calculated the value of χ^2 as a simple test of association, and that the value of χ^2 yielded was at a level likely to have been reached by chance in 5% of cases or fewer.

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they could manifest their identities and make an impact on their en-
vironment and be recognized as people who were effective.

The men would want secure futures coupled with recognition, in the
form of promotion, of change and growth which they felt would take place
in themselves.

Their evaluation of their occupational lives would involve comparison
with the occupational fate of significant others, within or outside the
same organization, of approximately the same age category. In the case
of the technical specialists more regard would be paid to reference groups
and associations outside their employing organization.

The men would expect to be able to plan and manage their own careers
to a significant extent and would explicitly or implicitly employ certain
strategies to achieve their objectives. On the whole these could be ex-
pected to be fairly active strategies, especially among those whose careers
were predominantly executive, given the sorts of characteristics likely to
be possessed by such men.

In regard to the types of behaviour or performance perceived as likely
to lead to promotion the men would see a connection between successful
performance and promotion, but would regard the connection as loose.
That is, they would mention the prevalence of such factors as chance,
uneven visibility, variability in judgments of superiors, and the implica-
tions of being in successful and unsuccessful departments. They would
be sensitive to the possibility that success in handling themselves in
relations with peers and superiors would be a factor in promotion, but
ambivalence would be present about the ethics of such behaviour and the
possibility that this would lead to hypocrisy in their relations with
colleagues.

The men would expect their employers to take great care to ascertain
and use their talents. While they would dislike being regarded as re-
sources toward 'organizational' ends and being appraised and 'processed'
for those purposes, this would probably be outweighed by the desire to
have their personal resources recognized and used. Accordingly, satis-
factory experiences with formal or informal personnel institutions,
especially those involving recognition, development and use of personal
talents, would be key variables in determining satisfaction with the
employing organization.

Contingencies would occur in the personal development of the men, in
the management of their careers by others and in the fate of their employ-
ing organizations that would bring upon some of them occupational fates
they would not wish. In so far as a proportion of the men had not got

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what they wanted or felt they might not get what they wanted in the challenge of their work, in status or in advancement, they would develop personal attitudes and shared ideologies that would purport to explain why this had happened or could happen. These theories would be of a kind that would help to protect the person's evaluation of himself, and might well be inconsistent with those ideas which their seniors tried to promulgate.

The relations of the men with their employing organizations would be characterized by ambivalence. This could be expected in view of (a) their dependence on the organization for acceptance, recognition, development, (b) the fact that they constituted resources to be used for 'organizational ends' other than their own welfare, (c) their commitment to particular occupational identities and inevitable problems of fit and lack of fit between these identities and organizational requirements.

A key role would be played by primary groups of colleagues in mediating between individual needs and 'the company' as a larger social system.

We could expect to find important differences between our two samples of men. The technical specialists at Novoplast would be more likely to experience their jobs as an important part of their lives, to emphasize autonomy and colleagueship, to rate their achievements and conditions of work in terms of reference groups external to their employing organizations.

They would be less concerned to make an impact on their immediate organizational environment and to advance up the organizational ladder and more concerned with satisfactions intrinsic to their work.

The men at Novoplast would be less identified with the commercial effectiveness of their employing organizations and more concerned with the quality of their own personal work.

Special problems would be reported by the technical specialists between themselves and those responsible for the economic efficiency of the firm in regard to the extent to which they could choose their tasks, the extent to which these should be relevant to the short-term profitability of the firm, the extent to which the results they achieved should be confidential and the extent to which they were controlled or constrained by non-scientist administrators.

It becomes evident in the chapters that deal with the field study that a major difference between the empirical field findings and my expectations relates to the place of advancement within the organization. This emerged as a central preoccupation at both Autoline and Novoplast. It

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became evident to me that I had not fully appreciated the extent of pre-occupation with this issue and that it has not received adequate attention in the literature that I had brought together to review.

Accordingly I devote a large part of the concluding chapters of the book to a discussion of probable and possible reasons for the prevalence of ambition for promotion among members of the sample. I draw here partly on the studies I have conducted, partly on sociological and social psychological theories whose relevance to careers in large-scale organiza-tions I had not adequately appreciated beforehand. My discussion is largely tentative and speculative and I hope that my emerging hypothesis on this important social phenomenon will form the subject of further research.

I conclude the book with a conceptualization of the interaction which appears to ensue between person, colleague group and organization during the course of a career in a large organization. I emphasize that phenomena of the sort I have reported are outcomes of protracted social processes and are responses to what has happened in the past and what is likely to happen in the future, rather than being reflections only of a current situation.