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**The Impact of Labor-Management Relations on  
Urban Mass Transit Performance:  
Notes on Research in Progress**

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## ABSTRACT

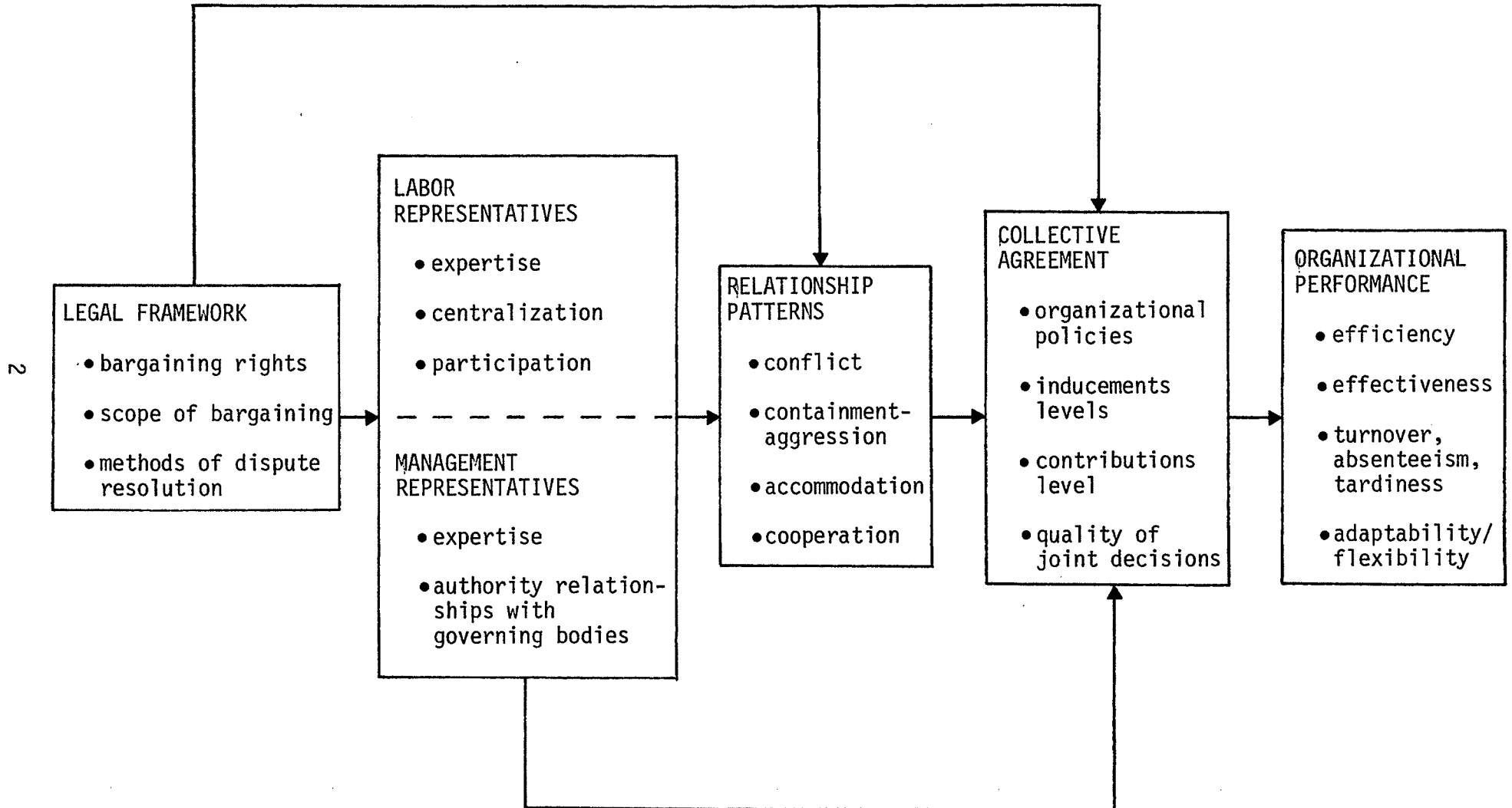
This paper reports initial impressions from a year-long study which is investigating associations between labor-management relations and organizational performance in urban mass transit. Five areas are discussed: the legal framework, labor and management organization for bargaining, relationship patterns, the collective agreement, and the performance indicators. In many cases the impressions are based upon observations at a substantial majority of 28 public transit organizations visited. In some instances the discussion draws attention to situations which, though infrequent, may merit attention from labor, management, and industry officials.

## INTRODUCTION

A critical component of the operation of urban mass transit organizations, like organizations in many other industries, is the management of labor relations. This view is well-supported by a number of recent assessments of labor-management relations in urban transit (e.g. Jennings, Smith, and Traynham, 1976; Meyer & Gomez - Ibanez, 1977; U.S. Department of Transportation, 1975). Aside from some very general notions among practitioners, however, our understanding of the processes by which labor-management relations impact transit property performance remains essentially conjectural.

This paper reports initial impressions from a year-long study which is investigating associations between labor-management relations and organizational performance in urban mass transit. The systems model which guides the research (Perry, Berkes, Angle, Spendolini, and Pittel, 1977) is presented in Figure 1. Variations in relevant indicators of organizational performance are being associated with a complex set of determinants, each of which is an aspect of the labor-management situation (i.e. the legal framework; labor and management's organization for bargaining; relationship patterns; and the collective agreement). These determinants comprise either operating parameters or constraints, which influence overall transit organization performance. Organizational performance, in turn, is conceptualized as a combination of four key factors: efficiency; effectiveness; turnover, absenteeism and tardiness (employee withdrawal); and adaptability/flexibility.<sup>1</sup> The data collection plan for the study was designed to acquire both objective and impressionistic data

Figure 1. A Systems Model of Labor-Management Relations and Urban Mass Transit Performance



in each of the above conceptual areas.

Our impressions were formed during site visits to 28 public transit organizations from August to December, 1977. The organizations we visited were grouped within a radius of 250 miles and well-distributed along a number of important dimensions, including a continuum of labor-management relationship patterns (i.e. cooperation, accommodation, containment-aggression).<sup>2</sup> Serviced populations ranged from 18,000 to more than one million. The sample included public transit organizations associated with nearly every conceivable type of labor organization: international transit unions, industrial unions, and independent employee associations. The sample also included several transit properties whose employees were not represented by a formal employee organization.

This report is organized around the five categories distinguished in Figure 1: the legal framework, labor and management organization for bargaining, relationship patterns, the collective agreement, and the performance indicators. It discusses observed relationships between the explanatory variables and organizational performance as well as some processes which may underlie linkages between the labor-management situation and transit performance. We should emphasize that the impressions reported here precede formal quantitative tests of the system of relationships depicted in Figure 1. They were gathered by amassing the subjective impressions of the researchers which had been recorded immediately upon completion of each site visit and later transcribed. In some cases the findings represent general impressions based upon observations at a substantial majority of the sites visited. In other

instances the discussion draws attention to situations which, though infrequent, may merit attention from labor, management, and industry officials. Of course, these observations are subject to modification upon analysis of the objective data collected at the sites.

#### LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legal framework governing the bargaining relationship at a transit property is usually composed of federal and state statutes and local ordinances. These statutes prescribe broad rules for establishing and conducting labor-management interaction. Such statutes ordinarily contain provisions governing the recognition of labor organizations, the scope of bargaining, methods of dispute resolution, and rights of the parties. Interviews were conducted with the official most familiar with these statutes at each transit property concerning the nature of the legal framework and how regulations and constraints written into statute were actually interpreted.

#### *Section 13(c) of the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964*

We hypothesized that there would be no differences in transit organization performance attributable to whether or not a 13(c) agreement was in effect. The ostensible purpose of 13(c) is to protect transit employees from any reduction in their status because of federal funding. In essence, 13(c) requires, as a precondition to receiving federal funds, certification by the Secretary of Labor that the interests of employees will not be harmed. Accordingly, 13(c) has been widely criticized by transit industry officials on the grounds that the protection provided goes far beyond preservation of

mere bargaining rights and, in fact, limits opportunities to improve transit performance.

Interviews with a wide range of labor-relations officials yielded widespread consensus that the adverse impact of 13(c) is more a potential problem than a reality. No instances were uncovered in which protections guaranteed by a 13(c) agreement were accorded an employee because of the adverse impact of federal funding. Several management officials suggested that 13(c) protections would probably not be invoked in the future since management was fully aware of 13(c) protections and could "manage its way around them."

Considerable ambiguity appears to exist over the circumstances which might lead to a 13(c) judgment. Many of the individuals we interviewed associated continuing growth of their organizations with the avoidance of any 13(c) difficulties. Most did not distinguish between the implications of reductions in employee welfare attributable to 13(c) and reductions attributable to circumstances other than federal funding, such as layoffs due to a contracting market for transit. It appeared that some managers equated any reductions in employment or employee welfare with the protections contained in their 13(c) agreement.

While 13(c) did not have the impact about which a great deal of industry concern has been expressed, it has had some impacts. In several instances the general reluctance of transit property officials to accede to the provisions of the standard 13(c) agreement resulted in substantial delays in signing an agreement. The resulting delay in certification caused the loss of substantial



interest on federal monies. While only one actual instance was uncovered where federal funding had actually been foregone interviews at other sites indicated that city officials had signed only under duress and that the potential for actual loss of funds at other locations was very real. It appears that the extent of federal intervention into the internal prerogatives of municipalities may be rather distasteful, wherever the culture favors local political autonomy.

We also uncovered a substantial wave of opinion that the provisions of 13(c) are so ambiguous that any actual confrontation may result in years of litigation before the specific intent of various provisions has been sorted out. If such a situation transpires, any actual impact of 13(c) upon organizational performance may be forestalled for a long time.

#### *Interpretation/Comprehension of Applicable Statutes*

It appears that the legal rules governing labor-management relations have less impact than we had anticipated. Although the statutes and ordinances regulating collective bargaining were unambiguous, we encountered only moderate levels of managerial familiarity with the laws. With a few notable exceptions, management officials who presumably, given their position, should have been knowledgeable about the legal constraints were unfamiliar with key provisions of the statutes.

This lack of familiarity with the legal framework for labor relations often resulted in significant differences between objective legal constraints and operative constraints. For example,

negotiated union security provisions in several instances extended beyond the boundaries allowed by law. While this variation between the statute and the "rules" at the property appeared to be the result of lack of familiarity with the statute, there was no apparent influence on performance.

Perhaps more important than the observed differences between formal and actual policies was the fact that the legal provisions and the processes controlled by them (unit determination, unfair labor practices) did not become significant points of conflict between the parties. A great deal more attention was paid by labor and management to the immediate rules of the relationship (the collective agreement) than to the more general state and local legal framework. This lack of attention to the statutory framework was, in part, probably a function of the age of some of the relationships and a lack of any cases of extreme conflict in our sample. It may also indicate that in the public sector the legal framework is much less important as a rule-setting mechanism than in the private sector.

#### LABOR AND MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION AND EXPERTISE IN THE BARGAINING RELATIONSHIP

This area of investigation focuses on a number of significant issues. Included are concerns over the comparability of organization and practices between public- and private-sector collective bargaining arrangements; the effects of size, centralization/decentralization, locus of power, authority relationship, and type of bargaining unit on overall effectiveness; and qualifications and training of

negotiators and staff specialists.

*Bargaining Unit Structure*

The bargaining units in our sample can be characterized along two dimensions. The first dimension represents whether the bargaining unit is a transit-specific or a general purpose labor organization. The second dimension reflects whether the bargaining unit is part of a formal labor union or an employee association. Cross-classifying these types of bargaining units produces a four-cell typology as depicted in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Types of Bargaining Units in the Sample

	Employee Association	Union
Transit Specific	Transit specific employee association (N = 2)	Transit specific union (N = 12)
General Purpose	General purpose employee association (N = 3)	General purpose union (N = 5)

The number in the cells represent the frequency of this type of bargaining unit in the sample. This table shows that transit specific unions dominate the sample. Non-transit specific unions

are encountered less frequently. Employee associations, both transit specific and general purpose, are relatively infrequent. In general, employees in larger transit organizations tend to be represented by both transit specific unions and employee associations. Independent transit authorities tended to be organized by a transit specific labor organization; those properties located within a municipal government tended to be organized by more general purpose unions or associations.

Related to this general typology of bargaining units, several general impressions were obtained during the site visits. Transit employees expressed dissatisfaction with the responsiveness to non-wage issues of general purpose bargaining units. Areas of concern in this context were issues of traffic safety provisions, protective measures for driver security (e.g. alarm systems, driver shields) and scheduling/working hours arrangements. These issues are either peculiar to transit operations or are general issues with aspects that differ significantly when applied to transit operations. Based on the number of comments received from employees, there is reason to believe that general purpose bargaining units have substantially less expertise than transit specific units to accurately assess and deal with transit employees' needs. Similar complaints were relatively rare at sites having transit-specific unions or associations.

Further affirmation of this observation was gathered from comments of leaders of general purpose labor organizations concerning their transit oriented constituency. These leaders frequently saw the demands of transit employees as unrealistic. Labor officials

further suggested that membership ratios and percentage of meeting attendance were much lower for transit personnel than for other employees not involved in transit, but organized within the same bargaining unit. Some of these comments suggest that the nature of work in transit may lead to social isolation from other fellow bargaining unit members in general purpose units.

Such concerns are not limited to general purpose labor organizations. Some labor organizations, with domains which encompass the entire transportation sector, encounter similar problems, since their sphere of organizational activity is not exclusively urban mass transit. While this type of union may be more familiar with the concerns of public transit operators than, for instance, a clerical union, a communication and knowledge gap may still exist. Again, issues which are salient to urban transit employees may not be fully understood and appreciated by general purpose units.

Turning to the second dimension in Table 1, there appears to be distinct differences between bargaining units organized by unions and those represented by employee associations. First, employees generally preferred to be represented by unions (as the N's in the cells indicate) for the expertise and "muscle" they brought to the collective bargaining process. Representatives of unions also tended to be more at ease with their roles as negotiators because, as full-time union employees, they had no conflicts with their work role. Employee association representatives, who were usually also full-time coach operators, expressed discomfort with their dual role and seemed to lack equal footing with their management

counterparts. Concern was expressed that exchanges in the context of their role as labor representative might create conflicts in the simultaneous employee-employer relationship. On the other hand, participation in union or employee association activities was one sign of leadership that management frequently used in searching for potential managerial talent among rank-and-file transit employees.

Several conclusions may be made about the above two dimensions of bargaining unit organization and their impact on labor-management relationships. First, transit specific labor organizations are more effective in dealing with transit related issues than the general purpose organizations. Coach operators tend to be isolated members of general purpose labor organizations, thus further limiting the responsiveness of these types of labor organization to the needs of transit operators. It is more difficult to make a definite conclusion concerning any overall advantages of employee associations or formal unions in dealing with management. Several contingent relationships intervene to make each type of organization appropriate to the particular transit operation. For example, employee associations tend to be most effective when located in a small, decentralized transit operation, and when there is strong local leadership. Formal unions tend to operate best in larger, more hierarchically structured transit operations.

#### *Characteristics of Transit Management*

General managers of the sites visited can be grouped into two categories. First, there are the long time transit professionals,

who have had years of transit experience at several levels. Second, and a smaller proportion of the sample, are managers who are new to transit and whose education and experience have been in other fields. In a few cases, the latter category of manager seems to have been brought in to fill an immediate need, caused by the precipitous departure of the former manager. The relatively large proportion of properties that have recently experienced such turbulence suggests that public transit may be a high-mortality occupational area at the general manager level. At this time, we are unable to generalize about which, if any, of the two managerial types are more effective in labor-management relations. In both categories, we encountered managers who appeared highly effective, as well as managers who left much to be desired. It is very obvious, however, that substantial transit experience is not a necessary condition for high effectiveness. In most cases, the ability to relate effectively to subordinates and to manage people was much more critical than the experience factor. In several instances experienced transit managers were having considerable difficulty in communicating with their employees. It appeared that much of this difficulty was a result of the manager failing to adapt to "changing times." At those transit sites where our initial impressions lead us to believe that the detailed data analysis will show a deteriorated labor-management situation, the principal theme presented by several disgruntled drivers who volunteered their opinions seemed to be "nobody listens to us." It may be that an experienced manager who thinks he knows what is happening in his

organization, is less effective than a novice who is willing to listen to advice. In terms of developing and maintaining a constructive working relationship with labor, the latter may have the advantage.

One other feature of transit management appears significant, partly because it reflects an asserted difference between the public and private sectors. The traditional "clear break" between management-level employees and union members that exists in the private sector is not apparent in public transit. In several cases, management personnel were either recently resigned or current members of the union or employee association. One transit manager confides that he would not hesitate to ask the union to support him were he to develop a grievance against the municipality. In another case, it appears that management considers the bargaining unit to be a good screening device for managerial talent, and has recently promoted some former officers in the bargaining unit into management ranks. There was no obvious association between the extent of management-union member differentiation and transit performance at the organizations visited.

### *Bargaining Practices*

We also encountered widely differing patterns of organization and staffing for the labor relations function. Many organizations relied upon specialists within the employee relations or personnel departments to negotiate and administer labor agreements. Some organizations delegated labor relations functions to generalists



within the chief executive's office. A smaller proportion had little or no in-house capabilities and turned to outside consultants.

For both labor and management, bargaining and dispute resolution takes place between designated representatives of the larger groups. These delegates may find themselves in something of a double-bind when trying to simultaneously meet all of the conflicting demands of the bargaining situation. The extent to which the negotiators on both sides perceive a need to maintain a long-term working relationship with their opponent should strongly influence the extent to which resolution of that conflict will be balanced or one-sided.

A limited comparison of recent bargaining history of the sites we visited lends support to the contention that more decentralized bargaining leads to a more integrative relationship. That is, where the negotiators are individuals who have in the past, and must in the future, maintain an ongoing working relationship, there is pressure to reach agreement and find common ground for communication. On the other hand, where bargaining is centralized and labor negotiators are "experts" who are brought in, either from union regional or international offices, or as hired consultants to management, the participants are freer to act in a relatively one-sided manner. Some indication was seen that bargaining under centralized circumstances also seems to engender some of the classic ritualistic sparring that takes place between labor and management before serious negotiating begins.

Another variant seems to be the basic posture which management takes in establishing negotiations. We asked all managers whether

their organization presented any initial demands to the union during the most recent negotiations (i.e. prepared demands beyond those in response to union demands). There was polarity of opinion regarding the use of this procedure. While some managers believed management should always make preemptive demands at the outset, others stated that management should never pursue this practice since it tends to begin negotiations with a conflictual tone. Although it has not yet been possible to follow up this lead with a systematic comparison of organizations following these basic negotiating policies, we expect to find some interesting contrasts.

Among bargaining units there were variations in the extent to which negotiating demands are generated from the "bottom up" or from the "top down." Limited observations indicated that a participative system, where union demands are generated from within the rank and file, may result in snarled negotiations, unless some means exist to consolidate and reconcile all of the diverse (and sometimes conflicting) demands into a consistent and coherent package. When this is not accomplished, union decision making is often crippled and a great potential exists for serious impasses. When this occurs both labor and management interests suffer because labor is unable to deal effectively with management proposals and negotiations become deadlocked.

#### *The Internal Labor Situation*

In a similar vein, it appears there is an optimal balance of power between labor and management which is conducive to effectiveness.

In those cases where the union leadership had been ineffective in representing employee interests, we found low employee morale and an uncertain and unstable labor-management situation. Low morale is not only likely to lead to costly employee behaviors, such as turnover, tardiness and absenteeism, but union leadership may find it necessary to make visible and tangible facesaving demonstrations to their members. The net effect is the adoption of a "hard line" toward management with an ensuing shift toward the identification of distributive issues and away from the definition of common problems.

#### THE LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP PATTERN

A premise of our study is that each bargaining relationship can be characterized by a quasi-stable relationship pattern defined in terms of the extent of conflict in the relationship. Borrowing in part from Walton and McKersie (1965), three categories were defined that could be rank-ordered along a conflict--cooperation continuum: cooperation, accommodation, and containment-aggression. Although more extreme patterns theoretically exist, (e.g. conflict and collusion) we did not expect to observe, nor did we, any which fell outside of the three categories above.<sup>3</sup>

Characterization of each of the visited properties as to their position on the conflict-cooperation scale must await detailed analysis of the data collected at each property. However, several preliminary observations appear warranted.

### *The Role of Middle Level Personnel*

The relationship pattern may result not from any official policy on the part of either union or management, or even from personal preferences of top officials on either side, but rather from the idiosyncrasies of middle-level personnel. Individuals at the locus of interface between labor and management can take actions that influence the relationship without the sanction or even the knowledge of persons in positions of authority.

### *The Effects of "Get Out the Work" Norms*

The "get out the work" orientation of middle-level supervision can result in practices that exacerbate the employees' dissatisfaction with management, even when these practices are in violation of established management policy. Such practices include sending drivers out on vehicles which are "marginally" safe and scheduling drivers for more consecutive driving hours than are safe. (The point that top management never learns about many middle and lower management activities was illustrated by instances observed in the present study including a run that was simply never put on the road, and driver changeover taking place somewhere on the route, rather than at the terminal as scheduled. In neither case was top management aware of the deviations from their policies, leading one to wonder how many decisions directly affecting the overall labor-management relationship are removed in a similar manner from top management's hands.)

### *Union Politics*

There may be some tendency for minor union leaders to use their positional power to further personal or political ends that are not necessarily embraced by higher leadership. In two locations both rank-and-file members and city officials indicated that the goals of the union local had become intertwined with ethnic causes. In one municipality, in particular, it was alleged that the local leadership of the transit union was in process of coalescing with local leadership of several other non-transit unions, in order to further their common ethnic-based goals with city government. Here again is evidence of lower-level impact on an overall relationship pattern, that goes beyond the intentions of legitimate authority.

While evidence is far too scant to make an assertive statement to the effect that "manufactured conflict" exists, there were scattered incidents which indicated that conflict may occasionally be engineered for secondary gains. In one location where the union leadership was in apparent disfavor with the membership, the union took management to arbitration over a relatively minor issue in order to create an issue with which to rally the rank-and-file. In another instance, one union official objected to the presence of the team of investigators for this study, not because of any objection to the study, but because management had failed to notify the membership in writing.

### THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

This study views the labor-management agreement from several

perspectives, including its function as a document embodying organizational policies (jointly determined by labor and management) and as a set of inducements to employees for their efforts as well as the contributions expected from them.

*The Collective Agreement and Organizational Policies*

*Work Rules.* As we expected, wide differences were encountered in the extent to which work rules were formalized. One specific item on the archival collection plan serves to illustrate this point. The question concerned the number of disciplinary actions carried out for schedule violations. The wide variety of responses encountered induced the researchers to question each organization more deeply about the policy regarding maximum allowable deviance from schedules. At one extreme, was a written policy requiring maintenance of schedule within plus or minus 30 seconds of scheduled arrival time, with a minute allowed if the stop involved an exchange of drivers. At the other extreme was total lack of any policy. Here the attitude was "We'll consider any case on its own merits." In between were various combinations, for example, "zero 'hot' time allowed, but we'll discipline for lateness only if it gets extreme."

While every transit property had written rules in one form or another, the extent of formalization of these rules varied considerably. In some instances personnel manuals had not been updated in years and no one paid any attention to the manual. In at least two organizations labor-management negotiations annually

resulted in a set of changes to the old agreement, but new agreements with the revisions inserted were never published. In one instance the research team was unable to obtain a complete set of agreements, only the past several changes. Management indicated that some of their operating policies are not a matter of convenient record although they were certain in the policies originated in some formal agreement in years past.

*Communication.* Some organizational policies were obviously outside the scope of the collective agreement but did appear to impact employee attitudes and the general relationship pattern. For example, there was considerable variation observed in the extent to which vertical communication was formalized. One concrete indicator was the extent to which operator access to supervisory personnel was controlled. Every extreme was encountered, from a completely open dispatch room where drivers came and went at will, to soundproofed glass enclosures where outward communication with drivers was by loudspeaker and where drivers could approach supervisors only via a designated service window. The latter arrangement tended to appear in the larger organizations.

With several exceptions, operators appeared to be less satisfied overall in the organizations with more formal structures. Three cautions, however, must accompany this generalization. First, this assessment of the extent of driver satisfaction is crude, based on conversations with drivers at each location. Second, the relationship between satisfaction and structure may be spurious because of the previously mentioned association between

formalization and organization size. If there is a difference in operator satisfaction, perhaps it is more clearly associated with size than communication structure. Finally, with respect to physical layout and communication, it is not clear whether organizational policies dictate physical arrangements or whether policies are adapted to the physical plant in which a transit organization is located.

*Grievance Procedures.* The policy for grievance handling was often elusive. Each organization was able to point to a sequence of steps in the grievance resolution procedure. However, in attempting to trace the number of formal grievances initiated in the past year, it became apparent that interpretation and application of organizational policies is another matter. Defining which complaints counted as "grievances" and which did not, was a problem. Several managers were apparently unsure of what to include in the total count.

More important was how grievances were frequently handled by labor and management officials. In some instances labor and management officials placed a premium on their ability to informally handle employee grievances without resorting to contractual procedures or other established organizational policies. Handling grievances informally, however, frequently resulted in "short circuiting" benefits acquired from a formal grievance process. Informal handling of grievances often either excluded lower levels of management from being involved in resolving a situation which they had responsibility for creating and subsequently for administering or cut off one of the few avenues of upward communication



for lower level employees. In treating grievances informally, top labor and management officials also often arrived at a guid pro quo which suited their roles and interests but was at odds with the interests of the employee initiating the grievance. Furthermore, since the grievance process is also useful for clarifying uncertainties in the collective agreement or other areas of organizational procedure, perhaps the most serious potential abuse of the process occurs where labor and management officials allow grievances at the arbitration stage to "hang fire" rather than risk the establishment of a precedent detrimental to either side. In such a situation, the grievances process neither clarifies uncertainty nor serves as an acceptable communication channel.

*Extra board.* Some extreme differences were found in policies regarding the "extra board." In a few cases, the number of operators kept on hand seemed to exceed any reasonable requirement. In one large organization, in particular, there appeared to be a "feedback" system whereby management could adjust extra board strength to match changing needs. Variations in the ratio of regular to overtime operator hours worked also showed that a number of organizations were not managing their human resources very efficiently.

#### *The Collective Agreement as an Inducements - Contributions Contract*

There were wide variations in the pay scales for operators across the 28 properties visited. Direct comparisons of total compensation, however, were complicated by the differences in "mixes" of wages and fringe benefits. In a major metropolitan area sur-

rounded by several other cities having separate transit organizations, one of the organizations had a wage scale that was clearly higher than any of the others, although total compensation was probably more nearly equal. Two managers in other nearby cities stated that although their operators were actually earning as large a total package, all they could see was the gap in hourly pay. Discussions with drivers in other organizations indicated that younger drivers, in particular, may be unimpressed with balanced compensation packages, and may want to see everything they get included in the paycheck. An official in one district confided that he would like to pay a higher proportion of the total package in wages, but that statutory restrictions constrain that approach.

*Upward Communication.* Certain non-compensation issues recurred in conversations with drivers. Drivers frequently stated that they were unable to get valid suggestions considered by management (e.g. schedule modifications, bus stop locations, etc.). The general theme was that their first-hand knowledge should be valuable to management, but they are frequently expected to do their jobs and leave the thinking to management. Several drivers expressed concern that money was being wasted on empty bus runs, etc., but no one would listen. Ironically, in many cases management either needed or would have been willing to implement changes based on operator feedback had they perceived operators as valuable sources of information. In far too many organizations, however, communication and information creation were perceived as top-down processes.

*Man-in-the-Middle Syndrome.* Closely related to the first issue, was a general concern expressed by drivers that they take the brunt of the public's dissatisfaction with company policies in their face-to-face contact, but that they have no voice in formulation of those policies. They are often in the uncomfortable position of implementing policies with which they don't agree. Although the transit literature emphasizes the importance of driver attitudes on customer satisfaction (Meyer, and Gomez-Ibanez, 1977), we were impressed by the complexities of operator attitude formation. Driver attitudes toward customers appeared to be a function of driver perceptions of the quality of services, customer appreciation of transit services (and therefore their treatment of drivers) and individual driver characteristics.

*Safety.* A third very general issue was that of personal safety and driver protection. The research team encountered drivers in several sites who had been assaulted by passengers in the recent past. Two of the assaults resulted in serious injury. Silent alarm and two-way radio systems, however, are not universal. In several properties where they are not installed, drivers appeared unhappy about the situation.

*Role of Road Supervisors.* A less universal concern, but one that arose in several locations, was the issue of the role orientation of road supervisors. In a few organizations, it was alleged that the road supervisors saw their principal role as that of a disciplinarian. At those properties, drivers frequently commented that they believed the road supervisor should be someone the driver

would turn to for help and coaching rather than someone to be avoided.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: THE INDICATORS

Fielding, Glauthier and Lave (1977) developed a set of concrete indicators of service efficiency and productivity which could be applied to public mass transit organizations. This set of indicators has been adopted for use in the present study, and archival data on these indicators were collected at each property. Data collected included (but was not limited to) operational statistics; budgetary data; scheduling data; employee pay data and attendance records and demographic data. Although there were dozens of separate data elements collected, most were of the sort that would be required for normal management information or for required reports to state and federal agencies. Thus, we expected that the information would be readily available and highly standardized. As it turned out, this was not the case.

Data elements often had different meanings in different organizations. Something as straightforward as "total route miles" included variants such as one-way measures, two-way measures, overlap with other numbered routes double-counted, overlap not double-counted, etc. Similar variations in data keeping were encountered in several other data elements, making it necessary to specify, in great detail, what was required. In fact, it was not possible to collect completely comparable data in all instances.

The most surprising discovery to the researchers was the extent to which information that would presumably be needed for ongoing

management was not readily available. For example, absenteeism rates, which would appear to be necessary for establishing employee schedules, were seldom readily available. The required data were, for the most part, focused on the fiscal year 1976-1977. We frequently found that data would be collected on a short-term basis, when a particular issue became salient, and discontinued when other issues become more prominent. In addition to the "we just started to collect that" syndrome, it should also be reiterated that several transit organizations visited had newly appointed managers. In several such cases, it appeared that the predecessor did not maintain the records needed to allow complete data collection over the FY 76-77 period.

Although all the desired archival data was not available at each site, this, in itself, was informative. On a "second level" of analysis, whether or not a given data element was accurately maintained often reflected management's attitude toward the process of transit management. One specific indicator of this sort was the recording of customer complaints and compliments. There was a wide range of systematization in recording this information, and interviews with several managers verified that the extent to which these data were recorded coincided closely with the general manager's overall assessment of the extent to which customer feedback is a legitimate matter of concern.

## SUMMARY

The general impressions reported herein precede the detailed and formal analysis of the extensive data collected in the project. They are largely impressionistic. Although many of the comments are the result of repeated observations, others are based on extreme cases. There was, however, high agreement among the comments of the individuals who visited the transit properties.

## NOTES

1. The use of the terms efficiency and effectiveness represent a change from the concept labels in a previous report (Perry, et al., 1977). The change has been made to reflect the similarity between the indicators used in Fielding, Glauthier, and Lave (1977) and those used here.
2. We use the term relationship patterns to refer to several discrete patterns of labor-management interaction. These patterns can theoretically be ordered along a single continuum. At one extreme of this continuum, the basic character of the relationship is adversarial. At the opposite extreme, the relationship is collaborative.
3. We were prevented from collecting several data elements in three organizations. In two organizations, union objections prevented us from collecting certain data elements. The third organization had reached an extremely sensitive point in negotiations and both labor and management preferred postponing data collection. The situation further deteriorated in this organization and we were therefore unable to return to complete data collection. The relationship pattern in these organizations may fit one of the extreme categories but our inability to collect data will prevent us from making a determination.

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