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## UNION MEMBERSHIP ATTITUDES AND PARTICIPATION

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The strength of a union depends, in part, upon its ability to mobilize its members not only in strikes but also in policing the collective agreement, filing grievances, and serving in the capacity of union stewards or committee members. Overflow crowds at union meetings, thousands of workers demonstrating in front of city hall, or every member wearing a union button all give the impression of unity and strength. Satisfied, highly committed members are more likely to support their union in strikes or political activities and to assist in organizing campaigns. Further, satisfied members serve as living advertisements of the advantages of union membership and so help win elections as well as public support generally. The reverse occurs when member are unhappy.

### Scope of Coverage

This chapter provides an overview and critique of research dealing with union members' attitudes toward their union and their participation in it. The introduction clarifies the distinctions between attitudes and behaviors and assists in integrating the various types of research to be considered. The central sections discuss first attitudes and then participation. One concluding section critiques present research and offers suggestions for future research; A second considers the policy implications of this research.

A few caveats. First, the chapter deals with *individual* attitudes and behaviors. What unions *as a whole* do is not within the area of our focus. Secondly, to avoid overlap with other chapters, we minimize attention to such issues as why members join unions (Chapter 2) or their political activities (Chapter 9). Finally, although we refer to English language research on union members in other countries, literature in other languages is not reviewed, for example, the substantial Dutch literature cited by Klandermans (1984, 1986).

### Research Trends

Union attitudes and behaviors received considerable attention during academic industrial relations's Golden Age, especially between 1948-1953 (see: Spinrad, 1960; Strauss, 1977), but were then largely ignored in North America. Meanwhile significant studies of membership attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Batstone, Boraston and Frenkel, 1977; Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton, 1981; and Klandermans, 1984) were conducted in Europe. By contrast with North American authors, Europeans were more aware of the literature in political science and sociology and more likely to look at unions as social movements.

Since 1980 North American research interest in union members has considerably revived, especially since a younger generation of industrial relations

scholars has been trained in organizational behavior as well as economics while other social scientists, especially sociologists, have discovered unions as research-worthy organizations. Further, unions, which were once quite suspicious of the social sciences, have become increasingly aware and accepting of the value of sensitively conducted studies of membership attitudes.

Although many of these newer studies address old issues (e.g., "dual allegiance," now called "dual commitment"), they do so in terms of newer theoretical perspectives (e.g., union benefits as public goods). Some studies use concepts such as involvement, satisfaction, and commitment, which were originally developed in the context of employer-employee relationships. Others examine previously unexplored issues such as how members evaluate grievance procedures or how new members are socialized into the union. In general, these studies are methodologically more sophisticated than were their predecessors. Further, by contrast with earlier reliance on interviews and observation of the membership behavior, contemporary membership studies are based almost entirely on questionnaire surveys.

### Attitudes, Intentions, and Behaviors

The term "behavioral" has been applied to this new wave of research, but this term is somewhat of a misnomer. In reality, a very large share of "behavioral" studies focus more on members' "attitudes" and "beliefs" than on their actual behaviors. Further, while at one time it was believed that attitudes and behavior were closely linked, a growing psychological literature suggests that this link is not always strong or necessarily direct.

The "theory of reasoned action" (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) provides a useful approach to analyzing the complex relationship between attitudes and behaviors, for example in studying voting patterns in union representation elections (for references and applications see Chapter 2 and Montgomery, 1989). Two key points in this theory are relevant to the union. First, *behavioral intention*. A behavioral intention is not a measure of members' actual behavior but more of their expressed "willingness" or predisposition to engage in a particular form of union participation. Second, the theory stresses the role of "subjective norms" or social pressures, the roles played by the opinions of others (e.g., friends, family, and coworkers) in both formulating attitudes and in transforming these attitudes into behavioral intentions and actual behavior. As will be illustrated later, this theory is somewhat central to our analysis.

Regardless of the attitude or form of participation studied, research examines many of the same sets of variables. These include: demographics, i.e., age, race, gender; personality; the nature of jobs, i.e., technology, pay, seniority, etc.; technology; culture; the state of the labor-management relationship; and union structure and internal government. All seem to affect member attitudes and participation.

### ATTITUDES

#### Membership Goals

Members' *goals*, what they want from their union, are critically related to why they joined the union in the first place. These goals also affect member *satisfaction* with the union, their *commitment* to it, and their attitudinal *militancy*, topics

discussed later in this section, as well as *participation*, which is covered in the next section.

*Class vs. Job Consciousness Goals.* A major distinction can be drawn between those who view the union as a means of achieving macro-political objectives and those who have a more micro, or bread-and-butter, goal orientation. This is the old distinction between political and job conscious unionism. Goldthorpe et al., (1968) contrast those who have "internalized" British union traditions and those for whom support for the union is merely "a matter of calculation" (pp. 96-97). For the first, the "union has often represented more ... than simply a means of economic betterment; it has also been seen as a form of collective action in which solidarity was an end as well as a means and as a socio-political movement aiming at radical changes in industrial institutions and in the structure of society generally." (p. 107). But this may be more more a matter of community than political consciousness. The "traditional" British worker often lived around the mill. Neighbors worked together, went to pub and/or chapel together, and attended union meetings together. For this group the union was not a business selling services (see Piore, chapter 11) but a social organization expressing community solidarity. By contrast, those with calculative orientations are "little interested in being members of a plant community ... [and so also favor a] limited function trade union ... which concentrates its activities almost exclusively on their economic protection" (p. 109).

Class consciousness has been a matter of concern for many European scholars, not just Marxists (Beynon and Blackburn, 1972; Goldthorpe et al., 1968; Van de Vall, 1970). The greater emphasis given to this topic in Europe may reflect different scholarly traditions or differences in the real world.

The concept of class consciousness is poorly defined and has had "a tortuous history" (Lockwood, 1958, p. 13). In investigating the subject, scholars find what they expect, depending on their political predilections. In some cases, "class consciousness" means identification with the working class as a whole. In other instances, it means alienation from the job or just hostility to management. Or, in the case of the "traditional" worker just described, it may mean only community solidarity against the outside world. If class consciousness means merely that workers and managers have different interests, then few unionists are not class conscious to some degree.

In any case, it seems reasonably clear that, compared with European unionists, those in North America look upon unionism more as an insurance policy than an instrument in the class struggle or even as a social movement. Although a majority of North American members may approve of their unions taking a political position, they view political action to be generally low priority.

During the 1970s and early 1980s British scholars debated two, possibly complementary, issues. The first was whether the growth of white-collar and professional unions provided evidence of the "proleterianization" of these workers (Crompton and Jones, 1984; Kelley, 1980). The second was traditional blue-collar workers' alleged "embourgeoisement" (Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1963) or loss of class identity. Today, however, scholarly preoccupation with class may be declining overseas, especially as Marxism is losing its appeal to practicing unionists.

Aside from political and job consciousness, there is a third possible orientation that may be characteristic of professional unionists. This is that the union should be a partner with management in organizational governance. Some professional

associations, such as faculty unions, want to do more than merely bargain: they want to govern.

*Bargaining Priorities.* Recent years have seen numerous US and Canadian studies which examine member preferences among alternative economic and non-economic bargaining goals (Giles and Holley, 1978; Kochan, 1979; Kochan, Katz, and McKersie, 1986; Dworkin et al., 1988). For the most part, these studies confirm North American workers' strong focus on traditional "bread-and-butter" bargaining goals. Items such as wages, fringe benefits, health insurance, and job security consistently rank at the top of the members' list of priorities. Job content and quality of work life issues come lower down. Political goals are quite low.

Aside from goals themselves, members distinguish among methods which might be used to achieve these goals. In the U.S., traditional forms of collective bargaining are viewed as the appropriate vehicle for the attaining of "bread-and-butter" goals, while job content and quality of work life issues are more often seen as the subject matter for less traditional joint union-management committees (Dyer, Lipsky, and Kochan, 1977; Ponack and Fraser, 1979). Although the past decade has seen the rapid growth of joint union-management committees and mutual problem solving there is little evidence, one way or another, as to whether these developments have changed members' views as to appropriate goals or methods.

Comparative analyses of the goals of union members in various countries are few. In an increasingly dated study, Form (1973) identified economic and job security issues to be the primary goal of union members across four countries (U.S., Italy, Argentina, and India), but he also found significant differences between countries with regard to workers' expectations of the union's role in promoting social unity. We need more such studies.

*Role of union leadership.* The ability of a union to meet its members' expectations depends on whether union leaders effectively evaluate membership needs. Often they do not. Studies in a variety of countries, for example, rather consistently agree that union leaders generally overemphasize membership demands for pay and security as contrasted with other needs (Dufty, 1979; Gluskinos and Kestelman, 1971; Howells and Woodfield, 1970; Howells and Brosnan, 1972; Martin and Magenau, 1985). Goldthorpe et al. (1968) suggested that assessing worker needs may become increasingly difficult for union leaders as the workers' interests expand beyond an occupational focus and to their role in the family or the community.

There are several explanations of why union officials fail to understand what their members want. One is the notion of "assumed similarity," union officials' belief that the interests of the general membership must be similar to their own and therefore there is no need to investigate them separately (Howells and Brosnan, 1972). Yet in fact their perspectives are often different. Union leaders tend to be politically more radical than rank and file members but more conservative and realistic in terms of their bargaining expectations (Dufty and Fells, 1989). Further member-officer communications may be poor. Howells and Woodfield (1970) suggest that in local unions where well developed mechanisms exist for communication between union officials and the membership, union leaders more accurately assessed membership goals than in locals with less formal internal communication systems. Given these problems it is understandable that unions are using surveys increasingly to find out what their members want.

Member-leader communications are not entirely one-way. Union leaders are in a strong position to influence what their members want, although as yet there have been few formal studies as to how this occurs. Berger, Olson, and Boudreau (1983) suggest that unions alter members goals by making particular issues, such as wages and supervision, more visible and salient.

How well unions meet members' goals and expectations is closely related to their satisfaction with the union, a topic to which we now turn.

### Satisfaction with the Union

Despite many studies of workers' satisfaction with their jobs and employers, members' satisfaction with their union has received surprisingly little scholarly attention. The studies that have been done vary considerably in scope and methodology. Some researchers study union satisfaction through *global* measures such as the member's overall satisfaction with being a member or with the union's overall performance. An alternative strategy examines union satisfaction with various *facets* or specific dimensions of union performance, for example, wages, fringes, intrinsic job issues, feedback from union, or handling grievances (Kochan, 1979). Each facet can be examined individually or summed to form an overall index of union satisfaction. A third approach measures satisfaction in terms of the *discrepancy* between what a member feels the union should be doing in a particular area or facet and what the member perceives the union as actually doing. The extent to which expectations are consistent with perceived union performance represents a measure of satisfaction. Still another distinction can be made between studies of particular unions or locals and those that sample union membership nationally.

According to national global surveys, the vast majority of members are satisfied with their unions and have a strong desire to retain union membership (e.g., Fiorito, Gallagher, and Fukami, 1988; Hills, 1985; Kochan, 1979; Kochan, Katz, and McKersie 1986; Kochan, Katz, and Mower, 1984). Nevertheless, levels of satisfaction vary, depending on the issue in question. In general, members are more satisfied with union performance on traditional bread and butter bargaining issues (i.e., wages and benefits) than with quality of work life issues (Fiorito, Gallagher and Fukami, 1988; Kochan, 1979; Kochan, Katz and Mower, 1984). They are least satisfied with what Kochan (1979) calls "union administration," i.e., internal member -union relations. In a national survey utilizing the discrepancy approach, Fiorito Gallagher, and Fukami (1988) found that membership satisfaction was heavily dependent on positive perceptions of good internal relationships. Studies by Glick, Mirvis, and Harder (1977) and Jarley, Kuruvilla, and Casteel (1990) came to similar conclusions, the later being a comparative survey of union members in the U.S. and Sweden. In a large multi-plant study, Leicht (1989) found that members' satisfaction with their union and the extent to which they participated in it was related to their perceptions that the union was internally democratic.

One way of interpreting the evidence of dissatisfaction with union leadership is to suggest that just as citizens may love their country but be unhappy with its political leadership, so union members may be less satisfied with their officers than they are with their union. Indeed leaders may be viewed as a self-interested clique, and consequently the members may look upon the union as "they," not "we" (Sayles and Strauss, 1953).

The centrality of a member's perceptions of the quality of representation as a determinant of union satisfaction emerges in studies of grievance systems. Gordon and Fryxell (1989) found that member satisfaction with union performance in grievance handling was less a function of whether the member actually won his or her grievance than it was of perceptions of the grievance procedure's "procedural fairness" and the quality of union representation provided. In short, overall union satisfaction is, in part, a function of the extent to which union leaders are perceived as effectively protecting procedural workplace rights. Members care as much about process as they do about outcomes.

British and the U.S. studies also found considerable member dissatisfaction with their union's political activities (Rosen and Rosen, 1955; Form, 1973; Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton, 1981), especially since officers were perceived as being more liberal than the rank-and-file. Further, members feel considerable ambivalence about the union's economic and political strength, with some feeling that the union may actually be too strong -- what Kochan (1979; see also Goldthorpe, 1968) calls the "Big Labor" image -- this despite the fact that many members vote for unions precisely because they are seen as strong (see Fiorito, 1987).

### **Union Commitment**

During the late 1970s and 1980s many researchers examined membership commitment to their union. Much of this research involved the application to unions of concepts and models previously developed with regard to the employer-employee relations. This research is easily divided into two primary areas of focus: commitment to the union, and "dual commitment" to both the union and employer organizations.

*Relationship to Satisfaction.* Although often found to be statistically related to each other, the concepts of satisfaction and commitment represent two different constructs or dimensions of a worker's attitudes. Thus a member may value the union highly but be dissatisfied with it because it doesn't meet his or her expectations.

Commitment is a basic underlying measure of the extent to which an individual accepts or identifies with the goals and values of the broader organization (March and Simon, 1958; Porter et al., 1974). It is a global or affective response to the organization as a whole (Mowday, Porter, and Steers, 1982), while job satisfaction has been approached largely in terms of a worker's attitudes toward more specific and often tangible aspects of the job. Satisfaction and commitment have also been distinguished in terms of the manner in which the two constructs are formed. Satisfaction has been characterized as being more transitory in nature (i.e., susceptible to changes in the immediate work environment). In contrast, commitment is believed to be more deep seated and stable (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982; Brooke, Russell, and Price, 1988). Commitment develops more slowly than satisfaction, since it is concerned with organizational goals and values rather than the immediate job circumstances. Commitment to an organization may reflect both attitudes which an individual holds prior to entering an organization and the cumulative effects of experiences with the organization over time. The practical distinction between union satisfaction and commitment is illustrated by Klandermans's (1989) study of Dutch workers which found that commitment is a stronger predictor of union turnover (quitting the union) than is union satisfaction.

*Commitment to the Union.* The employer-employee commitment literature examines the nature and consequences of commitment from a number of different perspectives. Commitment or attachment to an organization has been viewed in terms of: (1) an affective or moral attachment by the individual to the goals of the organization; (2) a more calculative or instrumental relationship in which individuals remain attached to organizations only as long as personal expectations or needs are met; or (3) attitudinal justification of past behaviors (i.e., once a member voluntarily joins a union, the member then adjusts his or her attitude toward the union to justify the act of joining; thus a member who supported a union in an NLRB election -- perhaps at the risk of employer retaliation -- is more likely to be committed than someone who is forced to join by a union shop).

In the 1980s union commitment researchers began asking whether the concept of organizational commitment, originally developed in the context of commitment to the employer, might also be applied to unions and possibly other kinds of organizations. Major academic interest in this subject began with the Gordon et al. (1980) pioneering use of factor analysis to develop four specific dimensions of union commitment. Each dimension reflects either a specific underlying worker attachment to the union or implications for membership behaviors. *Belief in Unions* represents a form of "moral" commitment to the importance of unionism. Such moral commitment may be suggestive of Tagliacozzo and Seidman's (1956) "ideological" and "good union" man (Gordon et al., 1980 p. 495). *Union Loyalty* relates pride and loyalty in the union with a recognition of the benefits derived from membership; conceptually, this ties into the notion of "calculative" commitment. Both *Willingness to Work for the Union* and *Responsibility to the Union* represent behavioral intentions or the propensity to act on behalf of the union. The primary distinction between these two dimensions rests in the level of personal cost associated with the behavior (i.e., holding a union office as opposed to filing a grievance). In a broader sense, these four dimensions fit into the theory of reasoned action, most notably since they suggest a potential sequential linkage between beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions.

Much of the union commitment research has been devoted to reexamining and validating these four dimensions. Studies have been conducted in the U.S. (Thacker, Fields, and Tetrick, 1989; Friedman and Harvey, 1986), South Africa (Fullagar, 1986), Sweden (Kuruvilla, 1989), Australia (Savery, Soutar, and Dufty, in press), and in the Netherlands (Klandermans, 1989). These studies have generally either confirmed the Gordon et al. (1980) approach or have proposed a more parsimonious (fewer factors) representation of commitment. Despite potential differences in the dimensionality of commitment, the cross-national research, taken as a whole, suggests that the instrument, developed in the U.S., may be equally useful in other countries.

A number of studies have sought to identify the circumstances under which union commitment is high. (For a good discussion of the theory and potential correlates of union commitment, see Fullagar and Barling, 1987). Evaluating and comparing these studies is difficult because few use the same questions to measure "union commitment." However, three general patterns appear to exist.

First, union commitment appears to be closely related to another concept, union "instrumentality," the belief that the union can be used as a means for achieving desired ends (Thacker and Fields, 1986; Martin and Peterson, 1987; Sherer and Morishima, 1989; Fullagar and Barling, 1989). Although such findings suggest a calculative attachment to the union, the relative scarcity of longitudinal



studies makes it difficult to determine the direction of the causal relationship. Do positive instrumentality perceptions *lead* to higher commitment? Or do members with high commitment to the union tend to perceive the union as instrumental? A longitudinal South African study (Fullagar and Barling 1989) suggests that instrumentality may operate as an intervening or moderating variable between satisfaction and loyalty. Black union members who were dissatisfied with the political aspects of their lives expressed higher levels of loyalty when the union organization was perceived as being instrumental for bringing about change. Fullagar and Barling concluded that a more pronounced relationship between union loyalty and union instrumentality for black, rather than white unionists reflected black members' limited access to alternative voice mechanisms.

Second, social influences affect commitment. Loyalty to, and belief in, unionism appear, in part, to be shaped by both the attitudes of one's family and the feelings one develops toward the union during one's first year of membership (Gordon et al., 1980). Members who have parents or friends with strong pro-union views are more likely to be committed to the union (Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton, 1981).

Finally, there is some evidence that commitment, like satisfaction with the union, is tied to members views of the fairness of the grievance procedure (not necessarily how effective it is) and their knowledge of how it works (Clark and Gallagher, 1989)

*Dual Commitment.* Dual commitment research traces its roots back to the "dual allegiance" studies of the 1950s. These early studies investigated the extent to which union members perceived conflict between their roles as union members and as employees (e.g., Dean, 1954; Purcell, 1954; Stagner, 1954). Contrary to conventional wisdom, members who were most satisfied with the company tended also to be more satisfied with their union. Further, dual allegiance was most pronounced when union-management relations were positive and workers were better integrated into the workplace community. Workers with high dual allegiance were more productive, had higher union meeting attendance records, and the like (for a recent British study, see Edwards and Heery, 1989).

Growing research interest in union commitment and the importance of joint union-management cooperative programs have recently spurred studies which reexamined dual allegiance, now called dual commitment. More recent research has examined the interrelationship between the two separate measures of commitment, the older scale measuring organizational (employer) commitment and the newer ones which measure union commitment (for a review, see Gordon and Ladd, 1990). These studies have produced rather ambivalent results. On one hand, the research generally confirms the findings of earlier dual-allegiance studies, for example that more positive union-management relations are associated with higher levels of positive commitment to both organizations. The research also suggests that dual commitment may be less widespread than it was perceived to be more than three decades ago (this may, in part, reflect greater recent research attention to white collar unions than the blue collar emphasis of the 1950s).

On the other hand, the research has had only limited success identifying factors, other than union-management relations, which may simultaneously contribute to the *development* of (as opposed to being the result of) both forms of commitment. Indeed many factors which are correlated with organizational commitment appear not to be correlated with union commitment, even when

"parallel [research] models" are utilized (e.g., Fukami and Larson, 1984; Sherer and Morishima, 1989; and Jeong, 1990). Further, Magenau, Martin, and Peterson (1988) suggest that the patterns and correlates of dual commitment differ between union stewards and rank-and-file members.

Gordon and Ladd (1990) question whether the interrelationship between two variables (union and employer commitment) actually represents a true measure of the construct of dual commitment. They conclude that unless a more meaningful and psychometrically sound measure of dual commitment is developed, one which actually predicts some relevant outcomes, future dual commitment research may not be fruitful. Indeed, as Gallagher et al. (1988) found in Japanese research, the correlational measure of dual commitment may be both conceptually and empirically misleading.

### **Militancy**

Studies of union member and union officer militancy have been conducted in a number of countries, perhaps more outside the U.S. than within it. Most have involved professional and white-collar workers, especially nurses and teachers. This interest in measuring the extent of white-collar and professional militancy has reflected the process by which white-collar and professional associations throughout the world have transformed themselves from little more than social and insurance organizations into true unions that engage in bargaining and strikes, a process which British scholars have called the development of "unionism" (Blackburn and Prandy, 1965; Crompton, 1979).

Research has looked at both individual-member militancy and that of specific unions. Three kinds of individual militancy have been studied: (1) attitudes toward the *appropriateness* of various forms of militant action in general (e.g., "Should unions be allowed to strike?"), (2) *behavioral intentions* or expressed willingness to engage in a particular action (e.g., "If asked, I would be willing to serve on picket line duty", Donnenwerth and Cox, 1978), and (3) *actual militant behaviors* by individual members. An example of this last type of study is Gramm and Schnell's (1989) comparison of football players who crossed the picket line during the most recent NFL strike with those who respected it. This last type of militancy is of course also a form of participation.

Given these various definitions of militancy, it is difficult to draw clear comparisons between studies. The following are among the presumed determinants of militancy which have been studied.

*Demography.* Many studies examine the influence of demographic variables -- such as age, sex, and education -- on militancy; however, there is little consistency among the findings (Griffin, 1985). Indeed demographic variables may be merely "markers" for other factors, such as relative deprivation, need fulfillment, and occupational investments (Martin, 1986; Hoyman and Stallworth, 1987). For example, though some (not all) studies find women to be less militant than men, this may depend on their feelings of relative deprivation. British female school teachers, for example, were found to be less militant than male teachers, perhaps because they perceived lower external wage inequity (Margerison and Elliott, 1970; for a related Israeli study see Dolan, 1979). Similarly, Gray, (1989) found militancy among female workers depended on the extent to which they held a feminist rather than a traditional role identity.

*Workplace Integration.* Further evidence of the importance of work place issues, as opposed to demographics, is provided by Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley's (1990) study of teacher propensity to take militant action with regard to workplace control. They concluded that militancy was best understood in terms of teachers' perceived integration into the school organization. Teachers who perceived little feedback, influence, and satisfaction with supervisor, along with accompanying high role conflict, were more likely to be militant. These results are consistent with other studies relating militancy to an individual's organizational decision-making influence (Feuille and Blandin, 1976; Alutto and Belasco, 1974; and Gray, 1984).

*Pay and Pay Equity.* Somewhat surprisingly, research suggests that higher paid workers are also more militant (e.g., Snarr, 1975; McShane, 1985; Donnenwerth and Cox, 1978; and Martin, 1986). Perhaps this is because they have a higher stake in their jobs (Tannenbaum, 1965) and so are more active in protecting those gains. But even more central to the pay level issue are members' perceptions of relative pay inequity (Cappelli and Sherer, 1990; Martin, 1986). Greater levels of perceived external wage inequity seem associated with higher levels of attitudinal militancy.

*Union Satisfaction and Commitment.* Correlations have been found between militancy and both satisfaction with union leaders (Martin, 1986) and commitment, though the later may be moderated by age (Black, 1983). To date, however, there has been little exploration of the relationship between militancy and *specific* dimensions of union commitment (e.g., Gordon et al., 1980) such as "responsibility to the union" or "willingness to work for the union" (but see, Savery, Souter and Dufty, in press).

*Social Influences.* Attitudes of fellow workers, friends, and family appear to influence militancy, just as they do commitment. ( Martin, 1986; McShane, 1985; Gray, 1984) In the recent NFL strike, whether professional football players respected their picket line depended in part on whether they were of the same race as their team representative (Gramm and Schnell, 1989).

*Converting Attitudes and Intentions into Behaviors.* Although McShane (1985) found a strong relationship between militant attitudes and militant intentions, there has been little research on actual militancy, i.e., who participates? who does not? and for what reasons? Neither do we know much about the extent to which actual militancy is consistent with attitudes and intentions.

The few studies that have examined member behavior during strikes (e.g. Snarr, 1975) suggest that social pressures may play an important role here too. In a study of teachers' strike, Cole (1969) found that teachers who went to work with the behavioral intent of crossing the picket line often changed their minds once faced with the peer group pressure that pickets exerted. Here there were "cross pressures" (Coles's term) between intent and social influences. Perhaps at the time they made their initial decision the intended "crossers" had failed to appreciate the impact these pressures would make.

Social pressures may be greater when members feel integrated into a closely-knit "occupational community," which may both shape the member's intentions and influence them to transform their intentions into actual behavior or participation (Nelson and Grams, 1978), the subject we consider next.

## PARTICIPATION

Attitudes and behavioral intentions may be important in shaping behaviors, but it is the behavior itself, participation -- filing grievances, going on strike, running for union office, or just paying union dues -- which has the direct impact on industrial relations.

Most forms of individual-union related behaviors can be categorized as participation. Participation was heavily studied during the U.S. industrial relations's Golden Age (Tannenbaum, 1965; Spinrad, 1960). U.S. interest declined for a while, but the subject continued to receive substantial attention in other English speaking countries (e.g., Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton, 1981). Then, beginning with Anderson (1978, 1979) U.S. interest revived. Early studies were based on union records (e.g., Goldstein, 1952), direct observation of union meetings (Sayles and Strauss, 1953), and even projective tests (Sayles, 1954). Most recent research involves questionnaires.

In early research, participation was found to be low wherever it was studied. This concerned unionists and scholars alike since it was generally agreed upon that unions would be stronger and more democratic if participation was higher. While early studies focused on union meeting attendance, it was soon recognized that other forms of participation are also relevant (Anderson, 1979). Participation includes holding an office, filing grievances, engaging in wildcat strikes, campaigning for COPE endorsed candidates, "contracting out" of a political levy in the U.K., or reading the union newspaper. Indeed, participation is not one dimension, but many (see Chapter 6).

Forms of participation have been classified in a variety of ways (Klandermans, 1986), for example, in terms of formality or frequency of the participatory acts (McShane, 1986a, 1986b; Hoyman and Stallworth, 1987). Using factor analysis to determine the relationship among various forms of participation, Gallagher, Parks, and Wetzel (1987) identified three main types of participation: *administrative* activities, such as serving as an officer or steward, running for office, and helping a member file a grievance; *intermittent* activities in which members engage only on special occasions, such as voting, attending and speaking at union meetings; and *supportive*, relatively passive, non-time consuming activities, such as discussing and encouraging support for union positions, and reading the collective agreement. As we shall see, factors explaining one form of participation may not explain another.

If we consider all these forms of participation together (not just meeting attendance), the extent of union participation may not seem as bleak as early studies had suggested. Both Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton (1981) and Klandermans (1986) note that a high percentage of members engages in at least one form of participation. Indeed, though only a relatively few hard core activists devote much time to union activity on a regular basis, in most unions a sizeable minority engage in non-time-consuming intermittent activities such as voting (especially if voting can be done by mail ballot). Further, a much larger group may file grievances or support strikes, especially when these are viewed as providing a direct payoff, either economically or in terms of peer approbation. Nevertheless, as we discuss later, low levels of administrative participation can be disturbing, since union strength depends heavily on having a strong core of activist volunteers.

### Why Members Do Participate?

Early studies divided the membership into categories based on the form and extent of the participation, for example, stalwart, troublemaker, cardholder, and alienated member (Tagliacozzo and Seidman, 1956; Child, Loveridge, and Warner, 1973; Johnston, 1974). More recent research has examined factors which may be associated with various forms of participation, for example, demography (e.g., age, gender, education, ethnicity); occupation; personality (e.g., need for involvement); community (e.g., small town versus big city); union characteristics (e.g., size of local, method of electing officers, control over the hiring process); and attitudes toward the job and management. Typical of the findings are that men are more likely to attend meetings than women, that higher status, better paid workers participate more actively than those of low status, that meeting attendance tends to be greater in small locals, and that participation of all sorts is greater when workers are socially integrated and live near each other (e.g. Kolchin and Hyclak, 1984).

Unfortunately, when examined separately, individual factors have not contributed much to our understanding of participation. Because of this researchers have increasingly sought conceptual schemes to explain not only *who* participates, but *why* they do or do not participate. A simple explanation is that members engage in a particular form of participation if they perceive it is likely to satisfy goals important to them -- and that the advantages of participating offset the costs involved (Strauss, 1977). For example, a member may attend a meeting to protest how her grievance is being processed if: she thinks there is a substantial chance of being heard; that being heard will help her win the grievance; and that the discounted value of attending the meeting (chance of being heard x the chance of being heard making a difference x the value of winning the grievance) exceeds such attendance costs as arranging for a baby sitter, missing a good TV program, or perhaps antagonizing the leadership by speaking out. In essence, this represents a net payoff theory (or "rational choice" as Klandermans, 1986, calls it) of why individuals participate. The theory involves goals, instrumentality, and perceived costs and benefits, as we discuss in turn.

*Goals.* The needs which members seek to satisfy through participation vary greatly. A member may file a grievance to express resentment toward a supervisor or for economic self-interest. A member may attend a meeting because she thinks this will advance the cause of the working class, because of peer pressure, or solely because it gives her a chance to meet with friends.

These diverse goals may be classified as either "expressive" or "instrumental." Expressive goals are those satisfied *through* participating in the activity itself, such as the opportunity to communicate with others, exercise leadership, or be part of the decision making process. Instrumental goals are satisfied as a *result* of some union action: winning grievances, getting better pay and benefits, protecting job security, and so on. There are differences, for instance, between hard core activists who view the union as a social organization and participate to satisfy expressive (social and decisionmaking) needs and those who are more instrumentally oriented and participate only for their own economic interests (Child, Loveridge, and Warner, 1973). For activists, the union delivers moral as well as economic goods. Indeed, the reasons why members participate relate closely to their perceptions of the union's role in the workplace and society, as well as to their own personal needs.

Personality and background may also be important in understanding individual goals. Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton (1981) found that members with a high "need for involvement", including expressive, power, and affiliation needs (cf. Glick, Mirvis, and Harder, 1977), were more likely to participate, but especially so if they or their parents were active or interested in unions or left-wing politics (cf. Nydan, 1984).

*Instrumentality (likelihood of success).* Members may participate if they perceive that participatory activity will be successful in satisfying their goal(s) (Chacko, 1985). Satisfaction of expressive goals may be relatively simple for here the very act of participation is satisfying, subject, however, to the major proviso that the union is democratic and provides opportunities for the member to participate.

Participation as a means of achieving instrumental goals may be more problematic because of what economists call the "free-rider" problem. Specifically, unionism and union benefits are free, "public goods", that is, all members share in the gains from participation, but only active members bear its costs. Thus the individual member has no economic incentive to participate since he or she will enjoy the benefits of union achievements whether or not he or she actually works to get them (Olson, 1965). For instance, in the absence of a union shop why should a worker join a union or pay dues? Because of the free-rider problem union leaders have considerable difficulty in persuading members to participate. For social scientists it is equally difficult to explain from an instrumental point of view why some members do in fact participate.

Nevertheless, despite the theory, a substantial number of members participate, at least occasionally. Perhaps the best explanation for why they do this derives from "resource mobilization" theory. Klandermans' (1984) version of this theory suggests that members participate in union activities *when* they are convinced that the goal is important, that their own participation will make a difference, that others will participate, and that together they will be successful. As Klandermans (1984, p.591) concludes, "Contrary to Olson's logic, the willingness to participate in collective action appears to be strengthened by the belief that others will participate." As Edwards and Heery (1989, p.130) put it, "individual workers must be persuaded not to evaluate the cost-benefit trade-off of engaging in collective action in a purely instrumental way" (see also Offe and Wiesenthal, 1985).

Alternatively stated, a member needs to believe that "we" can succeed and that he or she is an important part of that "we." This might well be called the Vince Lombardi approach to generating union participation. It stresses group spirit, expressions of solidarity, symbols and ceremonies, and appeals to values on a non-rational level.

While resource mobilization theory has been applied to a variety of social movements such as fascism or the civil rights crusade, so far, this promising approach has been largely ignored by union researchers. Perhaps it first needs refining to be applied in a union context. After all, it is quite a jump from the rational, cold calculus of instrumental motivation to the hot reality of a militant picket line. How people are moved from one mode to the other needs more investigation.

*Costs and Benefits.* Perceived costs and benefits are obviously significant in determining whether a member will participate in a given form of union activity (Fosh, 1981). The costs of participation are many and diverse, such as the expense of hiring baby sitters, the time involved to write a grievance, the possibility of being permanently replaced as a result of strike action, or being beaten up if one opposes a corrupt union leader. Further, it is not the actual costs or gains themselves that are important, but how they are perceived by the individual and the values which are attached to them. Values among class-conscious Italian workers, for example, may be quite different than those among North American white-collar workers.

Numerous other factors may affect this cost-benefit calculus, even the union's organizational structure. As Child, Loveridge, and Waener (1973) suggest meeting attendance may be lower if branches (local unions) are organized by geography rather than by workplace, because members may conclude that the meeting is less likely to deal with issues of direct importance to them.

#### **Alternate Analytic Approaches.**

In an important contribution, Klandermans (1986) observes that the literature is dominated by three alternative "approaches" to explaining why members participate. One, *rational choice theory*, is stressed in this chapter. The second approach, *frustration-aggression theory*, views "participation as a reaction to frustration, dissatisfaction, or alienation in the work situation" (Klandermans, 1986, p. 190). This approach explains some phenomena but not others. To be sure, members participate to improve their workplace conditions. But participation represents much more than a reaction against frustration, alienation, or aggression against management. Indeed, frequent participants tend to be "outgoing," "like to deal with people," and "possess high activity" (Spinrad, 1960). Further, according to the dual commitment literature, high participants tend to feel above-average satisfaction with both their union and their job. Although members who are dissatisfied with extrinsic aspects of their jobs may be more inclined to attend meetings or vote in union elections, dissatisfied workers are less likely to participate in union administration (McShane, 1986b, see also: Kryl, 1989).

Additionally, the frustration-aggression approach fails to explain why frustrated workers turn to the union to solve their problems rather than react in some other way. Indeed, job-related frustration may lead some workers to withdraw (exit) rather than participate (voice). For example, Conlon and Gallagher (1987) studied workers in an open shop who had joined the union and then resigned. These workers were considerably less satisfied with their jobs than were workers who had never joined the union in the first place. They appeared to be satisfied with neither the union nor their job.

Klandermans' (1986) third approach, the *interactionist*, has considerable support. This approach argues that "participation is inextricably bound up with the group culture, and the individual decision to participate is influenced by the group to which the individual belongs" (1986, p. 190). Thus it is consistent with the theory of reasoned action. For example, the extent of Japanese workers' social integration into the workplace was found to be significantly related to their level of union participation (Kuruvalla, et al., 1990). Similarly U.S. studies find that structural characteristics that increase identification and communication and tie workers to specific work settings also increase participation (Sayles and Strauss, 1953; Leicht, 1989).

The interactionist approach applies particularly to participation in union governance (i.e., attending meetings, voting, running for office), rather than to non-governance activities such as filing grievances or engaging in wildcat strikes (even though participation in wildcat strikes is related to group structure; Sayles, 1958; Batstone, Boraston, and Frenkel, 1977).

### **A Conservative Cast**

Taken as a whole, these participation patterns seem to give unions a decidedly conservative cast. Compared with inactive members, active participants tend to interact frequently with fellow workers on and off the job, to enjoy high pay and status, to be satisfied with the intrinsic aspects of their jobs, and identify with their job situation and fellow workers. Thus they have high "stakes" in their present jobs. In general, they are active not because of antagonism to management but because their activity satisfies important egoistic and social needs, needs that the union can satisfy only if its members have the appropriate skills to participate. Further, better-educated, higher status members may be more comfortable in speaking out at meetings, writing grievances, and the like.

### **Participation and Satisfaction with the Union**

The foregoing factors are closely linked. Satisfaction with the union is related to a belief that the union can in fact satisfy important individual goals ("instrumentality"). The nature of their goals helps determine whether members participate. Expressively oriented members, for example, are likely to attend union meetings because they are satisfied with the union or at least find attendance satisfying (Glick, Mirvis, and Harder, 1977). Instrumentally oriented members are likely to participate only when they are dissatisfied and want to change things. Low levels of participation may mean (1) the hard core, expressively-oriented activist group is small (for reasons discussed in Chapter 6) and/or (2) instrumentally oriented members are satisfied with the levels of service the union provides *or* they conclude that their efforts to improve this service will have little payoff (i.e., that the union has low instrumentality). Actual participation is related to one measure of commitment, "willingness to work for union" (Savery, Soutar, and Dufty, in press). Thus, depending on the situation, low levels of participation may mean member satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or apathy as well as commitment or alienation. As Child, Loveridge, and Warner (1973) suggest, members can be active because the union satisfies their objectives, or because it does not; similarly, they can be inactive because they are happy with the present state of affairs or because they are completely alienated.

## **RESEARCH CRITISISMS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Measurement**

Though the proliferation of research has increased our understanding of union members' attitudes and how these attitudes may affect behaviors, many methodological and theoretical questions remain.

*Inconsistent Definition of Variables.* Comparisons among studies are hindered by differences in how dependent variables are defined. This issue was noted in our discussion of militancy and participation but it appears more subtly in commitment



research. Two points deserve attention. First, in interpreting commitment studies close attention must be given to the particular dimension(s) of commitment being studied. Since union loyalty is but one dimension of overall commitment, it is potentially misleading to compare loyalty studies with studies measuring overall commitment. A second problem arises from the use of shortened or "bobtailed" scales (Strauss and Gargano, 1988; Gallagher and Jeong, 1989). Union commitment research also illustrates this point. Gordon et al.'s (1980) initial work tested and retested approximately 48 items that captured four dimensions of commitment. Subsequent studies operationalized commitment using only three to five scale items. Although such studies report evidence of reliability, one may question the extent to which a severely truncated scale is comparable to the original construct.

*Sample Bias.* Whether by design or result, surveys of union members (especially questionnaire surveys) can be prone to sample distortion. For example, in open shop situations, studies restricted to only members may lose valuable comparisons between the attitudes and behaviors of members and nonmembers (e.g., Beynon and Blackburn, 1972; Jermier et al., 1986; Conlon and Gallagher, 1987; Gordon and Fryxell, 1989). Further, some studies are based on response rates as low as 15 to 25 percent. Even with higher rates, results and subsequent interpretations may be distorted because of the non-respondents. For example, non-respondents may feel low loyalty to the union. If a questionnaire is accompanied by a letter from union officials requesting member cooperation, a response itself may be a form of participation and a non-response may reflect a refusal to participate. Thus, findings which claim to reflect the attitudes of the membership as a whole may in fact represent only those sufficiently committed to the union to answer the questionnaire. Of course, non-response bias is a potential problem in all questionnaire research, especially in voluntary mail surveys; however, when the research focuses on dimensions such as commitment and participation, the non-response rate itself may be an important social datum.

Finally, most studies are confined to a single site or a single union. Generalization under these circumstances is difficult. Scholars should extend or replicate studies on more diverse samples.

*Stability of Measures.* Member attitudes and behaviors may not be stable over time (Klandermans 1984, 1986). Kryl (1989) noted that survey questions pertaining to participation are often limited to a fixed period of time (usually the prior 12 months). Thus, relationships are usually measured in terms of present attitudes and present behaviors. Another factor complicating cross-sectional studies is that opportunities for participation may vary from year to year. In years with contract negotiations or contested union elections, member participation may be high. In other years, commitment may not diminish, but the opportunities to participate may be fewer. Attention should also be given the extent to which the various dimensions of union commitment are consistent over time (Strauss and Gargano, 1988; Farkas and Tetrick, 1989).

Another complication: attitudes may be more stable at some stages of a career than at others. Just as workers' attitudes may be most volatile during their first year of employment, so might be the relationship between attitudes and behaviors during the first years of membership in the union. Later on, attitudes toward the union may become more stable. Consequently, longitudinal studies taken over a fairly short period (six months to a year) may not catch the more slowly developing changes in attitudes or participation or the relationship between the two.

### Research Techniques and Theories

Future research on union membership attitudes and participation can be enhanced by reconsidering our investigatory techniques, theories and variables. The following general observations are offered for consideration.

*Design.* Contemporary North American research is based largely on questionnaires and is too tied to research issues and designs which can be tested with proven and reliable survey instruments. To varying degrees, it is directed by the availability of measures rather than by an underlying theory.

Too frequently, studies merely report correlations among predetermined scales and a standard list of independent variables which are now commonly included when examining a particular phenomenon. Furthermore, many North American researchers follow a "hit-and-run" research approach: identify the appropriate scales; find a union sample; administer the survey; analyze the results; and compare the results to other findings. Although this iterative, cumulative approach is consistent with the scientific method, mere iteration is not enough. Where studies differ in their conclusions, we should make an effort to find out why.

Research ingenuity seems inhibited by the emphasis on quantitative measures and the need to meet the restrictive requirements of psychometric orthodoxy. Gaining greater understanding may require the use of research techniques that dig deeper into members' attitudes than do questionnaire surveys. As Gordon (1988) noted, questionnaire studies may overlook some of the fundamental requirements of research design. These include exploratory studies to gain familiarity with the topic, and case studies to confirm ideas about the major phenomena of interest. All this should be done before undertaking a questionnaire survey.

More multi-method research is needed. Thirty-five years after its publication, *Union Democracy* (Lipsett, Trow and Coleman, 1956) still ranks as perhaps the best study in its field. Among the study's strengths were the authors' immersion in the Typographers' history and the technology of the printing industry. Research methods included open-ended and structured interviews, mail surveys, and an extensive analysis of union archives and relevant industry data. Contemporary U.S. studies of union members lack the richness of British work, such as Batstone, Boraston, and Frenkel (1977) or Nicholson, Ursell, and Blyton (1981), both studies that combined questionnaire surveys and extensive direct observation of the unions and their membership.

Multi-method research, including interviews and case studies, has the great advantage of placing survey results in the perspective of what is actually happening at workplace- or local union-level. They alert us to factors that we might otherwise ignore and they help us understand otherwise perplexing results. Along these lines, insights can be obtained through discussions of survey findings with knowledgeable union leaders, who also can be useful in designing the survey question in the first place.

*Theory Trimming.* Current research appears to be driven by a long laundry list of theories. Some studies apply four or more theoretical models to investigate one phenomenon (e.g., Schutt, 1982). Or, in a post hoc fashion, they use a scattering of theories to explain their findings (e.g., Guest and Dewe, 1988). Though no single theory can capture the diversity of factors which influence membership attitudes

and participation, researchers should examine existing theories to determine whether they really add to our understanding or merely duplicate other concepts using different terminology. Eventually more parsimonious models should be considered. Industrial relations research is already complicated by the fact that many researchers draw their concepts from both economics and organizational behavior. If industrial relations starts borrowing more from other disciplines, such as sociology and political science (which it should), then the need to recognize excessive duplication and overlap will be even greater.

*Longitudinal Studies.* Most current union-member attitudes studies are rather static in nature. Cross-sectional surveys tell us about the relationships among variables at a given point of time, but they reveal little about *causal* relationships. Sophisticated data analysis techniques, such as path analysis, may provide us little added understanding of the true sequence of events associated with attitude formation, behavioral intentions, and actual participation. To achieve greater understanding, we again stress the need for longitudinal studies which compare attitudes over time.

Longitudinal studies may help us expand upon the pioneering work of Fullagar and Barling (1987) who sought to understand the causal linkages between attitudes and participation. However, studying causal relationships may be difficult, since these relationships may constitute a "reinforcing cycles." Attitudes contribute to behavior (or behavioral intentions); behaviors, in turn, reinforce attitudes.

More attention should also be given to the "process," the "little black box" between variables which explains how the relationships among variables are developed. Indeed the question is rarely asked. A study by Berger, Olson, and Boudreau (1983) may point in the right direction. In an effort to determine why union members report lower job satisfaction than non-members (this despite the fact that most union jobs are objectively "better") the authors highlight the role of the union in influencing both how much members expect from their jobs (i.e., they expect more pay) and the value they place on various outcomes (pay is more important). This type of analysis represents progress. Still, as Barger et al. concede, their one-period research provides us little insight as to the specific process by which members' expectations are changed. A longitudinal case study might have been useful here, as in many other studies.

Once we have examined these issues, it would be useful to link both attitudes and behaviors to other variables, such as union bargaining success.

*Diversity.* This chapter has looked at four sets of attitudes. This list fails to capture the full complexity of the role of the union in members' lives. Perhaps too much attention has been devoted to examining the relationship among specific variables (e.g., commitment and participation) and not enough to the big picture of how all these variables fit together in different situations. Too often generalizations as to the entire union movement are made on the basis of studies in a handful of unions or only one local. Greater recognition needs to be given to the rich diversity of American union life.

In other words, by reducing membership attitudes to a few quantitative dimensions, we lose the complexity of human experience. For example, the nature of commitment may vary greatly among different groups. For a fourth generation plumber who marries a plumber's daughter, commitment may be affective or moral (Etzioni, 1961) and linked to his identification with the occupation. Jewish

garment workers 60 years ago may have ascribed their union loyalty to class solidarity. It may also have reflected ethnic identification and a moral belief in socialism. A Chicano member's current loyalty to the United Farm Workers may be based on ethnic pride, satisfaction with improved working conditions, and self justification for dangers encountered during the organizing period. Collectively, all these workers may report high union commitment, but the often unanswered question in survey research is "why." They may be committed for different reasons. There may be a difference in intensity and tone among these workers which standard commitment questionnaires alone fail to capture. To supplement commitment new measures may be needed.

### Applying Research Techniques

Though more work still needs to be done to refine our techniques, the time has come to apply them to a broader set of problems.

1. There has been almost no research comparing member attitudes in different countries (exception: Form, 1973). If we are to study differences in union behavior internationally, we need to know more about the different meanings members in different countries ascribe to unions, union membership, strikes, and contracts.

2. Similarly there has been little comparative research within this country. In what industries, unions, and occupations are commitment and satisfaction with the union the greatest? Why? The rich research done on the union-related attitudes and behaviors of professionals and professional union members during the 1960s, for example, needs to be resumed -- and on a basis which compares professional unions with other kinds of unions.

3. As Brody (Chap. 8) and Piore (Chap. 11) observe, unions in the U.S. have historically been embedded in ethnic communities. Further, as suggested above, in some circumstances union commitment may be linked to ethnic consciousness. In what unions and in what occupations is this still the case? To what extent is it changing? Similarly, to what extent is commitment to craft unions linked to craft identification? To what extent do ethnic and craft unions serve the solidarity-creating function once performed by traditional British unions?

4. Unions have been on the defensive for the last 10-20 years. They have lost membership as well as economic and political clout. How has this affected member attitudes and behavior? There is psychological evidence that outside attacks sometimes strengthen internal cohesion, but that carried to extremes they lead to disintegration. Kochan and Wever (Chapter 10) suggest that as unions have lost power they may also be viewed as less instrumental and therefore less attractive to both members and nonmembers. Though intuitively obvious there is little hard evidence to support this hypothesis. Under what circumstances has adversity strengthened membership support (commitment) and when has it weakened it? Have changing circumstances changed member goals? As unions have become less effective in winning wage increases, perhaps they are more valued for their ability to press grievances.

5. We need to know more about how voluntary organizations, such as unions or PTAs differ from work organizations, especially in how they motivate their members. For example, how does "extra role behavior," a concept developed in organizational behavior to describe workers who assume tasks beyond that required by their job description, relate to union activity?

There are some problems here. Many of the concepts applied to the study of union members were originally developed in the context of how workers react to their jobs (especially organizational commitment and job satisfaction). But work organizations are reasonably central to the life of their members. By contrast, except for its own employees, the union is not itself a work organization, though its members' attitudes toward their union are heavily influenced by their attitudes toward their employer. As Thompson (1967) puts it, a union is a "captive organization." It could not exist without the employer. For most members, most of the time, a union is merely a service agency, like an insurance company. But at critical moments it is a social movement; it must be able to mobilize its members into action.

Because of these complexities caution should be the rule when translating concepts from work organizations to quasi-voluntary organizations, such as unions. For example, can job attendance be compared in any meaningful way to union meeting attendance? Neglecting one's union is less risky than neglecting one's job, a point suggested by Farrell's (1983) extension of Hirschman (1970).

6. Many of the above questions may be of more interest to academicians than to unions. More attention needs to be given to problems defined by the leadership itself. Above all, are certain union structures or policies associated with more favorable membership attitudes and participation?

#### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Researchers in this area are still sharpening their tools (though there is certainly growing interest in application -- see for example, the AFL's new journal, *Work Place Topics*, edited by Michael Gordon, which reports scholarly findings in forms useful to union leaders). Given the inconclusive and at times contradictory research findings just discussed, our policy-oriented conclusions are presented with considerable trepidation.

1. The vast majority of members are reasonably satisfied with their union. Membership satisfaction is based, in part, on how well the union meets expectations with regards to traditional collective bargaining "bread-and-butter" issues. However, to a surprising extent satisfaction is also strongly related to internal union process, for example, whether officers listen to the members, handle grievances fairly, provide feedback, and permit members to have a say in the union's governance. To keep members satisfied, democratic procedures, perceived fairness, and officer responsiveness may be as important as collective bargaining gains. "Procedural due process," adequate representation in grievance procedure may be more important than actually winning.

This should be good news for union leaders in a period when substantive collective bargaining gains are sparse. Even when unions can't win victories, they can provide skilled individual representation.

2. Communications between officers and members are often somewhat ineffective. Officers frequently misjudge their members' bargaining priorities. Well designed membership surveys which guarantee respondent anonymity can provide officials with a basic diagnostic self-evaluation of the membership's opinions and assist in meeting members' needs.

3. High levels of membership participation in internal union affairs are generally viewed as desirable. However, low participation need not mean membership dissatisfaction. There is some evidence to the contrary. Equally important, low participation in routine union activities does not necessarily indicate low membership commitment to the union (though it might). Members can hold very positive feelings of loyalty and attachment to the union (one dimension of commitment) without actively participating in it.

4. Passive loyalty is not enough, however. Most unions need a core of volunteer activists to supplement the work of their paid officers. Further, during strikes and other emergencies the entire membership needs to be mobilized for picket-line duty, rallies and the like. The ease with which normally inactive members are mobilized may depend on their level of commitment. As we have seen, commitment is a function of the values that members bring into the relationship, how they perceive themselves treated by the union once they have joined it, and the attitudes of their workplace peers. In other words, commitment involves a process of socialization. Since the first year or so of membership may be critical to the development of favorable commitment, unions should try hard to welcome and familiarize new members with union values and functioning. Further, since peer pressures are important, the new members' workplace peers should be involved in this orientation process.

5. The union's ability to mobilize its members also depends a great deal on how the members calculate the costs and benefits of participation. The literature suggests that this analysis may be quite complex. Union officials should recognize that since members may have a wide range of motivations and expectations, it is unlikely that a single approach will serve to mobilize members. Among the requisite skills for a successful union leader is the ability to influence how these various groups of constituents perceive costs and benefits of union activity.

None of the above should be surprising to experienced union leaders, yet it may be comforting to know that their educated surmises are supported by some rather primitive social science research.

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