CAN ORGANIZING WORK? AN INDUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES TOWARD UNION MEMBERSHIP

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This inductive examination of responses to open-ended questions in a 1997 survey categorizes and assesses workers' attitudes toward unions. The author's content analysis, hierarchical cluster analysis, and textual analysis of the survey responses yield several results with implications for the prospects of a union organizing strategy. Although only a minority of workers in the sample were union members, most members were committed to the union, whereas most non-members held uncommitted attitudes about joining. Some union members appeared likely to be willing and able to help with union recruitment. Respondents were more likely to be union members the greater their awareness of workplace injustice, but most of them expected unions to "deliver," and resented failed strike activity and leaders who were out of touch. The author identifies unexploited opportunities for union organizing, and believes that unions can weather their current difficulties.

The aim of this study is to investigate the critical issue of why so few workers are union members and the related problem of how to get non-members to join. In the last century's final decades, most developed nations experienced declines in union membership, with postwar density levels reaching record lows by the closing years (OECD 1997). This trend represents a worldwide crisis for trade unions.

Research on this subject has had three weaknesses. First, most existing literature is solely concerned with identifying the determinants of membership. In order for unions to develop an effective response to the membership crisis, we must understand not just why some workers are union members, but also why others leave the union or do not join. Second, many studies have employed an individual-based theoretical framework, when it seems likely that strategies for collectivization might more readily be understood from a group-based perspective. Finally, conventional approaches are deductive, using quantitative analysis

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based on scaled item responses to closed questions or proxies derived from secondary data (for example, Fullagar and Barling 1989; Klandermans 1989; Van der Veen and Klandermans 1995; Haberfeld 1995). Although this is important and rigorous work, a deductive method leaves little scope for discovery of new clues in the quest to solve a pressing problem.

This investigation employs a new approach to examine the old issue of why people join or do not join unions. Rather than posit a theory about membership decisions and then test that framework through deductive analysis of purely quantitative data such as demographic variables and responses to multiple-choice survey questions, I inductively analyze both members' and non-members' open-ended textual explanations for their membership status. I thus seek answers from workers in their own words. From my aggregation and analysis of these qualitative data—a procedure consistent with a recent call for more qualitative research in industrial relations (Whitfield and Strauss 2000)—I derive insights that can help guide the development of a strategy to deal with the critical recruitment and retention problems currently faced by trade union movements around the globe.

My approach thus avoids the three limitations of previous research mentioned above. It investigates the attitudes not only of union members, but also of workers who either have never belonged to a union or dropped out; it considers not only calculative, individual-based motivations for joining unions, but also group-based reasons; and it is not a conventional deductive, quantitative study, but an inductive analysis of open-ended textual data.

The data consist of responses to a random sample survey carried out in Victoria, Australia, in early 1997, specifically to investigate the issue of low membership. The major focus of the present study is the 1,216 categorized reasons offered both for membership and for non-membership, gathered from 607 labor market participants. I analyze these reasons to explore two complementary sets of issues: first, why and how some workers belong to unions in the current climate of low membership levels, and second, why others are not members and how they might be motivated to join. The goal is to use this analysis to help guide the development of a union recruitment strategy.

Recruitment Models and Membership Theories

In recent decades, the two main union recruitment/retention strategies have been the servicing and organizing models. Both can be linked to theories of union membership. The servicing model can be related to theories based on individual attitudes, and the organizing model to those based on group attitudes.

The Servicing Model and Individual-Based Theories

Until recently, the servicing model informed many union recruitment strategies. Using a centralized structure, the union provided experts to negotiate wages and conditions, settle disputes, protect jobs, and provide advice for members. Success relied largely on the union's effective provision of goods and services, and the model flourished in the postwar era.

Conventional theory can be used to underpin this model because it explains union membership in relation to an individual's rational expectations regarding union efficacy. For example, traditionally membership was seen as a remedy for dissatisfaction (Ashenfelter and Pencaval 1969). In a similar vein, a utility maximization approach hypothesized that workers engage in ongoing calculation with regard to both wage and non-wage considerations (Farber and Saks 1980). More recently, membership has been presented as the culmination of a process of individual commitment to the union. A central factor in the development of this process is union effectiveness concerning both the instrumental and ideological goals of the individual worker (Fullagar and Barling 1989; Klandermans 1989; Van der Veen and Klanderman 1995).

Empirical studies have established the importance of union efficacy with regard to both of these goals. For example, wages and working conditions have consistently emerged as important specific issues (Ashenfelter and Pencaval 1969; Farber and Saks 1980; Haberfeld 1995). A leftist or labor political ideology (Kochan 1979; Haberfeld 1995) and activism (Kochan 1979) have been associated with pro-membership attitudes. Management status has been linked with non-membership (Kochan 1979). The degree of union availability at the workplace (Kochan 1979; Cregan and Johnston 1990; Cregan 1999) and the extent of workers' knowledge about unions (Kochan 1979) have also been found to influence individual membership decisions.

By the closing decades of the twentieth century, it had become clear that the servicing model was failing to halt the decline in union density. Several explanations might be offered. Union services were of diminishing value in a context where employers increasingly refused to accommodate union demands. The democratic goals of members were not fully met, as union mergers led to union bureaucracies losing touch with the rank and file. Some empirical work suggested that employers, in an effort to avert unionism, provided satisfactory conditions at the workplace, thereby rendering membership unnecessary (Farber and Krueger 1993). The problem with an individual-based rational approach to union membership as a basis for a recruitment strategy is that if unions fail to "deliver," no one will join. If unions are to survive, a different motive for some membership decisions must be found on which to build more effective recruitment practices.

The Organizing Model and Group-Based Theories

As density continued to decline, many unions sought a different recruitment strategy in the form of the organizing model. This model emerged in the United States with the creation of the Organizing Institute in 1989, and by around 1995, following the advent of John Sweeney's "New Voice" leadership, it had led to a distinct change in union policy. Organizing involved a switch in union resources from providing services to existing members to recruiting new members. It laid heavy emphasis on the role of workplace leaders and activists in attracting other workers to the union, leading to a decentralization of power. The new role of union officials was to organize recruitment activity that was to be carried out primarily at the workplace by union members themselves.

Organizing can be understood from two different perspectives. At one level, it is merely a cheaper and more effective method of recruitment than the centralized servicing of members. Servicing had become expensive as the costs of bureaucracy spread over an increasingly small membership. Organizing has also been presented in a much more substantial light as a strategy of transformation, whereby new members are attracted by mobilization, as opposed to recruitment efforts alone. Mobilization involves workers in union activities and industrial action. Success arises from the emergence at the workplace of a group ethos. Such a strategy is extremely important because rational expectations of individual gain are not paramount, so union efficacy in the provision of services is not essential for recruitment to occur. At a time when union services are few, this is a compelling strategy, provided that its theoretical assumptions are convincing and its success can be empirically identified.

Group-based theories can provide a grounding for the organizing model. Unions can be regarded as social movements when they engage in struggle against sources of grievance, visible protest, and disruption by means of collective action (Tarrow 1991). The involvement of workers in such activities is not just a rapid, low-cost way to get new members but also a means of reinforcing the support of the existing membership, welding it around goals. McAdam (1996) maintained that involvement in struggle raises individuals' awareness of injustice, leading ultimately to collectivization. Kelly specified the pro-

cess for trade unions. He argued that activists "promote a sense of grievance" in the work force (1998:64). This leads to a perception of injustice, attribution of blame (to managers), social identification, and collectivism. Knocke proposed that a sense of "oneness" develops that "strengthens the person's motives for contributing personal resources to the organization, including measures of recruitment" (1990:42).

Empirical work has clearly identified a "group spirit" among union members that exists quite separately from an individual-based approach to membership, and is comprised of "values on a non-rational level" (Gallagher and Strauss 1991:157). As yet, however, there is little evidence that this group ethos has been brought about by an organizing strategy. A few studies demonstrate that, relative to servicing, the strategy of organizing has had some success. For example, Delaney, Jarley, and Fiorito (1995) found higher membership gains in U.S. unions characterized by organizing features than in those that did not organize. An investigation of 1994 elections found that "a grassroots . . . intensive union building strategy" significantly increased the probability of winning (Bronfenbrenner and Juravich 1999:33). Adler and Turner (2001) produced case study evidence of the effectiveness of organizing. The problem with these findings, however, is that they do not demonstrate a causal pattern. Does organizing "work"? If so, by what means does organizing succeed—through transformation, or merely through a greater emphasis on recruitment? Until the source and mechanics of employee motivations are empirically identified and explained, the success of an organizing strategy cannot be adequately appraised. More important, criteria cannot be developed to justify the adoption, development, or abandonment of an organizing strategy.

In summary, literature suggests that the servicing model, with its centralized bureaucracy, is not cost-effective in the current era. Organizing may be a cheaper method of recruitment, but to assess its prospects we must examine whether local members have the characteristics that lend themselves to effective recruitment and whether involvement in activism might cause non-members to join in the manner envisaged by social movement theorists. In the following section, reasons offered by workers for their membership or non-membership will be examined to provide answers to these questions.

Methods

Context

Australia is well suited for a study of union recruitment strategy in a situation of dramatically falling membership. In the 1970s, density was higher than 50%, but over the following twenty years it dropped to about half this level (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 1998). In 1996, in an attempt to stem the fall in membership, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) consciously adopted the new U.S. recruitment model in the form of "Campaign Organizing." Although aggregate density levels have continued to decline (ABS 2002), there is evidence that some unions have increased their membership (ACTU 2002). It is not clear, however, whether these trends have resulted from the new strategy.

Sample

A postal survey was conducted in Victoria, Australia, in January 1997. It was constructed to investigate both members and non-members in a bid to understand and inform recruitment policies. Random sampling was used to select 3,000 names from the 37 state electoral rolls. The response rate for this unsolicited survey of the general population was a very satisfactory 30%, with 886 completed questionnaires received.[1] In the survey, adult workers were

[1]An additional 54 questionnaires were returned unopened. In an authoritative social survey text, Alreck and Settle argued that mail questionnaires with a response rate of over 30% "are rare" (1995:35).

asked questions about trade unions and membership issues. Central to this investigation are respondents' open-ended answers, which were provided in 607 of the 886 completed questionnaires. A chi-square-test comparison with national estimates for 1997 (ABS 1998) demonstrated that, in general, the sample was representative. For example, the union membership density figure of 32.4% was very near the national estimate of 31%, and there were no statistically significant differences between sample and national figures for gender or full-time/part-time workers. An examination of the occupational groupings showed that the survey under-represented unskilled manual workers ($p < 0.01$) and clerical/secretarial/sales/reception workers ($p < 0.01$). These groups, however, were sufficiently large to be valuable: the "clerical, etc." occupation was the second biggest grouping in the sample (22%), and when skilled and unskilled occupational groupings were combined, manual workers made up 31.8% of the sample. Even so, the results will be interpreted in the light of this occupational character.

The main source of data consisted of replies to open-ended questions asking for explanations for current membership or non-membership:

Members. *What are your reasons for being a union member? If you would prefer not to be a member, what are your reasons?*

Non-members. *If you are not a union member, what are your reasons? If you would prefer to be a union member, what are your reasons?*

Respondents were given enough space to write several lines of prose. Responses varied from a few words to a complete paragraph. The majority wrote at least two lines. A few added an extra sheet of paper and gave a lengthy, detailed response. At least one response was provided by each of the197 union members and 410 non-members. This is an unusual source of data that provides direct explanations from workers themselves. Other survey information will be introduced during the course of the inquiry.

Analytical Procedures

The purpose of the empirical work was to derive and analyze member and non-member "types" to guide the construction of a recruitment strategy. To gain as much benefit as possible from the rich and detailed qualitative data, I employed an inductive style of research. An inductive approach is often used to examine issues that are largely uninformed by existing theory. In this case, the literature fails to provide an adequate explanation for why people join or do not join unions that can be of use to union strategists as they try to increase recruitment at a time when unions provide few services to their members. "When the social researcher assumes a learning role …you need to learn about a world … by encountering it first hand and making some sense out of it" (Agar 1986:12). Specifically in relation to the organization of collective action, Tarrow argued that "the very boundaries of this field of study are still unclear. Rich evocation and thick description can begin to delineate them … [and] we must go from there to clear definition and thorough conceptualization" (1991:6). The inductive approach that was employed drew on three methods or techniques of analysis. Content analysis and cluster analysis are quantitative techniques, and the third method is the qualitative analysis of text data.[2]

[2]Content analysis of text data is commonplace in many disciplines (Neuman 2000), but unusual in industrial relations. The employment of cluster analysis in this field has also been extremely limited (Cutcher-Gershenfeld 1991; Arthur 1992; Drago 1996). A recent management study employed both techniques in a manner very similar to the approach used in this investigation: Osborne, Stubbart, and Ramaprasad (2001), working with letters from CEOs to shareholders, used content analysis as an inductive method for sorting extensive qualitative data into themes in preparation for the cluster analysis of the resulting categorical data. Jermier, Slocum, Fry, and Gaines (1991) employed an analysis of text data (interviews/conversations with police officers) to develop more detailed profiling of the types identified by prior cluster analysis.

Content Analysis

The first procedure was the content analysis of the data.[3] This involved the manual sorting and aggregation of the reasons for membership and non-membership. Fundamental to this approach was the identification of similar groups of explanations provided by members and non-members separately.

There were two main steps in the procedure. The first step was the most important part of the empirical work. It involved the development of a comprehensive series of categories of reasons. The construction of the categories "is a rather involved process, with repeated revisions" (Neuendorf 2002). It was achieved by manifest and latent coding. Each of the 607 individuals' open-ended responses was examined and, where more than one reason was provided, was sorted into separate explanations. Each explanation was represented in simple language, based on a word (such as *protection* or *conditions)* or a phrase (such as *to be looked after).* This resulted in an initial comprehensive list of 1,216 reasons gained from the 607 respondents. Some reasons were represented frequently in the list; some were offered by just a few workers. The reasons were then grouped in broad categories. Where possible, this was achieved by an objective evaluation of explanations known as manifest coding (Neuman 2000). For example, all explanations that involved the word *conditions* were placed in the same category. In all other cases, latent coding or semantic analysis was used. This is a subjective evaluation of the similarity of reasons (Neuman 2000). For example, *they protect workers* and *to be looked after* received the same category code. A week later, there was a blind matching of reasons from the initial list to the category codes . Any lack of consistency led to a reconstitution of the categories. This procedure was recapitulated twice to achieve some precision in the allocation of responses. There were 43 categories based on the 1,216 reasons.

Although the categories consisted of discrete groups of similar topics, they could be aggregated into larger themes. For example, *higher pay* could be integrated with *collective bargaining* (a mechanism to achieve higher pay). The second step, therefore, sorted the categories into broader themes (Osborne et al. 2001). It was carried out by an interpretation of the meaning of each of the categories in the light of the literature and involved a high level of semantic analysis. This resulted in 10 themes based on the 43 categories.

Results

The categories and themes are set out in Table 1. There were three themes for members, (a), (b), and (c), consisting of categories 1–18. The first of these (categories 1–7) was concerned with ideology. These beliefs and emotional attachments were termed *collectivist ideological.* The other two themes were instrumental, based on union goods and services. Categories that involved public goods[4] were aggregated in a *collectivist instrumental* theme. All categories (8–16) were included in this theme that demonstrated an understanding of collective strength in the face of individual vulnerability. Categories 17 and 18 were *private goods.*

There were six themes for non-members, (d) through (i), relating to categories 19–40. *Cost-benefit/unions ineffective* (categories 19–27) referred to the same collective cost-benefit analysis employed by instrumental members, but resulting in a decision to stay out of the union. There were two themes for former members, *disillusioned instrumental* (categories 28–30) and *disillusioned ideological* (category 31); two

[3]Content analysis may be defined as "the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics" (Neuendorf 2002:1). In this case, it involved the discrimination of categories and themes in samples of written text.

[4]Workplace public goods are those everyone can receive, regardless of membership. Private goods are union goods and services restricted to members.

Table 1. Categories and Themes.

Category	*Theme*	*Number of Responses*
Members		
1 Always Been a Member 2 Family Reasons 3 Give Support to 4 I Identify with the Union 5 Prevent Exploitation of Workers, Class 6 Pro-Union Beliefs 7 Solidarity, Unity	(a) COLLECTIVIST IDEOLOGICAL	113
8 Collective Bargaining/Voice 9 Get Support from 10 Job Security 11 Moral Obligation to Fellow Workers, Conscience 12 Pay and Conditions 13 Protection 14 Safety, Security 15 Strength in Numbers, Individual Weakness 16 Treated Badly at Work	(b) COLLECTIVIST INSTRUMENTAL	225
17 Advice and Information 18 Indemnity Insurance & Other Services	(c) PRIVATE GOODS	42
Non-Members		
19 Don't Know Why I'm Not a Member/ Don't Know Anything about Unions 20 Don't Get Anything for Your Money 21 Leaders Useless/Ineffective 22 Membership Costs Too Much 23 Not Interested 24 Scared of Losing My Job if I Join 25 Strikes: Cost Too Much, Too Many of Them 26 Too Much Hassle 27 Unions Ineffective	(d) COST BENEFIT—UNIONS INEFFECTIVE	163
28 Union Let Me Down When Asked for Help 29 Union Leaders out for Themselves 30 Union Leaders No Help/Ineffective	(e) DISILLUSIONED—INSTRUMENTAL	60
31 Unions Do Not Represent Members/Bullies	(f) DISILLUSIONED—IDEOLOGICAL	48
32 Dislike, Don't Believe in Unions 33 Strikes: Don't Believe in Them 34 Unions Are Bludgers (Scroungers) 35 Unions Do Not Represent Members: Too Interested in Politics 36 Unions Out-Dated	(g) ANTI-UNION IDEOLOGICAL	114
37 Can Negotiate for Myself 38 Do Not Like Being Told What to Do	(h) INDIVIDUALIST INSTRUMENTAL	48
39 Unions Damage the Company 40 Unions Harm Australia	(i) PRO-COMPANY/ NATION	30
All		
41 Members—Most People in My Job Are in the Union 42 Non-Members—I'm a Manager, Self-Employed 43 Non-Members—Non-Unionism Goes with the Job	(j) JOB NORMS	72
Total Responses		1,216

anti-union themes, *ideological* (categories 32–36) and *individualist instrumental* (categories 37 and 38); and a *pro-company/pro-nation* ideological theme (categories 39 and 40).

Finally, there was a *job norms* theme, (j) (categories 41–43), relevant to both members and non-members.

Reliability and validity. Four steps were taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. First, manifest coding has few problems of reliability because of its relative objectivity. Of the responses examined in this study, 39% could be immediately categorized using manifest coding because of the use of the same words, for example, *protection, pay, conditions, strikes, advice.* This provided a firm basis on which to categorize the remainder of the responses, for example, *unions look after you* (protection—category 13). They were interpreted largely by latent coding, which, although less reliable than manifest coding because of problems of subjectivity, has more validity because it rests on careful, case-by-case evaluation. Not surprisingly, "the final result is strengthened" if both coding methods are applied (Neuman 2000:295). As the success of this investigation depends on the accuracy and consistency of the categories and themes, the 72 examples of individual responses that are presented in the textual analysis section of this study will display both their category and theme references so they can be related back to Table 1 as a check on reliability and validity (see note 9, below).

Second, consistency in judgment was achieved because, although the number of responses was large, I was able to carefully analyze all of them, thereby applying the same personal evaluation (Neuendorf 2002). Moreover, the two-stage process that involved sorting/aggregation into categories, then into themes, enforced a high standard of accuracy. Further, iterative data examination and analysis by the same researcher preserves self-reliability over time via repeated measures.

Third, the entire sorting process was replicated by a second coder who was also an expert in industrial relations. Results were compared at the end of each part of the process, and a coding manual, consisting of definitions of all the categories and themes, was drawn up as both coders became familiar with the concepts and the data; as Neuendorf (2002) wrote, "the process of coder training is inextricably linked with the process of development." The categories formed the foundation of the entire analysis, and when they were finalized, each coder independently applied them to each explanation that had been identified in every individual's open-ended response. Cohen's kappa is probably the most widely used coefficient of intercoder reliability (Neuendorf 2002). It was calculated from the two coders' sets of results, based on agreement or disagreement on the coding of each category. The overall coefficient was 0.81. Although this is slightly lower than the 0.87 coefficient of Osborne et al. (2001), Ellis (1994) indicated that values above 0.74 are indicative of "high reliability."

Fourth, a sampling procedure was carried out. One hundred surveys were randomly selected and, for each one, a colleague unassociated with this investigation sorted the individuals' responses by use of the coding manual—the list of types of categories and themes that had resulted from the procedure. There were 157 categories. Among these, 21 discrepancies were apparent and 18 of these were concerned with one group of responses among non-members: "do not know why I am not a member/do not know about unions." All of these were included in the *cost benefit/unions ineffective* theme (see Table 1) because the union apparently had not been effective in reaching these respondents.

In summary, the content analysis of explanations for union membership status (member or non-member) produced 43 categories of response topics that were aggregated into 10 conceptual themes. These groupings were ascertained by means of formal, systematic, iterative procedures in order to ensure their reliability and validity. In the next section, these themes are used to group workers into separate types of member and non-member.

Cluster Analysis

The second procedure used to investigate the data was cluster analysis, which, following Osborne et al. (2001), was employed to identify statistically distinct groups of individuals. The specific purpose here was to sort workers into member and non-member types based on the similarity of the bundle of themes that was manifest in the reasons offered by the respondents for their membership status. (See the Appendix for an explanation of the clustering techniques employed in this investigation.)

Clustering procedures were carried out separately for the 197 member cases and the 410 non-member cases. The 10 themes derived from the content analysis formed the basis of variables used in the cluster analysis. All were coded to create dichotomous dummies—that is, the presence of a theme was coded as "1" and its absence as "0." Consequently, whether a worker gave only one response or multiple responses that fell under a given theme heading, the result was simply a positive value for that theme (for example, the three responses *pay, protection,* and *collective bargaining* together would yield the same positive indicator on theme *b, collectivist instrumental,* as would just one of those responses; see Table 1). There was a total of 607 members and non-members. Between them, they provided 921 separate theme-based explanations for their membership status. This falls below the figure of 1,216 reasons in the initial comprehensive list because some workers offered more than one explanation falling within a given theme. Each of 356 workers provided one reason; another 197provided two reasons; 45 provided three; 8 provided four; and 1 respondent provided five reasons. Finally, a dummy variable was introduced for both members and non-members to capture the reluctance of those respondents who had prefaced their set of responses with "I would prefer to join/leave the union."

For both members and non-members, 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-cluster solutions were sought. Following standard analyses (Everitt 1980; Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984), I examined the fusion or agglomeration coefficients (see Appendix for an explanation). For members, initial inspection indicated a discontinuity between the fourth and third clusters, suggesting that there were three interpretable member clusters. In the same way, five clusters were indicated in the non-member procedure.

In order to determine the statistical distinctiveness of the cluster solutions—that is, to verify that each solution is statistically significantly different from all the other solutions—I subjected each variable in turn to extensive significance testing, following Jermier, Slocum, Fry, and Gaines (1991). The binary nature of the data required the use of Cramer's V, a chi-square measure that overcomes the cell requirements in a cross-tabulation matrix (Osborne et al. 2001). Following Arthur (1992), I compared the value of each variable in a given cluster to the mean of its values in the other clusters. This involved 33 tests for members and 55 for non-members. On this basis, 19 relationships for members and 41 relationships for non-members demonstrated statistical distinctiveness ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, using standard practice (Everitt 1980), and following Jermier et al. (1991), I compared the value of each variable in a given cluster to its value in each of the other clusters. This involved 33 tests for members and 220 for non-members, yielding 18 statistically significant relationships for members and 61 for non-members ($p < 0.05$). These results showed that each of the cluster solutions had a statistically distinctive pattern.

Results

The results consist of the cluster solutions and a pattern of membership and non-membership derived from them.

Cluster solutions. The cluster solutions and results of the significance testing are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The results of the clustering procedures yielded distinct statistical patterns in the form of a three-cluster solution for members and a five-cluster solution for non-members.

Table 2. Member Clusters: 3-Cluster Solution.

Categories of Response	*Ideologically Committed (n = 68)*[a]	*Instrumentally Committed (n = 87)*	*Reluctant (n = 42)*	*Totals*	*Significant contrasts*
Union Values	**68**** (86)	8**– (10)	3**– (04)	79	(1 > 2,3)**
Collective Strength	39 (32)	**65**** (54)	17**– (14)	121	(2 > 1)* (2 > 3)**
Union Private	0**–	**25**** (89)	3 (11)	28	(2 > 1,3)** (3 > 1)**
Job Norms[b]	0**–	**23**** (77)	7 (23)	30	(2 > 1)**(3 > 1)**
Cost-Benefit	0**–	0**–	**16**** (100)	16	(3 > 1,2)**
Employer Values	0	0	1	1	—-
Anti-Union	0**–	8	7*	15	(2 > 1)**(3 > 1)**
Union Ineffective	0*–	4	7**	11	(3 > 1,2)*
Disillusioned	0	2	1	3	—-
Negotiate Own	0	0	1	1	—-
Prefer to Leave	0**–	2**– (06)	**33**** (94)	35	(3 > 1,2)**
Total Responses				340	

Notes: Shown in Table 2 are numbers of responses. Each figure in parentheses denotes the percentage of that category of response represented in a given cluster. For example, with regard to row one: 86% of responses concerned with union values are represented in Cluster 1. Cramer's V chi-square was used to detect the significance of a contrast between the value of a category of response in a given cluster and the mean of its values in all the other clusters combined. A statistically significant negative relationship is indicated by –; in all other cases the relationship is positive. Shown also are the statistically significant contrasts between the values of a variable in every combination of the clusters. For example, Cluster 1 contains significantly more responses categorized as values than the other two clusters, both combined and separately.

[a]n = number of respondents, that is, cluster cases.

[b]For members, this variable consisted of reply 41 in Table 1: "Most people in my job are in the union."

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level; **at the 0.01 level.

In general, each cluster was dominated by one variable or a few of the variables. That is, the response rate for one variable or a set of variables was statistically significantly greater in that cluster than in any—or most—of the others. Both member and non-member clusters denoted types consisting of committed or uncommitted views. Committed types gave unequivocal reasons for membership status. Uncommitted types can be defined as workers who were potentially mobile in terms of their membership status, for example, thinking of leaving or joining. The three-cluster member solution produced two committed types. The first was characterized by union values. These workers can be described as the *ideologically committed members.* The second was identified by an appreciation of the benefits of collective strength, representation in jobs where most workers were members, and a view of unions as providers of private services. These members can be described as the *instrumentally committed members.* The third type comprised *uncommitted members:* the reluctant members, characterized by thoughts of leaving, a collective cost-benefit approach, a perception of union inefficacy, and some anti-union sentiments.

There were five clusters of non-members, also demonstrating different levels of union commitment (positive through negative). The uncommitted non-members were of three types: those with pro-union attitudes in terms of values, collectivism, union-based private goods, and an intention to join; the *neutral,* some of whom were calculative (understanding the benefits of collectivism but unconvinced that joining was worthwhile), some uninformed about unions, and some showing no interest; and disillusioned or disgruntled former members who viewed the union as ineffective and undemocratic. The two *committed non-member* types consisted of those who were explicitly anti-union, and those with

Table 3. Non-Member Clusters: 5-Cluster Solution.

Categories	*Pro-Union (n=111[a])*	*Neutral (n=108)*	*Disillusioned (n=41)*	*Anti-Union (n=73)*	*Unitarist (n=77)*	*Totals*	*Significant Contrasts*
Union Values	**33**** (97)	1**– (03)	0*–	0**–	0**–	34	(1 > 2,3,4,5)**
Collective Strength	**88**** (85)	6**– (06)	6 (04)	2**– (02)	2**–(02)	104	(1 > 2,3,4,5)**(3 > 4,5)**
Union Private	**13**** (93)	0*–	1 (07)	0	0	14	(1 > 2,4,5)**
Prefer to Join	**62**** (90)	4**– (06)	1**–(01)	1**– (01)	1**–(01)	69	(1 > 2,3,4,5)**
Cost-Benefit	1**– (01)	**108**** (73)	15 (10)	20 (17)	3**–(02)	147	(2 > 1,3,4,5)** (3 > 1,4)** (5 > 1,4)**
Union Ineffective	4**– (07)	0**–	**40**** (70)	1 (23)	0**	57	(2 > 1)* (3 > 1,2,4,5)** (5 > 1,2,4)**
Disillusioned	1**– (03)	0**–	**21**** (57)	**15**** (41)	0**–	37	(3 > 1,2,4,5)** (5 > 1,2,4)**
Anti-Union	22 (22)	0**–	1**–(01)	**73**** (74)	3**–(03)	99	(4 > 1,2,3,5)**
Employer Values	1**– (03)	0**–	0	0**–	**28**** (97)	29	(4 > 1,2,3,5)**
Negotiate Own	2**– (04)	3**– (06)	3 (06)	4 (09)	**37**** (79)	47	(1 > 2)* (4 > 1)* (4 > 2,3,5)**
Job Norms[b]	14 (33)	5*– (12)	1 (02)	3 (07)	**19**** (45)	42	(5 > 1,2,3,4)** (1 > 2,3,4)** (4 > 2)*
Total Responses						876	

Notes: Shown in Table 3 are numbers of responses. Each figure in parentheses denotes the percentage of that category of response represented in a given cluster. Cramer's V chi-square was used in to detect the significance of a contrast between the value of a category of response in a given cluster and the mean of its values in all the other clusters combined. A statistically significant negative relationship is indicated by –; in all other cases the relationship is positive. Shown also are the significant contrasts between the values of a variable in every combination of the clusters.

[a]n = number of respondents, that is, non-members.

[b]For non-members, this variable consisted of replies 42 and 43 in Table 1: "I am a manager," "Non-Unionism Goes with the job."

*Statistically significant at the 0.05 level; **at the 0.01 level.

unitarist-individualist[5] attitudes characterized by pro-company/pro-national values and individualist tendencies.

Validation of cluster solutions. The major problem for the researcher is that hierarchical cluster analysis can provide a solution with any number of clusters. As the choice of which solution to select is essentially evaluative (Arthur 1992), several techniques must be employed in determining the optimal or final solutions (Everitt 1980). Four validation processes were carried out.

First, in each procedure, following Arthur (1992), I carried out further detailed significance testing for all possible cluster solutions within a reasonable range (in this case, 2- through 7-cluster solutions) in order to determine which offered the most distinct pattern of results. This involved a comparison of the value of each variable in a given cluster with its value in each of the other three clusters for every solution. Two examples of this extensive optimization sequence are presented in the notes.[6] These

[5]For simplicity, henceforth I use the term "unitarist."

[6]In the merging process of Ward's method (see Appendix), a new cluster is formed from two of the existing clusters of the previous solution, so comparisons are relatively simple. First, with regard to members, an examination of the 2-cluster solution demonstrated that it consisted of the ideologically committed from the 3-cluster solution and a new cluster comprised of the instrumentally committed and the reluctant from the 3-cluster solution. The new cluster, therefore, merged two statistically and theoreti-

examinations supported the three-cluster member solution and the five-cluster non-member solution.

Second, where sample and cell sizes are sufficiently large, internal validity is ascertained by splitting the sample by means of a random selection and comparing the subsequent cluster solutions to each other. The size of the non-member random samples allowed for such a procedure. The split sample consisted of 215 and 195 cases, respectively. The use of Cramer's V chi square tests for every category of each variable demonstrated statistically significant differences between the samples in only 3 (5%) of the 55 relationships (cluster 4—*collective instrumental;* clusters 1 and 2—*anti-union*). The null hypothesis was supported.

Third, an examination of the relationship between the cluster solutions and variables that have not been used to generate the cluster solutions is a standard external validation procedure (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984). Among the variables in the dataset not used to generate the cluster solutions were some that previous studies had identified as important in identifying the strength of pro- and anti-membership attitudes: for example, proxies, in the form of recent voting behavior, occupation, and union activist activities; variables for leftist political ideology (Kochan 1979; Haberfeld 1995); activism (Kochan 1979); and managerial occupation (Kochan 1979). Following Deshpande and Fiorito (1989), I used survey responses to capture the strength of individuals' attitudes, in this case, to both membership and non-membership. The variables and their values are reported in Table 4.

In order to validate the clusters as indicative of different levels of commitment,[7] I used Spearman's rank correlation test in two bi-variate procedures, for members and non-members separately. The results (see Table 4) demonstrated that the predicted relationships between the ranked cluster variables and all the external variables were statistically significant. These findings strongly validate the composition of the clusters and the labels assigned to them, as they reflect attitudes toward unions: committed union members, uncommitted types (both members and non-members), and committed non-members.

Finally, following Cutcher-Gershenfeld (1991) and Jermier et al. (1991), I used the cluster groups as target variables and carried out discriminant analysis on the 11 explanatory variables.[8] The results demonstrated that 94.9% of the original grouped data for members and 95.4% for non-members were correctly classified.

Pattern of Membership and Non-Membership

Following the validation process, a pattern or map of membership status was derived from the cluster solutions (see Table 5). This consists of a presentation of the proportions of member and non-member types that constitute the sample.

The results in Table 5 clearly show the situation currently facing unions. The pattern demonstrates that studies of union membership that have not taken into account non-member attitudes have failed to appreciate that there may well be imperfect symmetry between members and non-mem-

cally distinct clusters, concealing the richness of the data. This solution was rejected as inferior. Second, with regard to non-members, an examination of the 4-cluster solution demonstrated that the disillusioned and anti-union groupings of the 5-cluster solution appeared as a merged set of variables. This resulted in the loss of six statistically significant relationships between the two former statistically and theoretically distinct groups, involving over half of the independent variables. The 4-cluster solution was rejected.

[7]In both the union commitment and the social movement literatures, members whose ties to the union are based predominantly on values are held to have a deeper level of commitment than those with predominantly instrumental attitudes.

[8]Discriminant analysis is used to build a predictive model of group membership based on the observed characteristics of each case. The procedure generates a set of discriminant functions based on linear combinations of the predictor variables that provide the best discrimination between the clusters.

Table 4. External Variables.

Members

Dependent Variable
Cluster values: 1 = Ideologically Committed, 2 = Instrumentally Committed, 3 = Reluctant

Independent Variables
Unless stated otherwise, responses are coded as 1 for Yes, 0 otherwise.
Expected signs for all coefficients: < 0

Results	*rho*[a]
Proxies:	
For which party did you vote in the recent federal election? (Labor/other coded 1/0)	–0.251**
Do you see yourself as a union activist?	–0.186*
Pro-Union Attitudes:	
Would you join a union whatever your job or firm?	–0.379**
Do you have your union subscription paid directly from your wages?	–0.304*

Non Members

Dependent Variable
Cluster values: 1 = Pro-Union, 2 = Neutral, 3 = Disillusioned, 4 = Anti-Union, 5 = Unitarist

Independent Variables
Unless stated otherwise, responses are coded as 1 for Yes, 0 otherwise.
Expected signs for all coefficients: > 0

Results	*rho*
Proxies:	
For which party did you vote in the recent Federal election? (Labor/other coded 1/0)	0.247**
Occupation: manager/otherwise (coded 1/0)[b]	0.224**
Pro-Union Attitudes:	
Is there anything a trade union could do to persuade you to join?	0.257*
Are there any circumstances in which you would ever join a union?	0.212**

Notes: The values of the cluster solutions measured the rank order of the 2-cluster variables. Decreasing levels of union commitment were represented by values 1 through 3 for union members and 1 through 5 for non-members. Thus, a statistically significant correlation coefficient indicates that the cluster values were statistically associated with levels of attitudes to membership (+ through -) as measured by the values of a given external variable.

[a]Spearman's rank correlation 2-tailed test: *statistically significant at the 0.05 level; **at the 0.01 level.

[b]Using the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO), I classified jobs as managerial/non-managerial.

bers regarding their membership decisions. This is important because the reason most workers were not union members can be discerned in that very asymmetry in the following way.

While there was no difference between the proportions of committed members and of committed non-members (chi-square = non-significant), less than a third of the sample (29%) belonged to a union. Yet, although these union members were a minority, most of them (79%) were ideologically or instrumentally committed to the union. The overall character of non-members was very different. Less than half of them (37%) held committed non-member views. The largest group of workers (50% of the whole sample) held uncommitted attitudes to union membership—but these views generally resulted in non-membership because, for the most part, the union had failed to harness these workers. Non-membership, therefore, was the default state. In the discussion of the sample charac-

Table 5. Patterns of Membership and Non-Membership.

Committed Members		
Type 1 member: ideologically committed	68 (11%)	
Type 2 member: instrumentally committed	87 (14%)	*25% of total sample*
Uncommitted:		
Uncommitted Members		
Type 3 member: reluctant	42 (7%)	
Uncommitted Non-Members		
Type 1 non-member: pro-union	111 (18%)	
Type 2 non-member: neutral	108 (18%)	
Type 3 non-member: disillusioned	41 (7%)	*50% of total sample*
Committed Non-Members		
Type 4 non-member: anti-union	73 (12%)	
Type 5 non-member: unitarist	77 (13%)	*25% of total sample*
Total of Members and Non-Members in Sample	607(100%)	

Committed Members			*Uncommitted*			*Committed Non-Members*	
Member Types n = 197 (29%)			*Non Member Types* n = 410 (71%)				
68 (35%) Ideologically Committed	**87** (44%) Instrumentally Committed	**42** (21%) Reluctant	**111** (27%) Pro-Union	**108** (26%) Neutral	**41** (10%) Disillusioned	**73** (18%) Anti-Union	**77** (19%) Unitarist

Notes: Shown in the boxes in Table 5 are numbers of respondents in each type, for members and non-members separately. Figures in parentheses denote the percentage of that category of response represented in a given cluster, for members and non-members separately. For example, 68 members are characterized as ideologically committed; they form 35% of all members.

teristics, I noted that workers in the "unskilled manual" and "clerical, etc." categories were under-represented. An examination of the data using Spearman's rank correlation tests demonstrated that there was no statistically significant correlation between these two occupations and levels of union commitment, while managerial status was highly correlated with the level of non-member attitudes ($p < 0.01$). Thus, the likelihood is that the membership pattern understates the percentage of workers who have uncommitted attitudes.

In summary, cluster analysis identified statistically distinct types based on aggregated explanations for membership and non-membership offered by the survey respondents. Formal processes were employed to ensure the validity of the solutions. The results demonstrated that different attitudes to membership (+ through –) can be found among both members and non-members. The cluster solutions were used to produce a map or pattern of membership status, thereby depicting the problem facing unions.

Textual Analysis

The final empirical section presents a detailed textual analysis of survey respondents' explanations for membership and non-membership. Member types are analyzed to investigate different reasons for being a member in the current climate, to examine the various motivations members might have for recruiting others, and to identify attitudinal characteristics of members who are liable to drop out of the union

Table 6. Textual Illustrations for Committed Member Types.

Ideologically Committed	
(i)	I know myself as a member of the union. (1240–4a) I am a unionist. (1425–4a)
(ii)	Solidarity, unity. (7a) So everyone we are all one. (2004–7a)
(iii)	To … support fellows who in turn will support you if necessary. (2146–7a).
(iv)	Unions are a great thing. (2911–6a) I believe in unions…. They are a vital part of our social fabric. (1128–6a) I believe in being a union member regardless. (1088–6a)
(v)	Unions stand by the working class. (1453–5a) I believe strongly in unionism as a barrier to the exploitation of the work force and would always join. (2518–5a)
(vi)	Brought up in a strong union family background. (0700, 2628–2a) Union presence at the workplace—culminating in unrest and union actions. (2116–16b)
Instrumentally Committed	
(vii)	Job protection, protection from management, unfairness, exploitation. (13b) For support, support of workers' rights (8b); security, safety (14b).
(viii)	Is not good for workers not to be in union. Worker alone are not strong. (0284–15b) In the industry I now work in, I'm one person amongst hundreds working for a large bank. If I had a problem, there's no way I would get anywhere with my employer by myself. I would need the union to help. (2741–15b)
(ix)	There [is] a power in numbers—having a … body to represent me is much stronger than each individual fighting for better work and conditions. (0006–15b) A united front, the union's strength depends on numbers. (2506–15b)
(x)	Free legal services (17c), indemnity insurance (18c).
(xi)	I have my pride as a union member and could not use the sweat and fight of others to accept pay rises if I was not a member. (0700–11b) I do not wish to see myself as a parasite. (1284–11b) I believe it's the right thing to do. (Otherwise) how could I turn to them if I needed help? (0461–11b)
(xii)	I joined the union only about 5 years ago when it was obvious that unreasonable pressure and lack of support (were) being applied to … dedicated, hard-working employees. (2398–9b) I had an asshole of an employer. He used to threaten us with sack and treated us like dogs (till we joined the union). (1003–10b) A boss underpaid me for 3 years. My only recourse was the union. (0412–12b) Unaware—till spoken to in a derogatory manner—so enquiries and joined … there was a strong presence at the workplace—culminating in unrest and union actions. (2116–38h)

Note: For an explanation of parenthesized codes following the abbreviated quotations, see footnote 9 in the text, and Table 1.

and who should therefore be the focus of retention strategies. Non-member types are examined to identify workers who might be good targets for recruitment, and to evaluate the strength and source of any opposition to union organizing. In this way, an effective union strategy can be inductively derived from the findings.

Analyses of text data require systematic, careful observation that takes account of several factors: frequency of usage of words and phrases; number of issues or subjects remarked; valence (for example, support or opposition); and finally, intensity, in this case, of feeling (Neuman 2000). Below, I highlight these factors as appropriate.[9] The

[9]Throughout the qualitative analysis, individual examples will be directly referenced, in parentheses, to the relevant survey employee identification number. Moreover, this section provides detailed evidence of the accuracy and consistency of the coding process, because the identification number will be followed by a code that identifies both the category of response allocated to that explanation and its associated conceptual theme. For example, in *I feel it would be wrong to ride on the backs of others (1728–11b), 1728* is

types are examined in sequence, based on their union commitment ranking (+ through –): committed members, then uncommitted workers, and finally committed non-members.

Committed Member Types

The results of the cluster analysis demonstrated that although only a minority of workers belonged to a union, most members were committed. The discussion that follows looks in turn at the two forms of union commitment that the analysis identified: ideological and instrumental. Illustrations of responses by member types are presented in Table 6. Specific text is referenced throughout—for example, (i), (ii)—to match the groupings presented in Table 6.

The responses of *ideologically committed* members were characterized by collective values. Two major attitudinal features were apparent: an identification with the union (i) and a sense of "oneness" or solidarity (ii). Solidarity was understood as a sentiment of mutual reciprocity (iii). It was directly and vibrantly expressed as union beliefs, often unconditional (iv) and sometimes carefully articulated in class terms (v). Several respondents had become members through the influence of beliefs related to family or background, while for some, collective attitudes had been instigated at the workplace (vi). It seems likely that the collective values (ii, iii) held by some of the ideologically committed members could motivate them to recruit other workers; that is, someone who is moved to join the union by the general belief that workers should be united likely would wish to recruit co-workers in furtherance of that same end.

The responses of *instrumentally committed* members were characterized by signs of collective instrumentality. Two notions that featured prominently in these responses were collective strength and moral obligation. Most respondents in this group demonstrated some awareness of the superiority of collective power over individual power in the face of workplace injustice. The terms *protection* (which occurred 74 times in the survey—more often than any other term) and *conditions* (the second most common term, with 62 occurrences) were used extensively, and the overall defensive character of the responses was very clear (vii). There was an understanding of personal vulnerability (viii) and an appreciation of the nature and source of collective strength (ix). Only a few examples of private goods and services were cited (x). Many respondents of this type also manifested a sense of moral obligation to the union because of help they had obtained from it. There was an understanding that these benefits were derived from the efforts of other workers (xi). These respondents joined because they became aware of a need for collective support, often at the workplace itself (xii). Their motivation to recruit other workers can be deduced from their belief in the importance of increasing the strength of the collective (ix) and their sense that they had an ethical duty to support fellow workers (xi).

Uncommitted Types

Uncommitted types of members and nonmembers were potentially mobile. Illustrations of their written remarks are presented in Table 7.

Reluctant members, who were thinking about leaving the union, clearly represent a type that should be a focus of union retention strategies. Ineffective unions, ineffective leaders, and unsuccessful strikes were the issues they most commonly raised (i).

There were three types of non-members

the identification number of the respondent, *11* is the category number in Table 1—moral obligation—and *b* is the theme letter—*collectivist instrumental.* Where a response has been offered on several occasions, a general reference is given, with category number and theme letter, for example, *I don't believe in unions (32b).* All the references can be cross-checked with the listings in Table 1.

Table 7. Textual Illustrations for Uncommitted Types: Members and Non-Members.

Reluctant Members

(i) Workplace union is weak and didn't help some employees. (2473–27d)
They have only sold us out in all their recent discussions. (0562–21d)
Union leaders should lose wages when we go on strike. (1607–25d)
They send you out on strike and you don't get paid for it. (0301–25d)

Pro-Union Non-Members

The strength of numbers (39b); unions offer the power of collective bargaining (30b).

Neutral Non-Members

(iii) Payment for nothing. (0762–20d)
I would join if there was no fees. (1098–22d)
I do not see it would help me in any way at all so I don't need the extra aggravation. (2871–26d)
They cause too much trouble. Just want to get along with fellow workers and do my job and go home. (1788–26d)
The union that covers the industry I work in is very weak and therefore there's no reason to join it. (2653–27d)
"All yap, no bite." (1451–27d)

(iv) You never see a union delegate except to collect the fees. (0216–21d)
They take the money and run. (0783–21d)
Leaders concerned with preserving their position rather than protecting the interests of members. (1677–21d)
Too much bickering and hesitating … at the cost of the people represented. (1098–21d)
A lot of money for high-paid union officials and little return. (2139–21d)
They are full of idiots at the top. (1363–21d)
Not want to lose day's wages for a strike. (2199–25d)
Unions make work on a building site very hard due to fact they always stop people working. (1648–25d)

(v) Stopped (being a member) when I left the job. (0563–43j)
Took out union dues without my knowledge. Didn't know I was a member till after I left that job. (1397–43j)
I think it is better to be the same as what most people do. (2226–43j)

Disillusioned Non-Members

(vi) When I was in a union, they only used my membership when they wanted my dues or levies … treated indifferently after being a member for so long … even being a Branch Secretary at one time. (1767–28e)
Was laid off—no union supported, protected my interests. Got nothing … 25 years (a member). (0642–28e)
When I rang (the) union, I was treated with contempt. (1774–28e)
When being retrenched, they didn't want to know me. (1754–28e)
Experience of union uselessness in redundancy case. (0487–28e)

(vii) Past union heavy-handedness has turned me against unions. (0914–31f)
Watched them bully people to join the union. Disenchanted. (0749–31f)

(viii) My experience has shown me, they are only out to fill their pockets, not mine. (2475–29e)
It's all false. Found union reps to lie to suit themselves. (1179–29e)
They came and promised the earth when we joined and never saw or heard from them again. (0992–30e)
My past experience has been that they only want your subscription and any further contact is abuse, rudeness and threatening behaviour. (0625–30e)
Union went on strike. Achieved nothing. Were led by incompetent administrators. (2501–30e)
I was a union member for 25 years and all it done was cost me money for fees and strikes. (1077–30e)

Note: For an explanation of parenthesized codes following the abbreviated quotations, see footnote 9 in the text, and Table 1.

Table 8. Textual Illustrations for Committed Non Member Types.

Anti-Union	
(i)	Don't believe in unions. (32g) They're bludgers [i.e., scroungers]. (34g)
	I would never join as I think they are degrading. (2775–32g)
	Find them painful. (1626–32g)
	"One out, all out" mentality. (2024–32g)
Unitarist-Individualist	
(ii)	Too militant and unreasonable when economy in decline. (0303–40i)
	Unions have been most destructive to the development of Australia. (1166–40i)
(iii)	I am a professional person [accountant]—always negotiated my own salary. (1808–37h)
	Over time … as I moved up the management ladder ….I learnt that the union wasn't representing my needs … and this would worsen. (1681–37h)

Note: For an explanation of parenthesized codes following the abbreviated quotations, see footnote 9 in the text, and Table 1.

whose uncommitted character made them likely targets of recruitment: those who were *pro-union,* those who were *neutral,* and *disillusioned former members.* The most likely of these three types to be susceptible to recruitment efforts were the *pro-union,* because they understood the value of collective strength (ii). Responses of *neutral* non-members varied in nature from conscious calculation (perceived or expected union inefficacy in providing collective goods) to a lack of interest and awareness (iii). For some, disenchantment with union leaders and a dislike of strikes were the main issues (iv), whereas for others, "non-unionism went with the job," as their aversion to membership appears to have been a matter of conforming to the norms of the job, and reflected little or no critical thought (v). Of the three uncommitted types, disillusioned former members who felt betrayed or let down by the union were likely to be the most difficult to recruit (vi). Some felt the union was not acting democratically (vii). Once again, a distrust of leaders and a dislike of strike activity figured prominently in their thinking (viii).

Committed Non-Member Types

Finally, there were two types with committed non-member views. Examples of their written explanations are presented in Table 8.

It seems likely that some committed non-members had a disposition to oppose recruitment. Respondents belonging to one non-member type exhibited beliefs that were explicitly *anti-union* (i). The other type was characterized by *unitarist-individualist* views, that is, pro-company or pro-nation attitudes (ii) and a preference to individually negotiate their wages. Some of these respondents were self-employed or managers (iii).

In summary, the findings from the textual analysis were consistent with most of the results from recent empirical studies. Workers were unwilling to belong to an ineffective union. They expected various forms of protection, help in maintaining or improving working conditions, and, to a lesser extent, effective pressure for wage increases. The effect of political ideology was apparent: pro-labor voting was associated with the strength of favorable membership attitudes. In many instances, respondents were in workplaces where most people were not in a union or there was no union presence: those non-members who wanted to join simply were not recruited, and other non-members did not know about unions. Moreover, there was scant evidence that workers viewed company prac-

tices as sufficient for their welfare. The findings also identified features predicted by group-based theory. In particular, the results support Kelly's arguments regarding the existence of a collective membership process (Kelly 1998): in response to an appreciation of injustice or unfair treatment at the workplace, some workers became committed to fellow workers, demonstrating the development of a form of group spirit that was not motivated by self-interest.

These results also suggest some important new explanations for membership and non-membership. First, members displayed characteristics that demonstrate two levels of collective commitment—or two landing stages—in the membership process. One was typified by values and the other by instrumentality. Both stages were marked by an altruistic relationship between the individual and the group. Workers received support and, in return, the ideologically committed felt sentiments of solidarity, while the instrumentally committed felt moral obligation. These non-rational group-based instincts resulted in membership—and recruitment motivation—in a situation where the rational individual would remain out of the union and free-ride on the efforts of members. Second, many non-members (and those members thinking of leaving) were suspicious of strike activity and union leaders. Union leaders were often considered to be selfish, ineffective, or inattentive to their members.

Conclusions

The empirical work produced several important findings. First, although only a minority of workers were members, most of these were committed to the union. Some workers had become members by means of a collectivization process, prompted by feelings of individual vulnerability, leading to an appreciation of union support and, in some cases, the development of union values. Second, half of the sample held no definite views about membership one way or the other. Some were thinking of leaving, some of joining. Some of these uncommitted workers had decided the costs of being a member were too great, some were unaware of the benefits of membership because they had not been recruited or informed, and some were disillusioned with membership. Third, only a minority of the sample was anti-union or held unitarist views.

These results not only confirm that there exists considerable potential for recruiting new union members, but also are strongly suggestive of some specific tactics that could help make a recruitment strategy successful. The two main requirements for successful organizing, in its broadest sense, are a willingness to recruit, especially on the part of local leaders and activists, and the achievement of a transformation of workers' attitudes through the development of collectivist instincts. The findings show that, provided unions are circumspect, organizing is the right strategy for the times. They demonstrate that some union members could be prompted to mobilize other workers at their place of work; that most non-members—those who would be targeted by recruitment efforts—are initially neutral with regard to unions; and that current opposition to unions, at least among workers, is not overwhelming. Moreover, the development of a group ethos among workers is the central feature of an organizing strategy, and this process has been clearly identified.

The results also demonstrate, however, that the means by which organizing triggers this process—by involving workers in disputes—must be considered carefully. The survey clearly demonstrated that many workers resented what they perceived as union inefficacy, particularly where it involved failed strikes and leaders who were out of touch with the rank and file. Mobilization via local leadership is the keystone of organizing. These findings imply that organizing will fail to attract most workers if outcomes of industrial actions are unfavorable. Indeed, more might be at stake than the acquisition of new members; erosion of current membership is possible. A strategy that merely develops an awareness

of injustice in workers is insufficient: for many workers, the union must still "deliver." Consequently, only winnable battles should be fought, and members should be fully consulted before industrial action is undertaken. Continuous struggle, therefore, is replaced by strategic, limited struggle. Whatever the strategy, optimism must be guarded, because organizing will have limited success in the present climate, as many unions are constrained by their inability to wrest gains from employers.

This inductive study has added substantially to more conventional approaches by illuminating membership theory, and thus helping in the urgent quest to develop an effective union recruitment strategy. The novel insight gained from this analysis of workers' responses is that there are *several* types of members and non-members, each characterized by different reasons for joining or not joining unions. I found that the rational, individual-based approach of conventional theory was upheld only for a small proportion of non-members. Social movement theory had strong explanatory value in application to ideologically committed members, but at the time of the survey, such workers were a minority. For practical purposes, the most important discovery for unions is that most workers recognized the instrumental power of collective strength and were prepared to pay for it. Most indicated a readiness to pay not just in ways proposed by conventional cost-benefit theory, but also in the form of a felt moral obligation to support fellow unionists.

The problem is precisely that unions are, at present, ineffective in persuading most workers that such costs are worthwhile. Nevertheless, assuming this study's findings are generalizable to settings outside Australia, they are valuable for unions, because they demonstrate unequivocally that neither collectivism nor unionism is a thing of the past. One in four Australian workers still belongs to a union, and this survey suggests that most of them hold collectivist attitudes. I found that some workers had an unconditional allegiance to the union, regardless of outcomes; only a few workers embraced individualist values, and the majority did not look to the union to provide private services. Most workers—members and many non-members alike—said that what they wanted from a union was protection. These patterns, and the current prevalence of workplace injustice and low union density, imply great potential for mobilization efforts. An organizing strategy is constrained by limited opportunities to achieve the kinds of protection workers desire, but by fostering mutual support and consulting with its membership, a union can at least offer solace, consolation, and some grass-roots empowerment, reminiscent of early unionism. At a time of low union power, intangible benefits like these can rekindle notions of solidarity. In the current climate, mere steady-state survival—never mind growth—could be regarded as a victory for unions, and it may be that unions can best ensure their survival by cultivating a nucleus of committed members and a reputation for democracy, justice, and strategic success.

Several important limitations of this study bear mention. Because of the cross-sectional, country-specific data employed, the results could be both temporally and geographically bound. In particular, explanations for membership status may well be different in a time of labor power or in countries where management is more hostile or pro-active. As a qualitative analysis, the study does not allow for the use of controls for organizational or individual influences, or for some other potentially important factors. Open-ended questions may elicit responses from those with the strongest views. If a group-based analysis is to provide a framework for understanding membership and organizing, it will be essential to investigate and define group relationships and dynamics with the same rigor that has characterized the long tradition of individual-based research on union membership.

Appendix

Cluster Analysis for Union Members and Non-Members

Cluster analysis is a multivariate technique that attempts to re-organize cases into relatively homogeneous groups. A good overview of the procedure is presented in the appendix to Arthur (1992). It groups entities based on a matching algorithm that measures the similarity between profiles of variable scores. Its object is to find "natural" groupings in the data by identifying subgroups that are homogeneous. Agglomerative cluster analysis is employed in this paper. The clustering process begins by grouping two objects (for example, union members) that are most similar by virtue of their associated characteristics (for example, values, collective instrumentality). Each subsequent stage consists of the merging of the two clusters between which there is the smallest distance. The hierarchical form is used with Ward's method and the Squared Euclidean measure of distance. This combination has been employed in important studies in industrial relations (Arthur 1992; Drago 1996). In hierarchical analysis, the number of clusters emerges from the investigation and is not imposed by *a priori* theory, so this type of analysis is ideally suited to inductive empirical investigations. Ward's method has been employed because it is one of the most commonly used in the hierarchical version and has been shown to perform well (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984). In this method, the distance between two clusters is measured by the sum of squares between them, summed over all variables. The within-cluster sum of squares is then minimized. Squared Euclidean distance has been adopted to measure the distances and is most often employed with Ward's method (Everitt 1980; Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984).

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