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Article abstract

This paper examines the relative importance of demographic, parental, social, job characteristic, and union/job attitude variables in predicting attitudinal union militancy. This research also extends previous analysis by studying municipal government employees in a Canadian union local and by comparing the results with those of attitude toward unions in general.

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This paper examines the relative importance of demographic, parental, social, job characteristic, and union/job attitude variables in predicting attitudinal union militancy. This research also extends previous analysis by studying municipal government employees in a Canadian union local and by comparing the results with those of attitude toward unions in general.

Attitudes toward union sanction activities and the power of unions have received much attention over the past decade with the expansion of unionism into industries and occupations which were previously unfamiliar with the adversarial relationship. For most of the more recent studies, the main objective has been to determine whether this attitudinal union militancy is due mainly to the immediate situation or to the socialized beliefs and values that individuals bring with them to the occupation or industry (Dolan, 1979; Fox & Wince, 1976; Hellriegel, French & Peterson, 1970; Schutt, 1982; Shirom, 1977). More specifically, is the apparent increase in union militancy a result of changes in the work environment which have led to job dissatisfaction, positional frustrations, and declining organizational loyalty, or is it due to a change in the type of people entering the occupation or industry? The research attempting to address this question has become increasingly sophisticated, but the answer is still unclear. While there is evidence from some investigations that militant attitudes are a function more of one's background than of the immediate situation (Dolan, 1979; Fox & Wince, 1976; Schutt, 1982), other research suggests just the opposite (Donnenwerth & Cox, 1978; Feuille & Blandin, 1976).

There are at least two possible reasons why the results are equivocal. First, delineating predictors into two groups — background and situational — may be too simplistic for the complex phenomenon being studied. A

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refinement of the independent variable clusters as well as the inclusion of predictors not previously explored may help clarify the issue.

Second, the differing findings may be due to the use of different measures of attitudinal union militancy. For example, some analysts have operationalized the dependent variable as an attitude toward sanction activities (Carlton, 1967; Feuille & Blandin, 1976; Margerison & Elliott, 1970; Ostrander, 1970), while others have described militant attitudes as a favourable opinion of union power or a desire for unions to gain more power and control in order to bring about change (Donnenwerth & Cox, 1978; Hellriegel, et al., 1970; Kornhauser, 1965). With increasing frequency, researchers are employing multidimensional scales of militancy to represent the various perspectives of the construct (Black, 1983; Davis, 1973; Dolan, 1979; Dull, 1971; Schutt, 1982; Shirom, 1977; Wohnsiedler, 1975). Unfortunately, most of these instruments have methodological problems such as low reliability. Clearly there is a need to re-examine this subject from a multidimensional perspective using sound measures of attitudinal union militancy.

The main objective of this study is to determine the relative importance of several groups of variables in predicting the two dimensions of attitudinal union militancy described above. The five categories representing fourteen predictors include demographic, parental, social, job characteristic, and union / job attitude factors and the determination of their relative contribution is based upon standardized hierarchical regression analysis to reflect their implicit causal priority. In order to overcome the methodological problems of low reliability and uncertain construct validity evident in earlier studies, the measures employed here have been carefully pretested and factor analyzed, as described below.

In addition to identifying the sources of militant attitudes, this study extends previous findings by analyzing data from a public sector union in Canada. Although public sector unions have grown as rapidly as teacher federations in both Canada and the United States (Lewin & Goldenberg, 1980), the latter group has received almost all of the attention in union militancy research. However, there is a trend toward studying public sector union members (Shirom, 1977; Schutt, 1982) as well as employees in more traditionally unionized sectors (Nelson & Grams, 1978; Stagner & Eflal, 1982).

Finally, this study compares the correlates of both measures of attitudinal union militancy with a measure of attitude toward unions in general. The purpose of this comparison is to determine the extent to which militant attitudes are distinct from or comparable to general union attitude and thereby develop a better understanding of how attitudinal union militancy aligns conceptually with opinions of unionism.

CORRELATES OF ATTITUDINAL UNION MILITANCY

Several demographic variables have been studied as predictors of attitudinal union militancy but only a few have made any significant contribution to the analysis. Gender has consistently been a significant correlate of militancy with men being more militant in their attitudes than women (Black, 1983; Carlton, 1967; Davis, 1973; Dolan, 1979; Dull, 1971; Fox & Wince, 1976; Hellriegel et al., 1970; Margerison & Elliott, 1970; Max, 1978; Warren, 1971; Wohnsiedler, 1975). However, almost all of this research has been based on samples of teachers and the most frequent explanation for this finding — that male teachers experience more relative deprivation than female teachers because they have greater alternative occupational choices — might not be applicable in a sample of public sector employees who work in a variety of occupations. In fact, the only known published study of public sector employees to include the variable reported no significant association with attitudinal union militancy (Schutt, 1982).

The age of the union member is the other demographic factor which has been consistently predictive of attitudinal union militancy. Specifically, older employees tend to be less militant than younger employees (Alutto & Belasco, 1974; Cocanougher, 1971; Donnenwerth & Cox, 1978; Feuille & Blandin, 1976; Hellriegel et al., 1970; Max, 1978; Schutt, 1982; Shirom, 1977). It has been suggested that older workers are less militant because they are more satisfied with their jobs (Cocanougher, 1971; Donnenwerth & Cox, 1978), but others have found a negative association between age and attitudinal union militancy even when controlling for job satisfaction (Feuille & Blandin, 1976; Schutt, 1982). The other explanation for their finding is that older union members, particularly professionals such as teachers, once worked in a social milieu which was not as sympathetic to labour unions and the sanctions they impose. Fox and Wince (1976) contrast this with younger teachers who have been exposed to examples of apparently successful militant actions. Thus, the more militant attitudes among younger union members may be due to different cohort experiences.

Given the evidence that education is often associated with union attitudes (DeCotiis & Lelouarn, 1981; Gordon et al., 1980; Krahn & Lowe, 1984; Stern & Murphy, 1980; Uphoff & Dunnette, 1956), one would expect that union members with higher levels of formal education would also have less militant attitudes. This relationship was reported in one study of public sector employees (Schutt, 1982) but not in three studies of teachers (Dolan, 1979; Fox & Wince, 1976; Wohnsiedler, 1975). The latter findings might not be surprising, however, considering the restriction of range in the educational level of a sample of teachers.

Each of the three demographic variables discussed above are indicators of certain socialization experiences which might influence the union member's attitudes toward unions and sanction activities. Parental and social factors also figure into the socialization of attitudes (Jennings & Niemi, 1968; Landis, 1977) and therefore might be viewed as additional influences on attitudinal union militancy. To date, there is evidence that individuals whose parents were union members tend to hold more militant opinions (Wohnsiedler, 1975). Presumably, the union affiliation of friends as well as the perceived union attitudes of both parents and friends would also influence the individual's militancy. There is no direct research on this for militant attitudes, but two recent studies discovered that reference group experiences, particularly the attitudes of friends and coworkers, have a significant impact on the respondent's own attitude toward unions in general (Gordon, Philpot, Burt, Thompson & Spiller, 1980; Maxey & Mohrman, 1980). Another research project identified parents' union orientation as a correlate of the individual's own union orientation (Nicholson, Ursell & Blyton, 1981).

Most investigators of union militancy have preferred to look at job attitudes rather than job characteristics as possible situational factors. Nevertheless, in keeping with the chronological grouping of predictors in the present study, two job characteristics will be analyzed. One of these is salary because it is the most frequently studied job characteristic in this subject. Three studies have looked at the influence of salary on attitudinal union militancy with the hypothesis that lower wage earners will be more favourable to sanction activities (Dolan, 1979; Schutt, 1982; Shirom, 1977). Only Shirom (1977) found support for this hypothesis, although Schutt (1982) calculated a significant bivariate correlation which diminished considerably in the regression equation. Dolan's (1979) research reported positive coefficients between salary and both of his militancy subscales but neither was statistically significant.

The other job characteristic included in the present study is employment status, namely, whether the employee has permanent or temporary status in the organization. Based on the assumption that permanent employees have a greater vested interest in their jobs, it is anticipated that they will hold more militant attitudes than temporary employees.

Job satisfaction and its various facets head the list of union and job attitudes which have received much attention in union militancy research. Generally, job satisfaction has been found to be negatively associated with attitudinal union militancy (Davis, 1973; Dolan, 1979; Donnenwerth & Cox, 1978; Dull, 1971; Feuille & Blandin, 1976; Giandomenico, 1973; Hellriegel et al., 1970; Jennings, 1977; Kephart, 1982; Porter, 1973; Schutt,

1982; Slusher, 1980). However, the strength of the relationship varies with each particular facet of the job. Satisfaction with salary and administrative dimensions correlate with militant attitudes in most of the research while satisfaction with coworkers has typically been unrelated. A reasonable explanation for this is that sanction activities are not viewed as being instrumental in improving the rapport among coworkers whereas they are more effective against dissatisfaction with other extrinsic facets of the job and work environment.

In addition to extrinsic job satisfaction, satisfaction with the work itself is expected to be negatively correlated with attitudinal union militancy based on the findings of previous research (Feuille & Blandin, 1976; Giandomenico, 1973; Kephart, 1982; Slusher, 1980). There are two possible explanations for this. First, as Dubin (1973) points out, the individual's attachment to work influences his or her union militancy. Since the work itself is a source of work attachment, union members who are more satisfied with the work they do will have less militant attitudes. The other option is simply that problems with the context of work can be controlled to some extent by management and, therefore, union sanctions are more likely to be viewed favourable since they can be instrumental in changing job content. To the extent that situational rather than personal background factors are the source of union militancy, satisfaction with the work itself should be a significant correlate.

Organizational commitment and management aspirations should be negatively correlated with attitudinal union militancy since both imply a positive attitude towards the object of union sanctions. In particular, it is unlikely that individuals who feel loyal to the company or who eventually hope to enter a management position will be favourable to militant union activities. No research on union militancy has yet studied the effect of career intentions such as management aspirations. Alutto and Belasco (1974) did report that professional employees who were more loyal to their organizations were less enthusiastic about collective bargaining, but this variable had no significant association with attitude toward strikes by professionals.

Finally, it appears that individuals who are satisfied with their union local tend to hold more militant attitudes. For this association, both Dolan (1979) and Schutt (1982) calculated a moderate coefficient (i.e., $\beta = .10$), but this attained a level of statistical significance only in Dolan's research. Nevertheless, militant employees are more willing to use the union to resolve work-related conflicts (Porter, 1973) and are more likely to approach their union steward than the supervisor if a problem arises which might lead to a grievance (Schutt, 1982).

As explained earlier, previous research has brought forth mixed findings regarding which of these groups of variables have a greater influence on attitudinal militancy. Moreover, it is unclear to what extent the previous research on militancy among teachers can be generalized to other groups such as public sector employees and how militant attitudes compare with the general attitude toward unions. These questions are addressed in the data presented below.

METHOD

Sample

The data were obtained from a questionnaire as well as employer files of members of a municipal government union local (inside employees) situated in southern Ontario. Out of the population of 482 union members who were sent questionnaires, 297 (62 percent) returned completed booklets. A comparison of the characteristics of the respondents with the population showed virtually identical distribution with respect to gender, marital status, grievance filing, and presenting or seconding motions at general membership meetings. The respondents were slightly younger than the population and this was also reflected in a slightly lower distribution in salary and seniority. Overall, the respondent group appears to be quite representative of the population. The questionnaire data were matched with respondent information from personnel records through confidential serial numbers which were clearly marked on the questionnaire.

Measures

Dependent Variables. Three criteria are included in this study*. *Union power militancy* (alpha = .84) indicates the individual's attitude regarding how much power unions ought to have. It is measured by six statements (e.g., «Unions are too powerful in our society.») and is comparable to the union power scales derived from factor analysis by other authors (e.g., Huszco, 1983; Kochan, 1978; Krahn & Lowe, 1984). A high score indicates that the respondent is supportive of the power of unions. *Job action militancy* (alpha = .85) indicates the person's attitude toward and willingness to engage in various union-related job actions. The scale is measured by six statements (e.g., «I would not hesitate to participate in a

* A copy of all measures is available upon request from the author.

work slowdown with other union members.»). In addition to the two militancy instruments described above, this investigation looked, for comparative purposes, at the correlates of a general union attitude measure called the *Value of Unions* scale ($\alpha = .85$). The scale is a composite of eight items with a seven-point response format (e.g., «I am proud to be a member of the labour movement in Canada.»).

Items from all three scales had a seven-point Likert-type response format and were mixed together on two pages of the 12-page questionnaire. Scale totals represent the sum of the response scores among the items in each respective measure.

Each item was assigned to its respective construct prior to factor analysis based upon the results of the pretest version of the questionnaire completed by a sub-sample of 130 union members six months earlier. Although several items in the pretest were deleted and others added, a factor analysis (not shown) of the final data set identified three factors corresponding to the two militancy scales and one general union attitude scale. Simple structure was observed for both the union power militancy and job action militancy scales using an oblique rotation ($\delta = .2$). The third factor clearly corresponded to the value of unions scale but four items overlapped with the job action factor, thereby suggesting a similarity between the union member's attitude toward unions and his or her willingness to engage in sanction activities.

Independent Variables. There are fourteen predictors included in this analysis which are grouped into the five categories previously mentioned. *Gender* is dichotomously coded (0 = female, 1 = male) and *age* represents the union member's age in 1982. *Education* is measured on a six-point scale (1 = Grade 8 or less, 6 = Graduate university attendance). *Parent's union membership* measures whether none, one or both parents were ever members of a union and *parents' union attitude* is a six-point scale indicating both parents' favourableness to unions (2 = neither in favour, 6 = both in favour). *Friends' union membership* is a five-point scale measuring how many of the respondent's friends are members of a labour union (0 = none, 4 = almost all of them). *Friends' union attitude* is a single item scale measuring the perceived attitude that most of the respondent's friends have about unions (1 = not in favour, 3 = in favour). *Salary* represents the union member's gross weekly income standardized to 37 hours per week. *Employment status* indicates whether the person is either on temporary (0) or permanent (1) employment contract.

Union satisfaction measures the person's satisfaction with the union local and is the sum of eleven aspects of the union (e.g., handling grievances, getting better wages, listening to members) using a seven-point

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Zero-Order Correlations

| <i>Variables</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | Mean | SD |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|------|-----|------|------|------|--------|-------|
| 1. Union Power Militancy (84) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 24.48 | 9.44 |
| 2. Job Action Militancy (85) | 58 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 30.49 | 8.62 |
| 3. Value of Unions (85) | 51 | 73 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 44.22 | 9.62 |
| 4. Gender (0 = Female, 1 = Male) | 02 | -07 | -03 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | .35 | .48 |
| 5. Age | -02 | 17 | 21 | 12 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | | 35.62 | 11.96 |
| 6. Education | 01 | -17 | -18 | -09 | -32 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | | 4.07 | 1.17 |
| 7. Parents' Union Membership | 07 | 02 | -00 | 08 | -16 | 01 | -- | | | | | | | | | | | .77 | .66 |
| 8. Parents' Union Attitude | 14 | 24 | 31 | 07 | 11 | -18 | 43 | -- | | | | | | | | | | 4.40 | 1.19 |
| 9. Friends' Union Membership | 24 | 32 | 27 | 08 | 15 | -17 | 12 | 24 | -- | | | | | | | | | 2.48 | 1.02 |
| 10. Friends' Union Attitude | 25 | 38 | 41 | -01 | 16 | -12 | 08 | 30 | 35 | -- | | | | | | | | 2.40 | .62 |
| 11. Salary (Weekly) | 14 | 20 | 10 | 19 | 35 | 09 | -11 | -03 | -00 | -01 | -- | | | | | | | 355.18 | 93.15 |
| 12. Employment Status (0 = Temp, 1 = Perm) | 18 | 25 | 13 | 04 | 26 | -19 | -13 | -04 | 11 | -02 | 58 | -- | | | | | | .74 | .43 |
| 13. Union Satisfaction | 05 | 12 | 23 | -11 | 10 | -04 | -15 | 04 | -05 | 10 | 13 | 12 | (91) | | | | | 52.59 | 14.72 |
| 14. Managerial Aspirations | -16 | -18 | -23 | 21 | -13 | 30 | 06 | -12 | -03 | -01 | 00 | -16 | -24 | -- | | | | 2.00 | 1.08 |
| 15. Extrinsic Satisfaction | -13 | -13 | -03 | -10 | -19 | 15 | -08 | -07 | -15 | -14 | 07 | -06 | 38 | -04 | (86) | | | 79.49 | 31.16 |
| 16. Work Satisfaction | -19 | -15 | -04 | -06 | 04 | -03 | -09 | -00 | 02 | -07 | 04 | -08 | 13 | 03 | 26 | (80) | | 32.60 | 11.03 |
| 17. Organizational Commitment | -17 | 01 | 10 | 06 | 29 | -13 | -00 | 05 | 05 | 07 | 10 | 01 | 21 | 07 | 14 | 31 | (71) | 23.52 | 6.11 |

Decimal points have been omitted.

Mean substitution of missing values occurred in a maximum of nine cases per variable.

Internal consistency reliabilities are in brackets.

Critical Values are $r > \pm .11, p < .05, r > \pm .15, p < .01; r > \pm .20, p < .001$

response scale (1 = very dissatisfied, 7 = very satisfied). For *managerial aspirations*, respondents were asked on a four-point scale how important it is to them to eventually hold a management job (1 = not at all important, 4 = very important). *Extrinsic satisfaction* is the weighted composite of the pay, promotions, and supervision subscales from the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969). *Work satisfaction* is the work subscale from the JDI. Lastly, *organizational commitment* is a five-item index with statements similar to those found in Mowday, Steers & Porter (1979) (e.g., «I feel a sense of pride working for this company.»). Responses to each item are on a seven-point Likert-type scale.

Procedure. Standardized hierarchical multiple regression analysis is employed to study the associations between the criteria and predictors. In the hierarchical multiple regression method, the researcher predetermines the order of entry of the variables either individually or in blocks, usually based upon a theoretical model (Cohen & Cohen, 1975; Kerlinger & Pedhazér, 1973). In the present study, the five blocks of independent variables are added to the equation in chronological order, beginning with demographic variables.

RESULTS

Correlations among all of the variables included in this study are reported in Table 1. Means and standard deviations are also presented and the internal consistency reliabilities for the multi-item measures are shown in brackets along the diagonal. Since the maximum number of missing cases was only nine out of the 297 (most variables had fewer than three missing cases), it was decided to substitute these missing values with sample means.

The results of the three hierarchical standardized multiple regression analyses are presented in Table 2. Unlike previous research, men do not hold more militant attitudes in the present sample. In fact, for job action militancy, women seem to have higher scores. Younger union members have higher levels of union power militancy. And while education was negatively correlated with job action militancy in the bivariate analysis (Table 1), this effect disappeared in the multiple regression analysis in Table 2. None of the three demographic variables covary with attitude towards unions in general.

Parental factors have little apparent effect on union power militancy but parents' union attitude has a statistically significant correlation with job action militancy. These variables, particularly parental union attitudes, provide greater explanatory power to the value of unions scale.

TABLE 2
Standardized Regression Analyses of Factors Related
to Union Militancy and Value Attitudes

| <i>Independent Variables</i> | <i>Dependent Variables</i> | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>Union Power Militancy</i> | <i>Job Action Militancy</i> | <i>Value of Unions</i> |
| <i>Demographic Factors</i> | | | |
| Gender | .03 | -.13* | -.03 |
| Age | -.14* | -.05 | .04 |
| Education | .08 | -.07 | -.04 |
| <i>Parental Factors</i> | | | |
| Parents' Union Membership | .01 | -.04 | -.08 |
| Parents' Union Attitude | .05 | .13* | .19** |
| <i>Social Factors</i> | | | |
| Friends' Union Membership | .17** | .20*** | .12* |
| Friends' Union Attitude | .18** | .24*** | .28*** |
| <i>Job Characteristic Factors</i> | | | |
| Salary | .14* | .22** | .07 |
| Employment Status | .09 | .07 | .02 |
| <i>Union/Job Attitude Factors</i> | | | |
| Union Satisfaction | .07 | .07 | .14* |
| Managerial Aspirations | -.16** | -.09 | -.14* |
| Extrinsic Satisfaction | -.11 | -.08 | -.01 |
| Work Satisfaction | -.11 | -.14** | -.06 |
| Organizational Commitment | -.11 | .01 | .04 |
| R | .47 | .56 | .55 |
| R ² | .22 | .32 | .30 |
| R ² adj. | .18 | .28 | .27 |
| Overall F | 5.67*** | 9.34*** | 8.75*** |

N = 297

* p < .05

** p < .01

*** p < .001

Both friends' union membership and attitude account for unique variance in all three dependent variables. Apparently, these social factors have a major influence on the individual's attitudes towards union power, job actions, and unions in general.

Employment status is not a significant factor in attitudinal union militancy. Employees with higher salaries are significantly more militant than those in lower income brackets, a finding which is contrary to expectations. Neither job characteristic factor has a significant effect on general union attitude.

With respect to union and job attitudes, union satisfaction covaries significantly only with the value of unions scale. As predicted, union members with managerial aspirations hold less militant opinions, but only for union power militancy. While the correlations between both measures of job satisfaction (i.e., extrinsic and work) and the two union militancy scales are in the predicted direction, only one of the work satisfaction beta weights is statistically significant. Organizational commitment does not substantially contribute to either equation, although the coefficient is in the predicted direction for union power militancy. As would be anticipated, those union members who hold positive opinions of unionism also tend to be more satisfied with the union local and are less interested in a management career. The nonsignificant coefficient between organizational commitment and the value of unions scale is consistent with the dual loyalty concept.

The three equations in Table 2 explain between one-fifth and one-third of the variance in each of the union attitudes under examination. This is somewhat better than in previous research where linear equations have rarely explained more than 15 percent of the variance (Conklin, 1982; Dolan, 1979; Kephart, 1982; Shirom, 1977; Wohnsiedler, 1975).

In order to determine the relative contribution of each block of variables to each of the three overall regression equations, the summary statistics for the hierarchical analyses are shown in Table 3. The order in which each group of variables was entered into the hierarchical analyses reflects implicit hypotheses regarding the causal priority of the variables. The demographic and parental factors were entered first and second, respectively, reflecting the need to control for these background variables in assessing the role of subsequent groups. The two social variables were added in the third step, followed by job characteristic factors in the fourth step. Union and job attitudinal factors were entered last to determine whether they contributed any unique variance beyond that accounted for by the previous groups of variables in each of the three equations.

TABLE 3
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses

| Step | Independent Variable Group | Full Equation at Each Step | | | Change From Previous Step | | |
|--|--|----------------------------|----------|--------|---------------------------|----------|-------|
| | | R ² | F | df | ΔR ² | ΔF | Δdf |
| <i>Dependent = Union Power Militancy</i> | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Demographic | .00 | .11 | 3/293 | .00 | .108 | 3/293 |
| 2 | Demographic, Parental | .02 | 1.38 | 5/291 | .02 | 3.29* | 2/291 |
| 3 | Demographic, Parental, Social | .10 | 4.59*** | 7/289 | .08 | 12.34*** | 2/289 |
| 4 | Demographic, Parental, Social, Job Characteristic | .15 | 5.47*** | 9/287 | .05 | 7.80** | 2/287 |
| 5 | Demographic, Parental, Social, Job Characteristic, Attitudinal | .22 | 5.67*** | 14/282 | .07 | 5.29*** | 5/282 |
| <i>Dependent = Job Action Militancy</i> | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Demographic | .05 | 5.46** | 3/293 | .05 | 5.46** | 3/293 |
| 2 | Demographic, Parental | .10 | 6.57*** | 5/291 | .05 | 7.86*** | 2/291 |
| 3 | Demographic, Parental, Social | .22 | 11.60*** | 7/289 | .12 | 21.80*** | 2/289 |
| 4 | Demographic, Parental, Social, Job Characteristic | .28 | 12.52*** | 9/287 | .06 | 12.50*** | 2/287 |
| 5 | Demographic, Parental, Social, Job Characteristic, Attitudinal | .32 | 9.34*** | 14/282 | .04 | 2.89* | 5/282 |
| <i>Dependent = Value of Unions</i> | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Demographic | .06 | 6.74*** | 3/293 | .06 | 6.74*** | 3/293 |
| 2 | Demographic, Parental | .15 | 10.10*** | 5/291 | .08 | 14.21*** | 2/291 |
| 3 | Demographic, Parental, Social | .25 | 13.68*** | 7/289 | .10 | 19.45*** | 2/289 |
| 4 | Demographic, Parental, Social, Job Characteristic | .26 | 11.19*** | 9/287 | .01 | 2.11 | 2/287 |
| 5 | Demographic, Parental, Social, Job Characteristic, Attitudinal | .30 | 8.75*** | 14/282 | .04 | 3.47** | 5/282 |

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

The results in Table 3 show that there are differences in the relative contribution of each block of variables for the three dependent variables. Specifically, demographic and parental factors account for a substantial proportion of the variance in the value of unions scale and a moderate amount in job action militancy, but makes an insignificant contribution in the union power militancy equation. Social factors provide considerable explanatory power to all three union attitudes, but the largest amount of variance explained is for job action militancy. Lastly, job characteristic and union/job attitude variables are important factors in the union power militancy equation and, to a lesser extent, the job action militancy equation, but are only of marginal value in explaining variance in the value of unions equation. Overall, Table 3 suggests that the work situation (including attitudes and job characteristics) and social factors are the major sources of union power militancy whereas job action militancy and general union attitude are due more to background (i.e., demographic and parental) and social factors.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The major objective of this study was to determine the relative importance of demographic, parental, social, job characteristic, and attitudinal variables in predicting two forms of attitudinal union militancy. The research also extended previous findings to municipal government union members in Canada and compared the correlation of union militancy with those of general attitude toward unionism.

The findings reported here are consistent with those observed in another public service union (Schutt, 1982) but are somewhat at odds with some of the research on teachers (Dolan, 1979; Donnenwerth & Cox, 1978; Feuille & Blandin, 1976). More specifically, these results suggest that an individual's willingness to engage in sanction activities (job action militancy) is more closely associated with background and social factors than with the immediate work situation whereas job characteristics and union/job attitudes have a somewhat greater association with one's perception of how much power unions should have (union power militancy). Indeed, the high correlation in Table 1 between job action militancy and value of unions and their similar multiple regression equations suggest that the job action militancy attitude is anchored more in the socialization of the individual's attitude toward unionism than in a reaction to the immediate work situation.

Job action militancy can therefore be viewed to some extent as representing the behavioural intention component of the belief in unionism

(Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Those who believe that unionism is a valuable institution in our society (cognition) and therefore have more positive feelings toward unionism (affect) will be more willing to act in support of it (behavioural intention). In contrast, union power militancy seems to be due to both social and immediate context factors but is not quite as closely aligned structurally with value of unions. One should be careful not to polarize the two militancy attitudes too much, however, since both social factors and general union attitude correlate strongly with both measures of militancy.

The relevance of social factors in both union militancy equations requires further mention because this step in the regression equation has not received much direct attention in previous militancy research. The observation that the two militancy variables are closely associated with both friends' union membership and union attitude is consistent with the idea that mutual support is an important aspect of collective action. This also manifests the idea that attitudes are socially bestowed and therefore must be socially maintained (Berger, 1963). Militant activities and the very institution of unionism are collective phenomena which are founded upon mutual interests, beliefs, and values. Therefore, the more a union member is integrated into the union culture through friendship ties, the more he or she is likely to support collective actions and union power.

Notwithstanding the complex relationship between militant attitudes and behaviour, this research also points to the demographic and other background characteristics of the organization's workforce as possible sources of labour strife. It is possible, for example, that corporate recruitment and selection practices might have a long term impact upon the willingness of the local union membership to engage in strikes and other job actions. This is similar to the current policy of some manufacturing firms to locate their operations in rural communities or, at least, to recruit people from nearby rural areas where union sentiment is low.

While this study has added to our understanding of attitudinal union militancy, there is still much to be learned from further research. First, as previous writers have urged (Schutt, 1982; Shirom, 1977; Wohnsiedler, 1975), further analysis of the dimensionality of attitudinal union militancy is required. The present study examined two predetermined factors representing clearly different types of militant attitudes. Subsequent studies should re-examine these measures to determine their generalizability. Second, the connection between general union attitude (value of unions) and each form of attitudinal union militancy should be further investigated. For example, it would be interesting to discover whether the willingness to participate in all forms of union sanctions or just certain types are associated

strongly with general attitude toward unionism. Finally, it would be useful to expand this research to other industrial and occupational groups including those in traditionally unionized sectors as well as those who are moving more toward the union model of collective bargaining. For instance, are social factors as important in union militancy among employees who have only recently become organized or does the immediate work environment play a relatively greater role in the formation of these attitudes? By studying the sources of militant attitudes in other contexts, the generalizability of the model presented here can be tested.

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Les sources de militantisme syndical

Les attitudes relatives à l'activité militante des syndicats ainsi que leur puissance ont beaucoup retenu l'attention au cours de la dernière décennie à la suite du développement du syndicalisme dans des industries et des professions qui, auparavant, n'avaient guère connu de relations conflictuelles. La plupart des travaux ont tenté de découvrir si ces attitudes proviennent surtout de la conjoncture du milieu de travail ou des opinions et des valeurs ayant cours dans la société que les travailleurs transposent dans la profession ou à l'usine. Ainsi, même si la recherche est devenue très sophistiquée, la question n'en est pas pour autant résolue à cause de constatations contradictoires.

L'objectif principal de la présente étude est de déceler l'importance relative de plusieurs groupes de variables en considérant les deux dimensions que revêt le militantisme syndical, c'est-à-dire le militantisme en milieu de travail et le militantisme du syndicat lui-même. Les cinq catégories, qui représentent quatorze indicateurs, comprennent des facteurs démographiques, familiaux, sociaux, professionnels et d'activisme en milieu de travail. La détermination de leur contribution relative se fonde sur une analyse de régression graduée normalisée de manière à refléter l'importance causale implicite des dits facteurs. L'étude compare aussi la corrélation des deux mesures de l'attitude militante des syndicats avec une mesure du comportement des individus à l'endroit du syndicalisme en général. Le but de cette comparaison est d'établir dans quelle mesure les attitudes militantes sont distinguées du comportement à l'endroit du syndicalisme ou peuvent s'y comparer, et, de ce fait, permettre une meilleure compréhension de la façon dont ces attitudes s'alignent avec les opinions que l'on professe sur le syndicalisme.

Les données sur lesquelles repose l'étude furent tirées d'une enquête à laquelle ont répondu 297 membres (sur une possibilité de 482) d'un syndicat d'employés municipaux du sud de l'Ontario. Les trois variables dépendantes — le militantisme syndical, l'activisme syndical en milieu de travail et l'attitude générale à l'endroit du syndicalisme — ont été rendues opérationnelles à partir de questions multiples très crédibles. Les mesures furent établies à partir d'abord d'un échantillon initial

recueilli six mois plus tôt suivi de l'analyse des données qui ont servi à l'étude. L'analyse des facteurs (par rotation oblique) dissociait nettement les questions relatives au pouvoir du syndicat du militantisme sur les lieux du travail. Le troisième facteur identifiait les questions portant sur l'appréciation du syndicalisme, mais la moitié de ces questions valait aussi pour le facteur du militantisme sur les lieux du travail. Ainsi, l'attitude du syndiqué à l'endroit du syndicalisme semble en quelque sorte similaire à sa volonté de s'engager dans une activité de lutte.

Les analyses de régression normalisée laissent présager que la volonté de s'engager dans une activité de lutte (c'est-à-dire le militantisme sur les lieux du travail) est rattachée davantage aux antécédents et à des facteurs sociaux qu'à la conjoncture du milieu de travail, alors que les caractéristiques de l'emploi et les attitudes syndicales et professionnelles sont davantage reliées à sa propre perception de ce que devrait être le pouvoir du syndicat (le militantisme syndical). Les résultats en ce qui concerne l'attitude à l'endroit du syndicalisme se rapprochent plus de l'activisme syndical en milieu de travail que du militantisme du syndicat. Ainsi, on peut considérer dans une certaine mesure le militantisme sur les lieux du travail comme la composante fondamentale de la confiance au syndicalisme.

En plus de la distinction entre les deux attitudes militantistes et de leur correspondance avec le comportement à l'endroit du syndicalisme en général, les constatations rapportées ont montré l'importance des facteurs sociaux comme explication de ces attitudes. Des corrélations significatives entre les deux attitudes militantistes et l'adhésion syndicale de même que le comportement des amis ont souligné le fait que ces attitudes se concilient socialement et que, en conséquence, elles doivent être soutenues socialement. Aussi, plus un syndiqué est intégré à un milieu de culture syndicale par les liens de l'amitié, plus il est probable qu'il appuiera les actions collectives et le pouvoir du syndicat.