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Members and Nonmembers: Determinants of Dues-Paying Membership in a Bargaining Unit

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Article abstract

This study builds on the union organizing and free-rider literature by examining determinants of dues-paying membership in the Temple Association of University Professionals (TAUP). The TAUP, an American Federation of Teachers affiliate, is the collective bargaining representative for 992 members of the Temple University faculty, 52 percent of whom are dues-paying members. Results indicate that attitudes about unions in general, the costs of union dues, the perception of alternative faculty governance effectiveness, and beliefs about the appropriateness of unionization for professional employees were related to joining behaviour. In contrast, job attitudes, attitudes about the employer, perceived bargaining unit effectiveness, and political ideology were not significant predictors of membership status.

Members and Nonmembers

Determinants of Dues-Paying Membership in a Bargaining Unit

JOHN A. McCLENDON

This study builds on the union organizing and free-rider literature by examining determinants of dues-paying membership in the Temple Association of University Professionals (TAUP). The TAUP, an American Federation of Teachers affiliate, is the collective bargaining representative for 992 members of the Temple University faculty, 52 percent of whom are dues-paying members. Results indicate that attitudes about unions in general, the costs of union dues, the perception of alternative faculty governance effectiveness, and beliefs about the appropriateness of unionization for professional employees were related to joining behaviour. In contrast, job attitudes, attitudes about the employer, perceived bargaining unit effectiveness, and political ideology were not significant predictors of membership status.

The crisis facing organized labour over the past two decades has led to a broad array of research concerning union membership and organizing. Among the membership-related issues that have received considerable attention are organizing strategies (Bronfenbrenner 1997), alternative union membership (Ichniowski and Zax 1990), and employee voting behaviour in union certification elections (McClendon, Wheeler and Weikle 1998). This extensive research has been instrumental in identifying a number of correlates to the employee's decision to support unionization and union membership.

The impact of right-to-work laws (RTW) on union density (Baird 1998; Davis and Huston 1993; Moore 1998) and the issue of free ridership

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(Chaison and Dhavale 1992; Sobel 1995) has also generated a good deal of research interest. Free ridership — bargaining unit members who are covered by collective bargaining agreements but choose not to be dues-paying union members — has been associated with certain demographic characteristics in macro-level studies (Moore 1998; Sobel 1995). While these macro-level studies have contributed to our understanding of dues-paying behaviour, research on the individual's motivations to become a dues-paying member of an existing bargaining unit has lagged far behind the literature on employee voting behaviour in certification elections (Chaison and Dhavale 1992).

A better understanding of what facilitates a bargaining unit member's decision to become a dues-paying member is an important question. Possible non-dues-paying situations include all private sector units in the 20 RTW states as well as private sector units in non-RTW states that are not successful in negotiating "agency membership" clauses. Membership rates indicate that the percentage of private sector bargaining unit employees who are nonmembers is approximately 17 percent in RTW states and approximately 7 percent in non-RTW states (Sobel 1995). With respect to union contracts that include union shop provisions, only 77 percent of workers covered by collective bargaining contracts in non-RTW states work under union shop clauses (Davis and Huston 1993; Moore 1998). In addition to private sector membership, state legislation with respect to public sector units varies considerably, with many states prohibiting mandatory membership agreements for state, county, and municipal employees. In all of these bargaining situations, the union is confronted with the ongoing challenge of recruiting and retaining dues-paying members.

Recognizing the importance of the non-payer issue, the AFL-CIO Committee on the Evolution of Work (1985) emphasized the importance of internal organizing efforts designed to turn nonmembers and non-payers to enthusiastic dues-paying members. However, although dues-paying status among bargaining unit members is an increasingly relevant issue to current AFL-CIO organizing strategy, there is little research to guide those launching internal organizing campaigns (Chaison and Dhavale 1992). This study attempts to build on both the union organizing and the union membership literature by examining determinants of dues-paying membership in a long-standing bargaining unit.

Given that non-dues-paying members already have union representation, the decision to join a bargaining unit is different from voting in union certification elections. Nevertheless, many of the determinants identified in the union organizing literature may be useful in understanding the decision to join, especially given union strategies to organize non-dues-paying members. Using conceptual frameworks from the organizing literature, this

article examines determinants of dues-paying membership status among faculty members represented by the Temple Association of University Professionals (TAUP). The TAUP, a 992 member American Federation of Teachers (AFT)-affiliated bargaining unit, represents the Temple University faculty and librarians, 515 of whom are dues-paying members. This analysis of TAUP dues-paying membership attempts to shed light on the motivations of individual bargaining unit members to become or not become dues-paying members.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Since this study seeks to expand the free-rider literature by examining determinants of dues-paying membership that are drawn from the union organizing literature, a brief overview of the research findings in the two literatures is in order.

Union organizing has been the subject of extensive empirical research with a host of studies examining determinants of the individual employee's decision to support unionization (McClendon, Wheeler and Weikle 1998). While there is significant variation among the many studies in the predictors of individual support for unionization examined, most determinants investigated involve job attitudes, union attitudes, campaign tactics, and demographics.

One of the most frequently examined issues has been the relationship between job satisfaction and voting for union certification. This body of research has included overall satisfaction measures as well as various facets of job satisfaction (Wheeler and McClendon 1991). These studies have consistently found that job dissatisfaction is related to employee support for union certification (McClendon, Wheeler and Weikle 1998).

Two types of union attitudes have been examined in several studies: general attitudes about unions and perceptions of union effectiveness or instrumentality. First, a general negative perception of unions or the role of unionization in society has been shown to have a significant negative impact on an employee's propensity to support union formation. Second, in contrast to general attitudes about unions, the perception of a specific union's ability to be effective has received much research attention. These findings suggest that perceived union utility is perhaps the most consistent predictor of union support. In addition to the union organizing literature, research on union instrumentality has also been shown to impact other individual union member behaviour, including strike participation (McClendon and Klaas 1993, 1995) and union participation (Klandermans 1986).

Perhaps one of the most important recent trends in union organizing research has been the increased focus on the role of the union campaign. Although several studies had examined campaign tactics, (e.g., Hurd and McElwain 1988), most of this research did not focus on the link between campaign tactics and employee behaviour outcomes (Weikle, Wheeler and McClendon 1998). More recently, research has focused on the impact of campaign issues and tactics. For example, Brofenbrenner and Juravich (1995) found that union campaign tactics can have an important impact on union election win rates. Specific campaign tactics that have been shown to influence union support include person-to-person contact and communications that emphasize the values of democracy and participation (Brofenbrenner and Juravich 1995; Brofenbrenner 1997).

The correlation of demographic characteristics with individual support for unionization has received considerable attention. Research on such variables as age, gender, race, and education has generated mixed results (McClendon, Wheeler and Weikle 1998). Many argue that demographic characteristics function as proxies for underlying constructs (Fiorito, Gallagher and Greer 1986). As such, given that demographic variables may not adequately measure the underlying construct, it is not surprising that inconsistencies have been observed (McClendon and Klaas 1993).

Although it has received considerably less research focus, the issue of free riding has also been the subject of empirical examination. For example, some macro-level studies have identified some demographic characteristics as correlates with free-riding behaviour. Based on simple correlations, research has identified females, public employees, and white-collar employees as more likely to free ride than other employees, while older and more experienced employees are less likely to be non-dues-paying members (Chaison and Dhavale 1992; Davis and Huston 1993; Sobel 1995; Moore 1998). Given that the issue of right-to-work (RTW) laws is closely connected to the free-rider issue, some research has examined dues-paying behaviour in the context of the impact of RTW. While this research indicates that overall free-riding behaviour is greater in RTW states than in non-RTW states, some have concluded that other factors besides RTW laws must influence the decision to free ride (Moore 1998).

Most research on free-riding behaviour has focused on macro-level analyses of correlates with dues-paying membership. This study attempts to extend the free-rider literature by examining the decision to be a dues-payer instead of a free-rider in the context of a specific bargaining unit. By examining determinants to joining behaviour in a single well established bargaining unit, the findings of the voluminous research on union organizing are utilized to develop and assess hypotheses on the dues-paying membership. In doing so, the decision to join an existing unit is treated, at least in part, as similar to supporting union certification.

DETERMINANTS OF DUES-PAYING MEMBERSHIP

Job Attitudes and the Link to Joining

As stated earlier, one of the most consistent findings in the union organizing literature concerns the influence of dissatisfaction on employee support for unionization (McClendon, Wheeler and Weikle 1998). Because dissatisfaction is thought to motivate employees to search for ways to redress employment problems (DeCottis and LeLouarn 1981), dissatisfied employees are more likely to support the union in certification elections. Likewise, an existing bargaining unit serves as a mechanism to represent employees in resolving work-related problems. As such, when searching for ways to redress problems, dissatisfied employees are likely to turn to the existing certified representative as a means of dealing with the source of the dissatisfaction. Given that dissatisfaction may accentuate alienation from management and, conversely, draw employees closer to the union, it is predicted that as dissatisfaction increases, the likelihood of choosing to be a dues-paying member increases. Four measures of satisfaction are examined: overall satisfaction with the job, overall compensation, the merit pay system, and the university administration.

Organizational Commitment and Joining

Research suggests that union members may be committed to both the employer and the union (Sherer and Morishima 1989). This dual commitment is most likely to occur in situations characterized by a cooperative labour-management relationship. However, in the context of more adversarial labour-management relations, commitment to the employer should be inversely related to union commitment.

Although the labour-management relationship has recently become more cooperative, the unit examined in this study has experienced two bitter strikes over the past 14 years, including one in 1990 that resulted in a back-to-work injunction after 29 days. Given the bargaining history of this relationship, it is predicted that as commitment to the university increases, so does the likelihood that the faculty member will choose not to be a dues-paying union member.

Union Attitudes and Joining

Although employees may be dissatisfied, it seems unlikely that an individual who views unions negatively would support the union as a means of dealing with their dissatisfaction. Consistent with the organizing literature (McClendon, Wheeler and Weikle 1998), a positive attitude about unions in general would likely predispose one to be favourably inclined to

joining an existing bargaining unit. It can, therefore, be predicted that positive general attitudes about unions will be associated with dues-paying membership.

The decision to join, however, involves a choice with respect to a specific collective bargaining agent. In this study, the union is a long standing unit whose record is well known to all bargaining unit members. As such, in addition to general attitudes about unions, the perception of the specific bargaining unit's effectiveness is predicted to be associated with joining behaviour.

In contrast to more traditionally unionized employees, professional employees may view union representation as inconsistent with professional values. Because the TAUP consists of university faculty, it can be hypothesized that bargaining unit members who believe that professional employee unionization is consistent with professional commitments will be more likely to be dues-paying members.

To evaluate the impact of union attitudes, three variables are therefore assessed: general attitudes about unions, perceptions of TAUP effectiveness, and attitudes about the appropriateness of union representation for professional employees.

The Costs of Dues and Membership

An obvious benefit for bargaining unit members to choose not to become a union member is that the employee receives union representation without paying union dues. To the degree that the employee views membership costs as reasonable, the non-payer incentive should decrease. It can, therefore, be predicted that relative to free riders, dues-paying members will perceive the costs of union dues as reasonable.

Political Ideology and the Decision to Join

Unions are traditionally associated with more liberal as opposed to conservative social views. As such, while more liberal individuals may view becoming a dues-paying member as an extension of their political ideology, faculty members who hold more politically conservative views may be less oriented to joining the union. As individuals define their views as more liberal, it is hypothesized that they are more likely to become dues-paying union members.

Alternative Voice and Joining Behaviour

Most university governance structures include formal faculty representation, typically an elected faculty senate. As a result, university faculty,

in contrast to many occupations, have more participation and influence over workplace practices. Faculty who perceive the nonunion affiliated representative structures as effective may be more likely to view union representation as less important. Because some bargaining unit members may view faculty participation mechanisms as an alternative to union representation, it can be predicted that as the perception of faculty senate effectiveness increases, so does the likelihood the faculty member will not be a dues-paying union member.

Governance Attitudes and the Decision to Join

Individuals likely vary in their beliefs about the appropriate level of employee influence over management decision making. Given that union representation is a form of employee participation that may limit management discretion, those who hold a favourable attitude toward employee influence over university management may be more inclined to view faculty unionism as favourable. A positive relationship between belief in faculty control and the decision to be a dues-paying union member is therefore likely.

THE UNION

Consistent with the 1980 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the *Yeshiva University* case (*NLRB v Yeshiva*, 444 US 672), faculty at private universities are defined as managers under the National Labor Relations Act and, thus, are not able to require employer recognition of certified collective bargaining units. Public universities in the U.S. are, however, covered by the various state collective bargaining laws which may grant recognition and mandate "good faith" bargaining. Although some states do not provide for state employee collective bargaining, the public sector labour relations law in the State of Pennsylvania provides the right to unionize, including the right to strike, to state university faculty. Since Temple University is a state-related university in Pennsylvania, its faculty are covered by a state law that is similar to the U.S. private sector law.

The faculty union was certified as the exclusive representative of the Temple University faculty in 1972. The Temple Association of University Professionals (TAUP) bargaining unit was affiliated with the American Association of University Professionals (AAUP) until 1987 at which time the unit jointly affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AAUP. In 1990 the TAUP became solely affiliated with the AFT.

The bargaining unit has a history of adversarial labour relations with the university administration. There have been two acrimonious and highly

publicized strikes, one that occurred in 1986 and another in 1990. The 1986 labour dispute lasted for 21 days and the 1990 strike lasted for 29 days before the faculty was ordered to return to work by a state court "back to work" injunction. The 1990 strike received extensive media attention and was the subject of empirical study regarding individual strike participation (McClendon and Klaas 1993).

The TAUP bargaining unit includes faculty at all major colleges at Temple University, excluding the law school and the medical school. Although negotiating "fair-share" or agency membership is legally permissible under the state labour relations law, the TAUP contract does not provide for any mandatory membership or for dues payment requirement. Dues payment is provided through payroll "checkoff" and constitutes one percent of the employee's pay; 551 (or 52 percent) of the faculty covered by the contract are dues-paying members. While there has been a slight fluctuation in the percentage of bargaining unit members choosing to be dues paying members over the years, the bargaining unit has a long history of having a substantial percentage of free-riding members.

TAUP offers an attractive opportunity to examine the important issue of free ridership for several reasons. First, given the near even split between dues-payers and non-payers, this bargaining unit provides a unique population to investigate employee perceptions and workplace factors that correlate with the decision to be a dues-paying as opposed to a non-dues-paying member of a bargaining unit. Second, given that the Pennsylvania labour relations law is in many respects similar to federal private sector labour law (e.g. exclusive representation, the right to strike, etc.), this unit is to a significant degree similar to private sector units in which mandatory membership is not present. As such, examination of this unit may provide more generalizable findings. Third, in contrast to newly formed bargaining units, the TAUP is a well established unit with a documented record of representing Temple University faculty. As a result, assessing joining behaviour in this unit permits examination of determinants that involve employee perceptions of a well-known entity with a documented performance record in the workplace.

SAMPLE AND METHODS

Data Gathering and Sample

Questionnaires were mailed to each of the 992 bargaining unit members: 354 were returned, resulting in a 36 percent response rate. Anonymity was promised to all respondents. Questionnaire items, such as demographic variables, that could have identified respondents were excluded. Overall,

62 percent of the respondents — compared to the 52 percent of the population — were dues-paying members, suggesting that dues-payers were somewhat more represented in the sample compared to the population.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is a dichotomized variable (*MEMBER*) that was coded 1 if the respondent reported being a dues-paying member and 0 if not a member.

Independent Variables

Most items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Four variables were used to measure job attitudes. First, a three-item job satisfaction measure (*JOB SATISFACTION*, $\alpha = .66$) adapted from Hackman and Oldham was used (e.g. “generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job”). A four-item measure of satisfaction with the university administration (*ADMIN SATISFACTION*, $\alpha = .82$) was developed (e.g. “this university’s administration has the proper priorities”). To assess satisfaction with overall pay, a two-item measure (*PAY SATISFACTION*, $\alpha = .95$) was included (e.g. “I am satisfied with my overall level of pay”). Satisfaction with merit pay (*MERIT SATISFACTION*) was a one-item measure (“I am satisfied with the merit pay system at Temple”).

A four-item university commitment scale (*ORG COMMITMENT*, $\alpha = .65$) adapted from Gordon and Ladd (1990) was used (e.g. “I really care about the fate of this university”). Three union attitude measures were used. First, to assess perception of general union attitudes, a seven-item measure (*UNION ATTITUDES*, $\alpha = .92$) was developed (e.g. “unions play an important and useful role in society”). Second, an eight-item measure, (*TAUP EFFECTIVENESS*, $\alpha = .87$) was developed to measure the perception of TAUP effectiveness (e.g. “the TAUP does a good job negotiating our collective bargaining agreements”). Third, a six-item measure designed to evaluate attitudes about professional employee unionization (*PROFESSIONAL UNIONIZATION*, $\alpha = .92$) was used (e.g. “in general, faculty and professional employee unions help ensure that professional standards are maintained”).

Remaining variables included the perception of the cost of dues, political ideology, perceptions of faculty senate effectiveness, and attitudes about faculty influence. A one-item measure (*COST*) assessed the degree to which dues were viewed as reasonable. Ideology (*IDEOLOGY*) was a one-item measure that identified political orientation on a five-point scale ranging from conservative to liberal political views. A two-item measure

(*SENATE EFFECTIVENESS*, $\alpha = .61$) measured the perceived effectiveness of the faculty senate (e.g. "the Temple University Faculty Senate is effective in representing the interests of faculty"). A two-item measure (*GOVERNANCE*, $\alpha = .61$) captured attitudes about faculty influence over university management ("e.g. planning and management at a university works best when left to the university administration"). Table 1 provides the means and standard deviations of all measures.

TABLE 1
Variables and Descriptive Statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Mean (Std. Dev.)</i>
Dependent Variable		
<i>MEMBER</i>	Dues paying member (1 = Member; 0 = Nonmember)	.624 (.49)
Independent Variables		
<i>JOB SATISFACTION</i>	Overall job satisfaction (1-5 response Scale, 3 items, $\alpha = .66$)	3.45 (.74)
<i>ADMIN SATISFACTION</i>	Satisfaction with the administration (1-5 response scale, 4 items, $\alpha = .82$)	2.04 (.78)
<i>PAY SATISFACTION</i>	Overall satisfaction with pay level (1-5 response scale, 2 items, $\alpha = .95$)	3.40 (1.08)
<i>MERIT SATISFACTION</i>	Satisfaction with the merit pay process (1-5 response scale, 1 item)	2.54 (1.16)
<i>ORG COMMITMENT</i>	Organization commitment (1-5 response scale, 4 items, $\alpha = .65$)	3.69 (.72)
<i>UNION ATTITUDES</i>	General attitudes about unions (1-5 response scale, 7 items, $\alpha = .92$)	3.87 (.74)
<i>TAUP EFFECTIVENESS</i>	Perceived effectiveness of the TAUP (1-5 response scale, 8 items, $\alpha = .87$)	3.56 (.78)
<i>PROFESSIONAL UNIONIZATION</i>	Union representation for professionals (1-5 response scale, 6 items, $\alpha = .92$)	3.20 (.97)
<i>COST</i>	Perceived appropriateness of dues cost (1-5 response scale, 1 item)	3.33 (.98)
<i>IDEOLOGY</i>	Political ideology (1-5 response scale, 1 item)	2.00 (1.02)
<i>SENATE EFFECTIVENESS</i>	Perception of faculty senate effectiveness (1-5 response scale, 2 items, $\alpha = .61$)	2.48 (.90)
<i>GOVERNANCE</i>	Governance attitudes (1-5 response scale, 2 items, $\alpha = .61$)	4.07 (.68)

Analysis

Given that the dependent variable *MEMBER* is a dichotomized variable, logistic regression was used to assess the relationship between the independent variables and dues-paying membership.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 provides the logistic regression results. None of the job attitudes — overall job satisfaction, satisfaction with the administration, satisfaction with overall compensation, satisfaction with the merit pay process, and university commitment — were significantly related to dues-paying membership. These findings suggest that dissatisfaction was not a significant determinant of union joining.

In contrast to nonunion employees who are voting for union certification, the employees in this study already have collective bargaining representation. Although achieving greater dues-paying membership will likely enhance bargaining unit power, joining behaviour does not alter the existing employment relationship. As such, the decision to be a dues-payer does not create a new means to redress dissatisfaction. As a result, perhaps it is not surprising that joining behaviour among bargaining unit employees is not related to dissatisfaction. Furthermore, given that the agreement negotiated by the bargaining unit determines the terms and conditions of employment, dissatisfied employees may — at least in part — blame the union for their dissatisfaction, reducing their inclination to become a dues-payer member. While research indicates that dissatisfaction facilitates voting for union certification (McClendon, Wheeler and Weikle 1998), job attitudes do not appear to influence the bargaining unit member's decision to be a dues-payer.

Organizational commitment was also not related to membership status. Consistent with the dual commitment literature (Sherer and Morishima 1989), the historical adversarial relationship should have increased the likelihood that university commitment would be inversely related to dues-paying membership. However, recent, less adversarial relations may have had an impact. In addition, as a professional union, TAUP may function to enhance faculty governance over university affairs, something that may facilitate a closer identity with the university's goals. While union supporters may typically be viewed as having less employer commitment, these findings suggest that dues-payers were not less committed to the university.

Two union attitude variables were significant predictors to joining. First, favourable perceptions of unions in general was related to dues-paying. Consistent with union organizing research, this suggests that predispositional beliefs about the labour movement and its ability to provide an effective voice for workers influenced the decision to join. Second, the

TABLE 2
Determinants of Dues-Paying Membership Logistic Regression Results
 (standard errors in parentheses)

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Results</i>
<i>JOB SATISFACTION</i>	-.197 (.277)
<i>ADMIN SATISFACTION</i>	-.313 (.255)
<i>PAY SATISFACTION</i>	-.075 (.170)
<i>MERIT SATISFACTION</i>	.092 (.155)
<i>ORG COMMITMENT</i>	-.444 (.294)
<i>UNION ATTITUDES</i>	.798** (.301)
<i>TAUP EFFECTIVENESS</i>	.307 (.300)
<i>PROFESSIONAL UNIONIZATION</i>	.923** (.251)
<i>COST</i>	.696** (.193)
<i>IDEOLOGY</i>	-.172 (.166)
<i>SENATE EFFECTIVENESS</i>	-.417*** (.202)
<i>GOVERNANCE</i>	-.399 (.249)

Intercept -2.610

2 log likelihood 281.52

n = 327

Note: (**, ***) Significant at .01 and .05 level.

belief that union representation is consistent with professional occupations was significant. This suggests that dues-payers believe that unionization enhances university faculty professionalism, whereas nonmembers view unionization as less compatible with professional employment. Given this finding, it appears that a traditional view of unions as not appropriate for certain occupations may inhibit the decision to become a dues-paying member of a professional employee union.

While general attitudes about unions were significant, self-reported political ideology was not related to membership. It was predicted that more liberal faculty would be more likely to be members. However, compared to conservative faculty, those reporting to have liberal political beliefs were not more likely to be dues-payers. In contrast to common assumptions, political belief was not an important factor in the decision to join in this bargaining unit. In contrast to the self-reported attitudinal variable used in this study, perhaps assessing proxies for ideology such as previous voting behaviour in presidential elections would be a more appropriate measure of political beliefs.

The perception of TAUP effectiveness was not a significant predictor of dues-paying membership. While the union organizing literature suggests that perceived union utility is a consistent predictor of union certification votes (Wheeler and McClendon 1991), perceived TAUP effectiveness did not significantly influence the decision to be a dues-payer. Once again, it is important to note the difference between voting for union certification and the decision to be a dues-payer. While a certification vote is a decision to change the way employment terms and conditions are determined, becoming a dues-payer does not alter the employment relationship. As a result, in contrast to general union attitudes, the perceived utility of the bargaining unit appears to be a less important factor in becoming a dues-payer.

As predicted, non-payers — compared to dues-payers — were significantly more likely to believe that the cost of dues was excessive. This suggests that membership was related to cost considerations that are not constrained by a sense of obligation to pay a share of the cost of union representation. As such, it appears that the decision to pay dues may be related to pragmatic considerations concerning the financial costs of membership.

Contrary to prediction, members were not more likely to believe that faculty should have greater control over university affairs. This indicates that attitudes about employee participation are not associated with the decision to be dues-payer. However, faculty who view the faculty senate as effective were more likely to be non-payers, suggesting that perceived viability of nonunion forms of representation may substitute for union involvement.

CONCLUSIONS AND STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study investigated the dues-paying issue by examining determinants of dues-paying membership in a public sector bargaining unit. In doing so, the decision to pay dues was conceptualized as similar to the

decision to vote for a union in the union organizing literature. That literature suggests that union certification is influenced by the employee's perception about the job, the employer and the union. In this study, attitudes about the job and the employer did not influence dues-paying membership; however, TAUP membership was associated with attitudes about unions and union representation for professionals. This provides evidence that general beliefs — as opposed to issues concerning the specific workplace — are key determinants of membership.

Opponents of right-to-work laws argue that non-payers have little incentive to become dues-payers because they receive the same benefits. In this study, non-payers were more likely to view union dues as excessive, suggesting that the assessment of membership costs — perhaps unencumbered by a sense of obligation to pay dues — deterred joining. Given that non-payers were no more likely than dues-payers to view their union as effective, the results on the cost of dues suggests that non-payers may be influenced by utilitarian considerations, perhaps adding support to the argument that not paying dues is an incentive-laden decision. Finally, the significant finding for faculty senate effectiveness suggests that the decision not to be a member may be influenced by the belief that nonunion forms of representation are viable.

This study has a number of limitations. First, the data on determinants of dues-paying membership were recorded in the same survey. As a result, some of the findings may be partly due to common-method variance. However, given that dues-paying is a specific behaviour instead of an attitude, gathering data on independent and dependent variables in the same survey is less problematic. Second, this sample was a public sector collective bargaining unit of university professors. As a result, questions can be raised about external validity. It should be noted, however, that this unit is covered by a state law that is in many ways similar to many private sector units. While one should be cautious when generalizing the results reported here, this limitation is perhaps mitigated by the characteristics of this public sector bargaining unit. Third, while the internal consistency measures for most independent variables were above .87, alpha levels for a few predictor variables were less than .70. As such, caution with respect to interpreting the impact of variables reporting alpha levels between .60 and .70 is warranted. Fourth, the survey relied on self-reported data. Although the questionnaire was anonymous and confidential, social desirability response bias could have influenced some responses. Fifth, due to the extreme sensitivity of data gathering in this study, it was imperative that respondents be confident that no individual bargaining unit member could possibly be identified. As a result, given that demographic self-report could lead to respondent identification, it was necessary that no demographic data be

collected so as to ensure that respondents had the sufficient comfort level necessary to achieve adequate and representative responses. Some researchers argue, however, that demographic characteristics function as proxy indicators for attitudinal variables (McClendon and Klaas 1993) and, as such, the use of demographic variables should be used in most cases as control variables only (Fiorito, Gallagher and Greer 1986). Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that the absence of demographic data is a study limitation, at least in terms of conducting analyses that includes the use of statistical controls for demographics.

The findings have practical implications for union leaders. First, the unit studied consists of educated professionals. Given that beliefs about union representation of professional employees was significant, it is important that union leadership be able to convince unit members about the appropriateness of union membership for professionals. Second, the role of dues suggests the importance of maintaining low membership costs. By achieving administrative efficiency and successful internal organizing, the local unit can maintain lower union dues rates. Third, internal organizing — including the use of rank-in-file members to make personal appeals — could increase feelings among nonmembers to pay a fair share of union expenses. Fourth, non-payers were more likely to view the faculty senate as effective, suggesting a possible substitution effect for union representation. By working closely with these nonunion institutions, union leaders may accentuate the influence of these bodies, resulting in the perception that these administrative bodies augment the union's role and, therefore, are not alternatives to union representation.

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RÉSUMÉ

Facteurs déterminant le nombre de cotisants dans une unité de négociation

Il est important de mieux comprendre les facteurs déterminant le nombre de cotisants dans une unité de négociation suite à l'emphase donnée par la FAT-COI aux efforts d'organisation interne pour convertir les non-membres d'une unité de négociation en membres enthousiastes et cotisants. Cependant, même si le statut de cotisant parmi les membres d'une unité de négociation est une question de plus en plus pertinente à l'intérieur de la stratégie d'organisation de la FAT-COI, peu de recherches sont disponibles pour les responsables de telles campagnes d'organisation interne.

Nous recensons ici la littérature sur l'organisation syndicale et sur le *membership* syndical pour examiner les facteurs déterminant le nombre de cotisants à l'intérieur d'une unité de négociation bien établie.

Nous inspirant des modèles conceptuels utilisés dans de nombreuses recherches sur l'organisation syndicale, nous faisons l'hypothèse qu'un certain nombre de variables indépendantes sont reliées à la décision de devenir membre cotisant d'une unité de négociation existante. En bref, ces variables prédictives sont les suivantes :

- Les attitudes au travail, incluant la satisfaction au travail, la satisfaction envers l'administration, l'engagement envers l'organisation et la satisfaction envers la rémunération.

- Les attitudes syndicales, incluant l'attitude générale envers les syndicats, la perception de l'efficacité de l'unité de négociation et la pertinence de la représentation syndicale pour les employés professionnels.

- Le coût des cotisations.

- L'idéologie politique.

- Des questions administratives, incluant l'efficacité perçue du conseil universitaire et les attitudes au sujet du contrôle des employés.

L'unité de négociation ici retenue est celle de l'Association des professionnels de l'Université Temple, unité existant depuis 28 ans et incluant un pourcentage substantiel de non-cotisants. De façon plus spécifique, 52 % des quelque 1 000 membres de cette unité de négociation sont des cotisants. Cette unité a une longue histoire de conflit avec l'administration universitaire dont deux grèves, l'une de 21 jours en 1986 et l'autre de 29 jours en 1990. Des questionnaires furent envoyés par la poste à tous les membres de l'unité et 36 % répondirent.

Considérant que la variable dépendante est une mesure dichotomique, nous avons recouru à la régression logistique. Les résultats démontrent que

les attitudes envers les syndicats en général, le coût de la cotisation syndicale, la perception de l'efficacité d'un autre type d'administration universitaire et les croyances sur l'avenir de la syndicalisation des professionnels sont reliés au comportement de devenir membre. À contrario, les attitudes envers l'employeur, l'efficacité perçue de l'unité de négociation et l'idéologie politique ne sont pas des prédicteurs significatifs eu égard au statut de membership.