

## Trade Union Growth: A Marketing Model

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### Article abstract

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# *Trade Union Growth*

## *A Marketing Model*

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**and**  
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*By fusing trade union theory and marketing strategy, this paper provides an interdisciplinary perspective to the study of trade union structure.*

By fusing trade union theory and marketing strategy, this paper provides an interdisciplinary perspective to the study of trade union growth and trade union structure<sup>1</sup>. Undoubtedly, the time is appropriate to approach these issues. The recession of the late 1970's and early 80's has seen trade union membership stagnate and in many instances decline. There is also some evidence, reviewed later, that union morphology is undergoing radical change as well.

The body of the paper is split into three distinct parts and is followed by a short discussion. First, the paper reviews briefly the current literature on trade union growth and structure, and identifies lacunae which may exist. Second, the paper presents a typology of marketing strategies which describe union growth options which may in turn help us to understand the direction of structural developments. Third, the paper undertakes a review of recent changes in Canada with respect to union growth and structure, supplemented by some exploratory research findings all of which provide concrete examples to show how marketing strategies can be applied to current developments.

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper we employ the term structure, meaning «the coverage of trade unions by industry or by grade of worker and the relationship between different grades or industries within a union» (CLEGG, 1972, p. 41) i.e., the *external* contours of union membership.

## UNION GROWTH AND UNION STRUCTURE

It is with more than a little sense of mischief that we begin by stating that union growth appears to be most affected by technological developments — not in the work place per se — but in the techniques adopted and used by researchers. Writing over forty years ago, H.B. Davis (1941) suggested that union growth waves appear to be «imperfectly synchronized» with the business cycle, mainly because of the inertia which generally characterizes union organizations. Jumping forward into the 1970's, the literature on union growth is littered with econometric models which attempt to develop that elusive union growth business cycle 'fit'. According to McCarthy (1986), G.S. Bain and his colleagues, «have striven mightily» to develop a respectable aggregated theory of union growth. It is of course perfectly understandable that such structural or macro-explanations should predominate in the research on trade union growth (e.g., see Poole, 1984, pp. 129-131). In this light, Kumar and Dow, also argue that «recent research on trade union growth has increasingly favoured econometric model-building and testing as the preferred way to advance knowledge» (1986, p. 236), and that «there appears to be a general consensus in the recent industrial relations literature that the trends and patterns of union membership growth can be best understood in terms of its total environment» (1986, p. 237). The researchers' appetite for the total picture is clearly insatiable.

Yet in the drive to refine these mega-models, it could be argued that something has been lost. Returning to Davis once again:

Leadership can account for the success or failure of a strike, for the growth or decline of a union and even for the success or failure of a whole union movement. The quality of the leadership in a particular critical situation may have a determining influence on the subsequent development of unionism (1941, p. 233).

Writing a generation later in an era when it could be expected that union leaders might be more sophisticated, Bain claims that «only a very small amount of union growth can be unambiguously attributed to the independent influences of union leaders and their policies» (1983, p. 30).

The debate surrounding union growth therefore reflects a familiar duality — macro versus micro levels of explanation (Kochan, 1980, p. 133). However, as we have intimated above, it would be a mistake to assume that researchers have pursued the treatment of both aspects with equal vigour. On the contrary, the macro or aggregated approach has dominated the research into union growth for well over a decade now. Amid the wealth of statistical data, the arguments which surround the theory are relatively straightforward. The most important contribution is that of Bain and

Elsheikh (1976) who cogently argue that union membership as the dependent variable, is affected by the «crucial interrelationship between economic forces, employer policies and government action» — the independent variables. Although their book, *Union Growth and the Business Cycle* draws mainly upon data for the U.K. and the U.S., they have also applied this format to the Canadian context (1976a). As well as identifying key discrete economic variables as indicators of the business cycle, (e.g., rate of change of prices, and level of unemployment), they include rate of change of U.S. membership. The basis of Bain and Elsheikh's paper is to contradict an earlier, apparently more sophisticated model which had been developed by Swidinsky (1974). According to Bain and Elsheikh, the Swidinsky model suffered from a multitude of theoretical, statistical and methodological deficiencies. Specifically, they claim that Swidinsky had failed to account for multicollinearity within his model — i.e. the independent variables were interrelated and their individual effects could not be separated out. The simplified model developed by Bain and Elsheikh established «in contrast to Swidinsky's findings, that the rate of change of prices is an important determinant of union growth» (1976a, p. 489).

Chaison and Rose (1981) challenged the orthodoxy of this approach by identifying the significant rise of distinctly Canadian national trade unions within the context of an internationally based labour movement. They applied the simplified Bain-Elsheikh model of union growth, with results which indicated «a clear inability for the model to explain growth trends for Canadian national unions» (1981, p. 542). Moreover, an alternative model, inclusive of independent variables specific to Canada such as the proportion of national union memberships affiliated with labour federations and the proportion of union memberships of truly national scope, also failed to show any statistical significance. Put bluntly, Chaison and Rose demonstrated that an aggregated econometric model could not account for the growth in Canadian national unions.

Eastman (1983) argues that all previous models were defective since they employed single equation analysis as opposed to simultaneous determination which alone could account for trade union growth in Canada. Maki (1982) however, argues that the existing econometric models can be made statistically significant by factoring in the impact of political parties upon union growth. Interestingly, this takes us into the realm of public policy which Bain (1978) addresses in a non-statistical article in the *Labour Gazette*. Here, Bain argues that Federal and Provincial administrations should provide a climate of acceptance for trade unions so that growth and membership can be sustained. This is in tune with his earlier work with Elsheikh which established that government policy (especially in the U.K.)

is a key factor which can influence the nature of union growth. Craft and Extejt (1983) also agree with this thrust. They argue that in the U.S. recent attempts by the AFL-CIO to develop more effective organizing strategies are likely to fail in the face of «declining public approval of union power and leaders» and «the growing sophistication of management in maintaining a union-free environment» (1983, p. 123). This conclusion is strongly reinforced by Chaison and Rose (1985) who found that differences in union growth between the U.S.A. and Canada could be explained by changes in public policy and employer resistance in the U.S. and more importantly by union related issues such as the desire and ability to organize.

Now for our purposes, this is a crucial insight. We began by pointing out that Bain and Elsheikh denied the significance of a unions' ability to organize. Yet the work of Chaison and Rose shows that accounting for the growth of Canadian national unions *and* the difference in growth patterns between the U.S.A. and Canada, requires a focus at the disaggregated level. Specifically, they suggest that «a more satisfying model of Canadian national union growth would require an examination of its *component types*» (our emphasis) and that future researchers «may wish to consider the extent to which union growth occurs automatically through union security clauses or *as a result of new organizing*» (1981, p. 549) (our emphasis). Undy *et al.* (1981) also criticize Bain and Elsheikh for ignoring the impact of a union's ability to organize as a key determinant of union growth. Contrasting the expansionist Transport and General Workers' Union in Britain with the more passive General and Municipal Workers Union they argue that their studies «throw doubt on how far macro-statistical analysis<sup>2</sup> can provide a full explanation of the complex factors which affect union growth», and conclude that Bain and Elsheikh failed to account «for the determination and will to organize, and the critical role of leadership» (1981, p. 350). In response to this, Bain and Price have argued that Undy *et al.*, «dramatically overstate their case when they speak of «the critical role of leadership». Referring to British data they reason that

«...most of the decrease in union membership and density since 1979 would have occurred regardless of which union leaders were in office, because «union leadership is dependent upon and constrained by the same socio-economic forces which motivate or enable workers to join trade unions', and «as such, it is very much a secondary and derivative determinant of aggregate union growth» 1983, p. 30).

We feel that this type of explanation is dangerously mechanical, and borders on simple determinism. To suggest that union leaders are merely driven to what they seek, substantially distorts our understanding of social phenomena.

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<sup>2</sup> Recently, doubt has also been cast upon the accuracy of union membership data used for the purpose of statistical analysis, (see CHAISON, 1984).

Clearly, what is needed here is a supplement to the aggregated analysis which has been developed by Bain *et al.* Chaison and Rose have already called for research into component union types, and union organizing. Undy states the case more clearly,

What we think is needed, at this stage, is not a more developed or refined analytical framework, including further macro-variables, but a study that seeks to combine our kind of evidence with Bain's kind of data—perhaps carried out at an intermediate level, where it is possible to distinguish between the relative impact of internal and external factors in contrasting situations (1981, p. 350).

We can be more specific. Aggregated analysis of union growth needs to be *enriched* with *individual* case studies so that we can measure and analyze what trade unions are doing in terms of organizing. Since this is unlikely to achieve aggregation in terms of overall union membership figures, such case studies will be best suited for revealing not simply the number of members gained, but where the members are coming from or being lost. This is the point of transition, where growth issues become structural ones. In other words, case studies of individual unions should examine the impact of union growth upon union structure. As yet, other than the fact that union structure has been determined historically by early union growth patterns (Clegg, 1976, p. 39), little has been written which accounts for recent changes in structure, save those research findings on union mergers.

Indeed, the theory offered by Clegg is little more than a statement of how the external contours of union structure were historically determined by prevailing technology and organization, or as Turner has succinctly expressed — trade unions «are historical deposits and repositories of history» (1962, p. 16).

It seems to us that it may be fruitful, as Undy has suggested, to develop an analytical framework which allows us to classify individual union growth strategies and hence to interpret changes (or consolidation) in individual union structure. Such a framework should be able to transcend a purely historical context and offer insight around current developments. Finally, it may also offer the opportunity to integrate some of the insights which have been developed around the impact of mergers and amalgamations.

It is with this in mind that we have developed a typology of union growth strategies. Before the typology is fully developed we offer some observations which show how marketing concepts may be applied to a union setting.

## MARKETING AND TRADE UNIONS

The essence of marketing is human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through exchange processes. The unit of measurement of an exchange is the individual transaction (Kotler and McDougall, 1985). A marketing transaction may be said to occur whenever two parties — at least one of whom represents an organization — exchange things of value. Applying this broad but well accepted concept of marketing to the union context, when a rank and file union member exchanges his dues, time and loyalty for the benefits of collectivism and representation by his union a marketing transaction occurs. Here we examine the nature of such transactions between a union and its members' or prospective members. Then we present a typology of marketing strategies for classifying union growth patterns.

The marketing mix (package of want satisfying benefits) that a union develops to meet its members' needs is not conceptually different from the marketing mix that a company develops to meet its customer's needs. In both situations the total marketing mix is comprised of a product/service mix, a pricing mix, a promotional/communication mix and a place/delivery system mix. These components of the marketing mix are elaborated upon below.

The core of a union's package of benefits for its members is its product/service mix. The benefits provided by the product/service mix include satisfying members' economic objectives (wages, strike funds, benefits, etc.); social objectives (such as the quality of work life and grievance/redress procedures); and, political objectives (legislative protection and amendments, for instance). When employees are asked what the benefits are of being a union member, they usually consider the items of the product/service mix first.

A member's exchange relationship with the union however, transcends the basic benefits of the product/service mix. The union-member exchange relationship extends to the pricing (dues) mix and includes issues such as the absolute level of dues paid, the relative level of dues paid and the prices or fees charged by the union for ancillary products or services. The relationship also extends to the promotional or communication mix and includes issues such as the type and nature of information provided by the union, the media employed, and the trading relationship between the union's organizer (salesman/agent) and the member. Finally, the union-member relationship extends to the union place or delivery system mix and includes the nature of the physical facilities provided by the union and the nature of local, regional, and national personnel.

Just as exchange processes are the core of marketing, so too the marketing mix is the core of marketing strategy. An organization's marketing strategy consists of the set of integrated decisions on target markets, marketing mixes and expenditure (effort) levels which collectively identify the major thrusts or activities that the organization plans to undertake to achieve its marketing objectives (Kotler and McDougall, 1985). In the union context, typical marketing objectives might be to acquire new members, to avoid losing certain existing members, to improve member morale, or to win certain votes. To accomplish any of these marketing objectives the union would have to identify and attempt to understand the group or target (i.e., a certain local or a certain type of member), to develop a mix of marketing variables (product, price, promotion, place) and to set expenditure (effort) levels for each of the key elements of the campaign.

Marketing strategies should not be created in a vacuum as Hardy *et al.* (1985) note clearly. Marketing strategies should spring from an analysis of internal, organization reality including money and management resources, past strategies and past results, attitudes toward risk, overall strengths and weaknesses combined with an analysis of external, market reality including buyers/members, prospective members, and competition. The analyses of internal and external reality should be used to identify marketing problems and opportunities which in turn should be prioritized to generate the specific marketing objectives and marketing strategies for the coming year. We may hypothesize that unions not only *can* regard themselves as employing marketing strategies to attain objectives related to current and prospective members but also that unions which *do* regard themselves as employing marketing strategies may well be healthier and more successful.

In marketing, the most widely utilized vehicle for classifying strategies for growth is the product:market matrix shown in Figure 1 (Ansoff, 1965). A brief explanation of each of the four growth strategies follows.

FIGURE 1

The Product: Market Matrix

	<i>Old Products</i>	<i>New Products</i>
<i>Old Markets</i>	Market Penetration	New Product Development
<i>New Markets</i>	Market Development	Diversification



A market penetration strategy concentrates on current markets and current products and attempts to achieve growth by getting existing product users to use more, to use the product in a new way or to switch brands. Product differentiation, intensified advertising, reduced prices or expanded distribution are typical approaches to market penetration. A market development strategy concentrates on current products and attempts to achieve growth by adding new markets either geographically or demographically. A new product development strategy concentrates on current markets and attempts to achieve growth by adding new, but related products. Finally, a diversification strategy typically concentrates on both new markets and new products through the acquisition of existing businesses which offer unrelated products.

This traditional growth strategy matrix is instructive in examining a union's options as much for what it suggests a union cannot do to grow as for what it suggests a union can do. If we accept that the union movement is an economic, social and philosophical movement whose product is the value of collectivism, then it is difficult to conceive of unions attempting to grow through a strategy of diversification. To grow through diversification a union would have to move to activities unrelated to unionism. Similarly, a union growth strategy of new product development would be difficult to envisage. Again, if we view the basic union product as the representation of workers including the collective agreement and all other intra-union benefits, for a union to implement a new product development strategy it would have to attempt to satisfy its member's needs through something other than the process of representation. In effect then, a broader package of benefits which, say, the Canadian Auto Workers may try to negotiate with GM or Chrysler, or some of the 'new' union tactics and strategies for survival, identified in the Medoff study (*Unions Today*, 1985), would not, from our perspective be viewed as new product development. Rather, they would be viewed as examples of product differentiation and would be classified as market penetration strategies because their focus is on making one union different from, and better than, alternative unions on one or more meaningful dimensions.

Therefore, to grow, unions are restricted essentially to market penetration and market development strategies. These strategies are depicted in Figure 2 and are elaborated upon below. First however, it should be noted that no union can afford to focus exclusively on growth strategies. Some effort must be expended to ensure that current union members are satisfied with the current package of benefits that the union offers. Nothing would be gained if for every 100 newly certified members, 100 existing members voted to decertify because of neglect.

**FIGURE 2**  
**A Typology of Union Growth Strategies**

	<i>Stay Within Traditional Jurisdictional Lines</i>	<i>Move Outside Traditional Jurisdictional Lines</i>
Target Already Unionized Workers	Market Penetration 1 (MP1)	Market Development 1 (MD1)
Target New, Non-Unionized Workers	Market Penetration 2 (MP2)	Market Development 2 (MD2)

Figure 2 indicates that a union may grow by staying within traditional jurisdictional lines (market penetration strategies) on the one hand or by moving outside traditional jurisdictional lines (market development strategies) on the other. In like manner, it may target already unionized workers or new, previously non-unionized workers. By combining these two variables — the nature of jurisdictional lines and the nature of the prospective members — we obtain four distinct and exhaustive strategies for growth.

To pursue a market penetration 1(MP1) growth strategy the union would stay within traditional jurisdictional lines and concentrate on already unionized workers. To implement such a strategy the union either could focus on smaller, weaker unions as the objects of takeovers or mergers or it could focus on disaffected workers who are ripe for fresh, responsible representation. To pursue a market penetration 2(MP2) growth strategy the union would stay within traditional jurisdictional lines but concentrate on non-unionized workers. To implement such a strategy the union either would have to identify non-unionized work places and engage in certification drives or seek to extend its influence in unionized settings by pursuing union security clauses. In some mature Canadian industries market penetration 2(MP2) opportunities may be limited.

A union may move outside its traditional jurisdictional lines (market development) and seek growth by targeting already unionized workers (MD1) or by targeting new, non-unionized workers (MD2). To implement a market development 1 (MD1) strategy — as was the case with implementing a market penetration 1 (MP1) strategy — the union either could focus on smaller, weaker unions as the objects of takeovers or mergers or it could focus on disaffected workers who are ripe for fresh, responsible representa-

tion. To implement a market development 2 (MD2) strategy the union would have to identify non-unionized work places and engage in certification drives.

Figure 2 presents a framework which enables us to classify union growth patterns, where the actual gain in membership observed is less important than the direction of growth which may result in an alteration to union structure. In this regard the framework offers analytical properties similar to Turner's categories of 'closed' and 'open' trade unions (1962). But in addition to classifying a union growth pattern as being essentially open or otherwise, we can now elaborate further by examining just where union growth is taking place and whether sectional distinctions are being blurred. We now turn to some recent union developments and in doing so, apply the framework, by indicating in brackets which growth strategy (MP1, MP2, MD1, MD2) best classifies the development described.

#### **RECENT UNION GROWTH — STRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN CANADA AND SOME TENTATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

During the 1970s the average growth rate of new members posted by unions in Canada was a little under 5%. Despite the fact that some 50,000 + new members are being signed up every year, the collective membership of the top 30 unions dropped 22,000 (1 percent) between 1981 and 1984. (*Harder Times*, 1985). The International Woodworkers and International Steelworkers each lost over 20% of their membership. Others, such as machinists and Clothing and Textile, Retail and Wholesale, and Railway workers all lost over 10%.

Although these figures are a pale reflection of the decline in trade union membership in the U.S., they are indicative of similar trends. The recession of 1979-82 saw the loss of thousands of jobs in primary industries and as a consequence a dramatic fall in the fortunes of some of the older established unions in the private sector.

Some unions such as the Steelworkers and Retail Workers Union have responded to declining membership by laying off central office staff in order to reduce the costs of servicing each member.

The Steelworkers have faced other problems as well. According to a study carried out by Peter Warrian and Associates, the decline in the members of the Steelworkers has been at the expense of some of the larger locals, which are being replaced by smaller bargaining units which reflect the poorer paid service sector. This situation parallels, to some extent,

developments in Ontario, where in 1984 over 50% of the certificates granted by the Labour Relations Board were to units with fewer than 10 members (*Harder Times*, 1985). More recent events in the banking world have revealed the difficulties and costs in servicing a multitude of small geographically dispersed bargaining units.

Some unions have sought to confront the problem of membership stagnation with aggressive recruiting. Figure 3 summarizes several recent, well publicized successes. For example, several unions have attempted to recruit from the giant retail department stores from across Canada but with limited success. The main drive is being conducted by the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCWU) which aims to unionize an estimated 15,000 full and part-time department store workers in Alberta. (MD2) Unions such as the National Union of Provincial Government Employees (NUPGE) have decided to seek new members by organizing Hotel and Restaurant Workers in B.C. (MD2) and the steelworkers in Québec have recently moved towards signing up 8,000 security guards as well as fish plant workers in the Atlantic Provinces. (MD1) Roman Gralewicz the colorful president of the Seafarers International Union has also declared that his membership, which declined from 8,600 in 1980 to 5,200 in 1986, will have to be turned around 'by organizing workers outside his traditional jurisdiction'. (MD2) Even more aggressive campaigning has been undertaken by the Communication and Electrical Workers of Canada who have for some time been signing up disaffected members of the Canadian Telephone Employees Association who work for Bell Canada. (MP1) Similarly the United Food and Commercial Workers Union of Newfoundland is set to sign members of the Canadian Seafood and Allied Workers Union (CSWU) who have been unimpressed with the CSWU's bargaining power. (MP1)

According to Wood and Kumar (1985, p. 231) there has also been an increase in merger activity between unions which in terms of face validity appear to have 'little in common'. The absorption of the Canadian Air Line Employees' Association (CALEA) into the UAW — now the CAW — (MD1) appeared to open up the possibility for the latter union to move aggressively into the airline industry, with potential partners in Canadian Airline Flight Attendants Association (CALFA) and the International Machinists. However, following the Pacific Western Airways dispute of 1986, CALFA joined up with the expansionist public sector union The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). (MD1)

Brewery workers in Ontario (Local 304 of the Canadian Union of United Brewery Drink and Distillery Workers) also signed up with NUPGE at the beginning of 1985, thus clearly straddling public/private sector

representation. (MD1) The remainder of the Brewers' Union (6,500) began recently successful merger talks with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. (MP1) At the beginning of 1984 the Communication Workers of Canada (CWC) absorbed the Canadian section of the International Union of Electrical Workers. This composite union is now seeking to represent 4,000 linesmen and telephone installation employees in Alberta, in the face of opposition from the long-established International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. (MP1)

**FIGURE 3**  
**The Pursuit of Growth**  
 — Recent Canadian Union Developments

	<i>Stay within traditional jurisdictional lines</i>	<i>Move outside traditional jurisdictional lines</i>
	<i>Market Penetration 1</i>	<i>Market Development 1</i>
Target already unionized workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication and Electrical Workers of Canada → Canadian Telephone Employees Association</li> <li>- United Food and Commercial Workers Union → United Brewery Drink and Distillers Union → Communication Workers of Canada → International Union of Electrical Workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Steelworkers in Québec → Security Guards and Fish Plant Workers</li> <li>- Canadian Union of Public Employees → Canadian Airline Flight Attendants Association</li> <li>- United Auto Workers → CALEA</li> <li>- NUPGE → United Brewery, Drink and Distillers Union</li> </ul>
Target new non-unionized workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional Organizing Drives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- United Food and Commercial Workers Union → Department Store Workers in Alberta</li> <li>- NUPGE → Hotel and Restaurant Workers in B.C.</li> <li>- Seafarers International → Intentions to move outside announced.</li> </ul>
	<i>Market Penetration 2</i>	<i>Market Development 2</i>

All these developments have led some commentators to suggest strongly that due to membership stagnation and decline a competitive state of flux now exists between trade unions in Canada. The arguments presented amount to the following. First, that unions are now moving aggressively into new non-unionized workforces. Second, that old traditional jurisdic-

tional barriers are beginning to crumble as unions compete against one another outside their traditional territories. Third, that union raiding is becoming more commonplace and fourth, that aggressive mergers are now taking place (*Harder Times*, 1985).

To measure and begin to understand the apparent competitive state of flux among unions attempting to grow in declining markets, we undertook some exploratory research. Using non-probability, judgment sampling to provide some geographic and sectoral diversity and using a combination of telephone and mail survey data collection approaches, we developed 14 case studies. Three respondents were provincial public sector unions, three were national public utilities unions, two were provincial nurses unions and seven were a mixture of national craft unions and blue collar unions. We present below the key findings of these studies as they relate to union growth. Although the results are presented at an aggregated level to assist in the hypothesis generation process no generalizations beyond the respondent unions are, or should be, made.

### **Traditional Jurisdictional Lines**

We asked each union to indicate the extent to which the phrase 'traditional jurisdictional lines' described the current membership. Nine unions responded totally or essentially and five unions responded to some extent. No unions responded marginally or not at all. We then asked each union to define itself in terms of the industries or trades/crafts to which current members belong. Only one union indicated that 100 percent of its members are from the same industry and only two unions indicated that 100 percent of their members are from the same trade or craft. In other words, the work domain defined by the phrase 'traditional jurisdictional lines' apparently has already been broadened and the historical distinction between industrial and craft union has already been blurred.

### **Membership Changes**

Between 1981 and 1985 the net membership base of the 14 respondent unions dropped by 18,000 from 276,000 to 258,000 or about seven percent. Yet, during this same time period successful growth attempts by the 14 unions added 32,000 new members. In other words, *without* successful growth attempts these unions would have lost 50,000 members, instead of just 18,000 members, or about 18 percent of their membership base. In 1981 the average local contained 262 members. By 1985 this average had slipped

to 225 members primarily because the average size of the successful growth attempt between 1981 and 1985 was only 74 new members. These aggregate results reveal rather clearly the need for these unions to attempt to grow and the considerable value of their successful attempts.

### Growth Strategies

We asked each respondent union to indicate approximately how many attempts it had made to secure new members in each of six different ways between 1981 and 1985. The six types of growth studies were organizing new locals within traditional lines, organizing new locals outside of traditional lines, attracting union members away from their existing union within traditional lines, attracting union members away from their existing union outside of traditional lines, merging with/taking over another union within traditional lines, and merging with/taking over another union outside of traditional lines.

In response to these six questions the 14 unions reported engaging in 602 attempts to grow (secure new members) between 1981 and 1985. These 602 attempts and the results of these attempts are summarized in Table 1. Table 1 reveals that organizing drives within traditional lines (MP2 strategy) accounted for over 80 percent of the growth activity of these 14 unions.

Certification drives were more successful than raid, takeover or merger attempts but raid, takeover and merger attempts, when successful, added four to six times as many new members as the average successful certification drive.

**Table 1**  
A Summary of 14 Unions' Attempts to Secure New Members  
1981 to 1985

	<i>Percentage of Attempts (Base = 602)</i>	<i>Percentage Success</i>	<i>New Members Per Success</i>
Certification Drives	93%	75%	64
Raids	6	44	339
Mergers/Takeovers	1	11	220
Within Traditional Lines	88%	72%	74
Outside of Traditional	12	70	74
Market Penetration 1	6%	38%	368
Market Penetration 2	82	75	62
Market Development 1	1	33	60
Market Development 2	11	73	75

### **Merger and Takeover Attempts**

Between 1981 and 1985, the 14 respondent unions engaged in nine merger or takeover attempts with one success and one vote pending. Seven of the nine merger or takeover attempts took place within traditional jurisdictional lines. In the full five year period only two of the 14 unions attempted to merge with or takeover a union outside of traditional jurisdictional lines and in neither case did the attempt succeed. This result leads to the hypothesis that merger activity in Canada typically takes place within industries where locals can be absorbed into a larger unit without major disruption to existing patterns of bargaining (Chaison, 1983). Unions may also be concerned that linking up with workers outside their traditional coverage may result in ineffective forms of representation. In this sense, structural developments obviously carry implications for internal trade union government (Webbs, 1913, p. 105).

It would seem that reports of the death of traditional union boundaries, collapsing in favour of a potentially chaotic race for membership growth, may be exaggerated. Apart from some high profile unions such as the UAW, NUPGE and CUPE, it appears that membership growth is typically taking place along traditional lines of representation, reflecting perhaps that similar collective bargaining experiences between workers' continues to exert a powerful influence over trade union developments.

### **DISCUSSION**

In the present climate of union membership stagnation and decline, Kochan has forcefully argued that

«... the key to future union growth will lie in improving the organizational attractiveness of unions to individual workers. The key to this, in turn lies in the organizational policies and strategies of unions and the competing strategies of employers.» (Kochan, 1980, p. 141)

Some unions appear to have taken remedial steps in this regard, by openly advertising themselves. For example, in Britain the giant Transport and General Workers' Union having lost over half a million members since 1979 has recently established an extensive television advertising campaign<sup>3</sup>. This course of action was originally pioneered by the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union in the United States who created the «Look for the Union Label» television commercial in the mid-seventies<sup>4</sup>. The Steelworkers on both sides of the boarder and the UAW have also broken «marketing» ground with newspaper ad campaigns aimed at positive image creation.



And the Bricklayers (International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen) have just sponsored a «Project 2000» report designed to develop a long-term plan to stem membership haemorrhage<sup>5</sup>.

Undoubtedly, for the union purists, these developments «jar» somewhat. Yet it has been cogently argued that marketing concepts can be suitably applied to «not for profit» or «social cause» type organizations (Kotler, 1972; 1975)<sup>6</sup>. Moreover the analytical framework we have developed in this paper clearly implies that union growth strategies and attendant structural developments need to be managed and operationalized.

If unions to develop in this direction, then it may be possible to look again at the «critical role of leadership» and determine whether growth in union membership can be attributable to leadership phenomena as opposed to a mechanical response to broader economic forces. Yet it is not so much the issue that union leaders make the differences in terms of numbers gained, but that they *do* make a difference when it comes to decisions concerning *where* these members will be recruited. In this respect the typology of marketing strategies we have presented, whilst maintaining an obvious focus upon union growth, more particularly offers research opportunities into current developments around union structure.

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## ***Le développement du syndicalisme vu selon le modèle du «marketing»***

Cet article aborde la question du développement ou de la croissance et des structures du syndicalisme dans une perspective interdisciplinaire en attirant l'attention sur les rapports entre les concepts du *marketing* et le développement du syndicalisme.

La première partie de l'article passe en revue la littérature actuelle en matière de croissance du syndicalisme. Elle décrit le développement des modèles économétriques en tant que méthode valable de noter les changements dans les modèles de croissance. La littérature, au Canada, en Europe et aux États-Unis, est bien inventoriée du point de vue critique. Tout en reconnaissant le rôle de l'analyse globale, cette partie de l'étude conclut que la question du leadership est passablement ignorée dans l'établissement de modèles économétriques. Naturellement, l'article suggère de procéder par étude de cas individuels de manière à compléter le travail déjà effectué.

La deuxième partie adopte les concepts de base du *marketing* comme moyen de catégoriser l'orientation du développement du syndicalisme. On distingue entre la pénétration du marché et le développement du marché dans le contexte des champs de compétences traditionnels ou nouveaux. Ce modèle apporte quatre catégories exhaustives qui permettent d'ordonner l'orientation de tout développement susceptible de se produire. On y signale aussi que l'appréciation d'une telle croissance dans le nombre de membres est moins significative que leur provenance. Sur ce point, le modèle du *marketing*, qui est offert, porte à la fois sur le développement et la structure du syndicalisme. Par conséquent, les auteurs de cet article estiment que ce nouveau modèle donne une meilleure cohérence analytique à son rôle d'expliquer les changements dans les structures syndicales. Et c'est cet aspect qui est d'une valeur plus grande que l'importance du fait que l'on puisse attribuer le développement du syndicalisme à des questions de *leadership* ou à des motifs d'ordre économique ou gouvernemental plus notables. On soumet donc que le «rôle critique du leadership» est plus important en ce qui a trait aux changements de la structure syndicale qu'à la nature même de la croissance du syndicat.

La troisième partie de l'article consiste dans une recherche exploratoire en rapport avec quatorze études de cas. Bien que cela n'ait été entrepris qu'à titre expérimental, les résultats semblent démontrer que les syndicats qui ont fait l'objet de l'enquête comptent fortement pour le recrutement de leurs membres sur les méthodes traditionnelles et que cela tend à devenir la source de presque tout leur travail d'organisation. Quand on considère ce travail selon le modèle du *marketing* mis au point dans la deuxième partie de l'article, les syndicats ont tendance à s'engager dans la pénétration plutôt que dans l'élargissement du marché.

Dans la partie de l'article réservée à la discussion du sujet, les auteurs signalent que même si l'application du concept de *marketing* à la croissance et aux structures du syndicalisme a été utilisée aux fins de la mise au point du modèle, la notion de *marketing* en est une que de nombreux syndicats n'ont pas perdue tant en Europe qu'en Amérique du Nord en ce qui a trait au recrutement de nouveaux membres. D'où les auteurs soutiennent que des recherches multidisciplinaires plus poussées de façon à rattacher *marketing* et relations professionnelles peuvent offrir de nouvelles possibilités d'analyse intéressantes.