

**Do Formal Union Administrative Practices Promote or Hinder Labor
Revitalization?**

Results of a Survey of American and British Unions

Lois S. Gray

New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations
Cornell University

Paul Whitehead

Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Penn State University

Paul F. Clark

Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Penn State University

Union Futures: Innovations, Transformations, Strategies

International CRIMT Conference

October 25th to 27th, HEC Montreal, Montreal, Canada

Trade unions around the world face fundamental changes in their environments and aggressive attacks from their political and economic adversaries. This has sparked widespread discussion about new strategies for revitalizing and even transforming the labor movement. In a canvass of various initiatives being urged by academics and labor leaders, scholars have identified the following revitalization strategies: organizing the unorganized; grassroots political action; coalition building; labor-management partnerships; union mergers; internal restructuring; and international solidarity (Turner, Katz and Hurd, 2001). Most of these activities connect, directly or indirectly, “to a new emphasis on rank and file participation or mobilization”, the essence of social movement unionism, and a sharp contrast from traditional business unionism (id.). However, one issue very rarely addressed in these conversations is the role internal administrative practices play in union transformation and revitalization.

This paper reports the results of a longitudinal study of the administrative policies and practices of American and British unions. The authors conducted surveys of United States (U.S.) and United Kingdom (U.K.) unions that gathered information on individual union policies and practices involving human resources, hiring, budgeting, and strategic planning. The findings from the 2010/2011 surveys – supplemented by the results of surveys conducted in the early 1990’s – indicate that unions in both the U.S. and the U.K. have increasingly adopted modern, formal, and systematic management practices.

Clearly, a more rational and professional approach to administration has numerous benefits for labor organizations. When unions adopt more formal human resource, budgeting, and planning practices, they improve their overall organizational

capacity (Weil, 2005). And that— combined with better strategic choices by unions – can offset the effects of overall decline in their leverage (id.).

However, it is widely recognized that more formal approaches to administration can have costs as well as benefits for organizations of all types. This paper reports on recent trends toward the modernization of union administration practices. It then considers whether these trends undermine the voice of rank-and-file members or produce new rigidities that inhibit innovation or adaptation.

Background

In both the U.K. and U.S., academics and other observers have studied the structure, government and internal practices of unions dating back to their beginnings in each country (Webb and Webb, 1918 and 1919; Commons, 1918.). In Britain, the literature has traditionally focused on how unions function (see, for example, Clegg et al., 1961; Roberts, 1956; Fisher and Holland, 1990; and IRRI, 1992). In the U.S., experts have emphasized union structure, governance, and leadership (Hoxie, 1926; Lester, 1958; Barbash, 1959).

In both countries, modern labor movements arose out of the tumultuous events of the 1930's and 40's, when the ranks of labor swelled dramatically. While many unions employed lawyers, researchers and accountants in this period (Wilensky, 1956), most of them operated in an ad hoc, informal manner. Yet, in retrospect, the post-World War II era in both the U.S. and the U.K. is seen as labor's "golden age," a time of expanding power. Speaking of that era in the U.S., one leader of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee whose job it was to gather signed authorization cards recalled, "...it was a

poor week if he didn't pick up at least 1,000" (Williams, 2011, p. 226). Clearly, in their period of greatest growth, unions functioned as lean and informal organizations capable of changing to meet the challenges they faced.

By the 1960's, major unions in the U.S. and U.K. had grown into organizations with large payrolls, diverse expenditures, and a greater need for specialists. In an article entitled "American Unions: From Mass Protest to Going Concern," Jack Barbash noted how unions had begun to hire specialists in economics, research, accounting, law, and public relations (Barbash, 1968).

In the 1970's, U.S. and U.K. unions began to draw criticism from labor scholars as a result of their failure to adopt modern administrative processes and practices. These observers characterized labor leaders, in general, as being ineffective managers (Bok and Dunlop, 1970). They noted that unions hired almost exclusively from within, requiring that applicants for employment, even for demanding technical positions, be current union members. Formal human resource policies were rare, and political patronage was a common consideration in hiring. Over time, the overall employment practices of unions prompted their own employees to unionize (Clark 1989; Clark 1992).

In terms of their financial practices, unions engaged in little more than post-expenditure review, a practice later termed the "credit card syndrome" (Weil, 1994, p. 157). As late as the 1970's, union budgeting and strategic planning were the exception rather than the rule (Gray, 1982-1995 interviews with national union presidents; Dunlop 1990).

The 1980's marked a turning point for modern American and British unions. In both countries, the decade brought privatization and deregulation of major industries, significant increases in import penetration, the offshoring of manufacturing operations, and more hostile governmental and employer policy toward unions. The Reagan and Thatcher years confronted unions with steep membership losses and related cuts in income, hardships that for many unions persisted throughout the 1990's and 2000's (Willman, Morris, and Aston, 1993) This dramatic worsening of the environment posed two significant challenges for the labor movement. First, unions recognized the need to revitalize their efforts to organize new members (AFL-CIO, 1985; Bronfenbrenner and Hickey, 2004; Mann, 2012; Turner, Katz, and Hurd, 2001; Netherlands TUC, 2007). Second, it became clear they had to take dramatic and urgent steps to cope with shocks to their membership rolls and dues ledgers. (Delaney, Fiorito, and Jarley, 1991; Clark, Gray, and Gilbert, 1993; Clark, Gray, Gilbert, and Solomon, 1998). The latter of these realities posed stark choices for unions and union leaders: either improve internal management or in some cases possibly face financial collapse.

Against this backdrop, academic researchers in both the U.S. and U.K. began to study trends in the internal administration and business practices of unions. In the U.K., Diane Watson (1988) compared the work and working conditions of union officers with industrial relations managers. Kelly and Heery in Working for the Union surveyed and analyzed the human resource practices of British unions, including staff recruitment, selection, training and performance appraisal (1994). In the U.S., scholars examined the HR practices of unions (Clark and Gray, 1993; Margolies, 2011). A recent study hypothesizes the kinds of correlations that should be expected between union

characteristics (size, degree of centralization, etc.) and their adoption of modern HR practices (Rau, 2012). Two of the three co-authors here have earlier compared trends in union administrative practices in Britain and the U.S. (Clark, Gray, Gilbert, and Solomon, 1998).

Some observers have pointed to a correlation between union innovation in their financial practices, especially budgeting, and the need for labor organizations to function with increasingly scarce resources. They have pointed to a similar connection between the challenge posed by scarce resources and the kind of environmental scanning that accompanies strategic planning (Delaney, Jarley, and Fiorito, 1996). Scholars have both urged unions to engage in strategic planning and evaluated their efforts when they have done so (Stratton & Brown, 1989; Stratton and Reshef, 1990; Dunlop, 1990; Weil, 1994).

Data Collection and Analysis

In 1990, Clark and Gray asked 110 U.S.-based national and international unions to complete a questionnaire about their internal administrative policies and practices. Forty-eight (48) unions returned completed questionnaires for a response rate of 44 percent. In 1993, with the help of Kay Gilbert at the University of Strathclyde, questionnaires adapted from this instrument were sent to the 86 national unions in the U.K. Sixty-one (61) of the 86 unions completed the questionnaire for a 71 percent response rate.

In 2010, Clark, Gray, and Whitehead asked 60 U.S.-based national and international unions to complete a questionnaire about their internal administrative policies and practices. Thirty-five of the sixty national unions completed and returned

surveys for a response rate of 58.3 percent. In 2011, the authors and Kay Gilbert also sent questionnaires to 56 Trade Union Congress (TUC)-affiliated and 40 non-TUC affiliated national unions in the U.K for the purpose of this study. Forty-six unions returned questionnaires for a 48 percent response rate.

Each version of the survey instrument included questions on human resource, hiring, budget, and strategic planning processes and practices, and this paper reports findings in those areas. In all of the surveys, the union respondents were asked to answer questions in reference to headquarters professional staff and field staff.¹

Findings

The findings from this study suggest that, over the last twenty years, most unions in the U.S. and the U.K. have, at least to some extent, adopted more modern administrative practices.

HR Policies and Practices

Written Human Resource Policies -- Table 1 presents results from the 1990/1993 and 2010/2011 surveys regarding the percentage of respondent unions with more than 50,000 members that had formal, written human resources policies for headquarters professional staff in seven subject matter areas (equal opportunity, discharge and discipline, etc.). The findings show that as of 1990, a majority of U.S. unions had written policies on only one subject (discipline and discharge) out of seven human resource

¹ Headquarters professional staff are usually specialists with advanced training and/or experience in such areas as law, politics and legislation, education, economics, communications, and advanced technology or generalists with significant experience in collective bargaining, contract administration, and organizing. Field professional staff are generally involved in direct representation capacities, including organizing, bargaining, or settling grievances and disputes with employers on behalf of the members the union represents.

areas; by 2010 a majority of U.S. unions had written policies on four of ten employee relations topics. The findings also show that between 1990 and 2010 there was an increase in the percentage of unions with formal policies in six of seven areas of HR concern. The exception involved the 37 percent of unions with salary review policies in 1990 versus 36 percent in 2010.

For U.K. unions, Table 1 shows that between 1993 and 2011 the percentage of unions with formal written policies for headquarters professional staff increased in four of seven human resources areas. It also indicates that a majority of U.K. unions responding to the survey in 1993 had written policies in three of seven areas. By 2011, that number increased to seven of ten issues. As of 2010/2011, a greater percentage of British unions had formal HR policies than did U.S. unions in nine of 10 areas.

In sum, the data clearly indicate that unions in both countries have moved toward more formal, systematic human resources policies for headquarters professional employees. The reasons seem readily apparent. More formal, written human resource policies are likely to result in greater employee job satisfaction and lower turnover. They also commit the union to meeting standards that union bargainers themselves demand of their employer counterparts.

Table 1
Written Personnel Policies for Headquarters Staff,
U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+ Members, 1990/1993, 2010/2011

(percent)

	U.S.		U.K.	
	Headquarters Professional Staff	Headquarters Professional Staff	Headquarters Professional Staff	Headquarters Professional Staff
	1990	2010	1993	2011
Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action	52	60	86	67
Discipline and Discharge	44	72	86	78
Hiring	48	56	64	67
Performance Appraisal	26	40	14	44
Promotion	26	40	50	44
Salary Review	37	36	40	67
Training	30	44	50	67
Ethics	n.a.	18	n.a.	33
Sexual Harassment	n.a.	80	n.a.	67
Workplace Privacy	n.a.	48	n.a.	67
	n=27	n=25	n=14	n=9

Hiring Practices and Policies—The 2010 U.S. and 2011 U.K. surveys included questions about union staff hiring practices. As indicated in Table 2 below, the analysis found that only a small percentage of respondent unions in both the U.S. and the U.K. still impose the once common requirement of unions that job applicants for the headquarters professional staff belong to, or hold office in, the union.

The survey results also indicated that – in contrast to their traditional “hire from within” emphasis -- a very high percentage of U.S. unions (88 percent) hire individuals for headquarters professional jobs who have no previous experience working for a union. Just under half of U.S. unions (48 percent) do this for their field/regional staff. U.K. unions, on the other hand, do not appear to make this distinction. Most U.K. unions hire people from outside the labor movement for headquarters professional staff just as readily as U.S. unions. However, they are much more likely than American unions to hire individuals without prior union experience for their field/regional staff (78 percent of U.K. unions; 48 percent of U.S. unions).

Table 2 illustrates that British and American unions to very similar extents hire staff who have previously worked for other unions. A high percentage of unions in both countries hire such people for their headquarters professional staff (92 percent for U.S. unions; 89 percent for unions in the U.K.). Most British unions (67 percent) hire field/regional staff who have worked at other unions, and a slightly higher majority of American unions (80 percent) engage in the same practice.

Table 2

Union Hiring Practices: Qualifications and Recruiting Sources

U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+ Members, 2010/2011

	U.S.	U.K.
Percent of unions that:	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
--require current membership as a	29	11

qualification for appointment to the headquarters professional staff

--require prior election or appointment to union office at some level as a qualification for appointment to the headquarters professional staff 8 11

--have hired headquarters professional staff who have no previous experience working for a union 88 89

--have hired field professional staff who have no previous experience working for a union 4 78

--have hired headquarters professional staff who have previously worked for other unions 92 89

--have hired field/regional professional staff who have previously worked for other unions 80 67

n=25 n=9

It makes sense that unions in the U.S. and the U.K. are open to hiring headquarters professional staff who have worked at other unions. Certainly, staff need to be knowledgeable about the issues specific to the sectors or occupations in which the members of a given union work. But that knowledge can be readily acquired if the staff person has the skills and background required of professionals. It is, therefore, not surprising that a

national union might hire a legal, political, or communications professional who has worked at one or more other unions.

Specific Training and College Degrees in Union Hiring -- Table 3 illustrates that slightly more than half of the respondent unions from both the U.S. (58 percent) and the U.K. (56 percent) require specific degrees or training as a qualification for appointment to the headquarters professional staff. However, U.S. unions appear to place a significantly greater value on college degrees when making staff hiring decisions. Eighty-four (84) percent of U.S. respondents indicated that a college degree is a very important or somewhat important consideration in hiring headquarters professional staff, and 54 percent reported that a degree was similarly important in hiring field/regional staff. A slightly lower percentage of U.K. unions (75 percent) placed similar value on degrees in the headquarters staff-hiring process, while only 38 percent indicated this was a very important or somewhat important consideration in hiring field/regional professional staff.

Table 3

Union Hiring Practices: Training Requirements and College Degree

U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+ Members, 2010/2011

	U.S. 2010	U.K. 2011
Percent of unions that:		
--require specific degrees or training as a qualification for appointment to the headquarters professional staff	58	56

--say a college degree is a very important or
somewhat important consideration in hiring:

*headquarters professional staff	84	75
*field/regional professional staff	54	38
	n=25	n=9

CAN SOMEONE GET RID OF THIS BLACK LINE??

In recent years, as unions have faced more and more complex challenges in all of the arenas in which they operate—economic, financial, political, legal, and organizational—the types of skills, knowledge, and experience union staff needed to address these challenges also has changed. In recent years, the traditional “up from the ranks” approach to developing staff has proven less and less able, by itself, to meet the needs of labor organizations. Unions have been required to look outside their own membership to find professionals to assist with the work of the union. Over time, there has emerged a group of “union professionals” made up of people who spent their careers in professional capacities with unions. These individuals often were hired from outside the labor movement and in many cases moved across unions in the course of their careers.

Use of Consultants -- For both countries, the union administrative practices surveys asked unions about their use of outside consultants to supplement the expertise of in-house staff. Table 4 indicates the percentage of unions with more than 50,000 members that indicated they employed consultants to provide various services in 2010/2011. The results suggest that while unions in both the U.S. and the U.K. used consultants in many

areas, U.S. unions employed outside experts to a much greater degree than U.K. unions. In fact, a higher percentage of American unions used consultants in twelve of the sixteen areas included in the 2010/2011 survey. And in several areas—economic analysis, public relations/communications, lobbying, travel, and corporate campaigns—U.S. unions used consultants to a much greater degree than their U.K. counterparts. It is also worth noting that the two areas in which unions most often used consultants were identical for both U.S. and U.K unions (legal work and computer services and technology).

Table 4
Use of Outside Consultants
in U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+ Members, 2010/2011

<u>Percent of unions that use outside consultants to assist with:</u>	U.S. 2010	U.K. 2011
--computer services & technology	79	89
--economic analysis	38	0
--financial planning	25	11
--containment of union's benefit costs	46	44
--organizational analysis	21	0
--personnel recruitment	21	22
--public relations/communications	50	22
--training	29	67
--political work	33	11

--lobbying	38	0
--travel	46	11
--legal	88	68
--corporate campaigns	29	0
--organizing techniques & strategies	17	0
--leadership development	58	44
--occupational safety and health	8	33
	n=25	n=9

Budgeting and Strategic Planning

The 2010/2011 union administrative practices questionnaire also included items focusing on the budgeting and strategic planning activities of unions. Both surveys asked the responding unions if they developed an annual budget with planned expenditures by function or department. As Table 5 illustrates, in 2010, 72 percent of U.S. union respondents with more than 50,000 members indicated they engaged in this practice, while, surprisingly, an even larger percentage of unions with memberships of less than 50,000 (89 percent) said they did. Fully one hundred (100) percent of respondent British unions both large and small reported that they had a formal budget each year.

The survey results regarding the employment of a formal strategic planning process are also presented in Table 5. The results indicate that in 2011/2012 U.S. unions employed this process less often than British unions.

Table 5
Financial and Strategic Planning Practices
in U.S. & U.K. Unions w/50,000+, 2010/2011

	U.S.		U.K.	
	<50,000	>50,000	<50,000	>50,000
Percent of unions that:				
--develop an annual budget with planned expenditures by function or department	89 n=9	72 n=24	100 n=36	100 n=9
--employ a formal strategic planning process	75 n=8	64 n=24	94 n=36	89 n=9

They also indicate that smaller unions in both the U.S. and U.K. developed a strategic plan more often than larger unions. Sixty-four (64) percent of American unions with more than 50,000 reported using strategic planning, while 75 percent with less than 50,000 members engaged in this practice. The results in this area for U.K. unions were 94 and 89 percent respectively.

Budgeting – Who Is Responsible? : For those respondent unions reporting that they develop a formal budget, Table 6 shows, by country, which union representatives have primary responsibility for the budget. Because respondents were free to check more than one official as primarily responsible, percentages in Table 6 exceed 100 percent.

Not surprisingly, half of responding unions in the U.S. placed budgeting responsibility in the office of the Secretary-Treasurer. But other unions assigned this task to the union president (17 percent), executive board (6 percent), and appointed financial specialists (9 percent).

Table 6 –Union Official With Primary Responsibility for Developing Union Budget N = 27	
United States (N = 27)	United Kingdom (N = 46)
President -17%	President - 2%
Secretary-Treasurer -51%	General Secretary - 61%
Executive Board -6%	Exec. Body or Members - 28%
Appointed financial specialists - 9%	Appointed Finance Officer - 39%
Other (please identify)- 23%	Treasurer - 7%
	Other - 7%

In Britain, where 100 percent of responding unions develop budgets, 61 percent of them give chief responsibility for financial planning to the general secretary. An appointed finance officer takes the lead in 39 percent of U.K. unions. Other participants in budgeting include the president (2 percent), treasurer (7 percent), and executive body or members thereof (28 percent).

Strategic Planning – Who Participates?

Table 7 provides information on which union leaders and staff participate in the strategic planning process. U.S. unions typically include the president, executive board members, and staff of the union (81 percent, 86 percent, and 86 percent, respectively). Other officers besides the president participate in strategic planning in well over half of U.S. respondent unions (68 percent). Notably, a third of respondent unions in the U.S. include local union representatives in strategic planning, while 41 percent involve convention delegates.

In the U.K., the most frequent participants in strategic planning included the general secretary (76 percent of responding unions), the executive body or its members (67 percent), and the union president (48 percent). Other participants included professional staff (33 percent), professional staff unions (20 percent), and the union's congress or conference (22 percent).

Table 7 – Participants in the Strategic Planning Process – U.S. and U.K.	
United States N = 22	United Kingdom N = 46
President – 81%	President – 48%
Other Union Officers – 68%	General Secretary – 76%
Executive Board Members – 86%	Executive Body or Members – 67%
Staff – 86%	Professional Staff – 32%
Local Union Representatives – 32%	Professional Staff Union 20%
Convention – 41%	Congress/Conference – 22%
Other – 14%	Other – 4%

To gain additional understanding of the strategic planning process, the 2010/2011 questionnaires asked respondents to briefly outline the process (i.e., what is the structure, who is involved, etc.). The responses indicate that somewhat smaller percentages of British unions bring their executive body or members thereof (67 percent) or congress or conference (22 percent) into their planning process than is the case with U.S. unions (86 percent of whom include executive board members and 41 percent their convention). More generally, unions in both countries report planning processes that differ across various dimensions, including: the depth of internal study and environmental research that informs the process; the regularity of planning cycles (once per year versus every third year versus occasional); and whether planning reaches beyond officers, executive board, and senior managers to include broader constituencies like in-house unions or local union representatives. The survey results suggest that U.K.

unions more commonly base their planning on formal research efforts than do their U.S. counterparts. The findings also indicate that U.K. unions are more likely than their U.S. counterparts to conduct planning on as frequently as an annual basis.

That authors conducted interviews with administrators of U.S. unions (typically the chief administrative officer) about their planning processes, and their reports underlined the truth that “no two unions are alike.” In a smaller craft union, for example, the international president appoints a union vice-president to serve as director of strategic planning; together, the two leaders and a facilitator convene a group of local presidents to assist in formulating the union’s strategic plan. A medium-sized union of professionals conducts an annual process led by its “strategic cabinet” of leading staff, national officers, and the chairs of key internal committees; they work together in several retreats over the year. A public employee union focuses its strategic planning activity on the development of an annual plan for organizing new members. A mixed craft/industrial union has traditionally engaged all of its leadership in the planning process, but it reports that, in recent years the process is evolving from a top-down process to “a more bottom-up approach.”

Discussion

The Implications of More Formal Human Resource Policies on Union Revitalization

The trend to formalize human resource policies which is reported by our surveys in the U.S. and the UK. may be expected, according to extensive literature documenting the results of HR practices in other organizations, to enhance organizational efficiency and effectiveness, thereby contributing to union revitalization. Also predicted by the literature is higher

employee morale and commitment reflecting greater satisfaction with predictable compensation and benefits and greater equality of treatment in relation to job assignments and working conditions. Organizations with modernized HR policies generally have lower turnover with cost savings in employee recruitment and training. Furthermore, systematic search procedures, including opening the applicant pool to candidates outside the organization (another trend in union practice reported by the surveys), generally increases the likelihood of finding the most qualified individuals to match the skills and knowledge unions require to achieve desired outcomes.

Currently, unions on both sides of the Atlantic, as reported in our survey, now recruit job candidates from outside as well as inside the membership ranks, not only for specialist positions in headquarters, but for service and organizing positions in field offices. To date there is no direct evidence of the relative effectiveness of insiders versus outsiders. However, two studies (Kelly and Heery, 1994, in the U.K., and Ganz, Voss, and Strauss, 2004, in the U.S.), suggest different characteristics and motivation between the two groups. Outside recruitment resulted in a higher representation of women in staff position in British unions (Kelly and Heery, *id.*, p. 57), a result the authors attributed to the shift from political considerations in hiring to focus on finding the best qualified. Studies in the U.S. also show that women find greater opportunities for staff appointments when they bring special talents from the outside as compared with their chances of being selected from inside (Gray, 2000). In both countries, outsiders were reported to have higher levels of education than insiders (Kelly and Heery, *id.*, and Ganz, *et.al.*, p.11).

The motivation and social philosophy of union staff plays an important role in revitalization of union activities. In depth staff interviews in the U.K. and the U.S. report that

union staff hired from outside the membership (usually with a background of social activism as students or working in social movement organizations) were more likely than insiders to see the union as an instrument for attaining broad social goals. Outsiders also tend to identify with left of center political causes (Kelly and Heery, p. 58). Experience in the United States suggests a similar outcome of open searches. Staff interviews revealed that outside recruits identified themselves as ‘social reformers’ drawn to union work as a means of attaining social justice with a strong belief that “political work is the best way to make the world a better place.” By contrast, insiders were more likely to be motivated by a commitment to make life better for fellow workers and/or their own ethnic group or to achieve upward mobility for themselves (Ganz, et.al. p. 10). While fragmentary, these reports suggest that adding idealistic outsiders to staff makes a positive contribution to union revitalization by broadening union objectives and strengthening alliances with other social movements.

On the other hand, there may be a downside to open recruitment in those unions which have traditionally filled all or most staff positions from within. Unions in both the U.S. and U.K. depend heavily on volunteers, particularly at the local level, where members serve as unpaid officers, stewards, negotiators, organizers, and political activists. Traditionally, this volunteer work offers the reward of consideration for selection to full time staff and elected office. The narrowing of such opportunities through open staff recruitment may have a negative impact on membership willingness to become active and volunteer, which would run counter to revitalization. In the U.S., for example, at the convention of the Steelworkers in 1992, almost 50 resolutions urged an amendment of the union’s constitution to require for the first time that all new hires for field staff and technical positions be hired from within the ranks (USWA, 1992). That initiative accounted for one-third of all proposals to amend the

constitution at that convention (id., p. 197). While the proposal was eventually voted down, supporters of the change argued that it was unfair for members who had served as active volunteers to be passed over for staff opportunities by newcomers to the union.

In addition, there are questions about whether, as qualifications for union work, education and motivation make up for lack of experience with industry practices and worker needs. Lacking in the literature is direct evidence of differentials in performance of individuals hired from inside versus outside for traditional staff positions basically focused on collective bargaining.

An alternate model of staff recruitment is offered by unions representing professional workers in entertainment, health care, education, and airlines. In those sectors, fulltime staff positions are mostly filled with outside “experts” because members prefer to pursue the careers for which they were trained. Further research is need to compare the results of alternative practices to determine which mix may result in the most effective staffing pattern for unions that continue to perform traditional roles in bargaining but aim to broaden their mission to meet current challenges.

The practice of recruiting college graduates (for example, the AFL-CIO’s Organizing Institute and Union Summer) brought reports of some tensions as a result of the mix (see, Rook, 2004). In another case, a scholar examining the management practices of a large service union reported that the hiring of outside lawyers hired to negotiate contracts resulted in a legalistic approach not appropriate to the culture of the members in some bargaining units (Piore, 1989, p. 9). The author also criticized the use of consultants for organizing in corporate campaigns and in political action when activist members could be trained for these positions (id., p 10). Further research is needed to assess the organizational impact of open

hiring and the advantages and disadvantages of recruiting outside the membership to achieve the dual goal of organizational effectiveness and membership commitment.

The Implications of More Formal Budgeting and Strategic Planning on Union Revitalization

For any modern organization, it is necessary both to budget resources in relation to targeted goals and to engage in strategic planning to assess planned activity in light of environmental opportunities and restraints. Therefore, the increased adoption of these practices by labor unions in the United States and the United Kingdom, as reported in our surveys, is a major step forward in revitalizing the labor movement. More efficient financial management and targeting of goals free resources for alternative uses in keeping with the goals of ‘the new union.’ When the budgeting process locates “freed up dollars,” that money may remain in the union to fund its most pressing priorities. In other cases, budgeting and planning can enable unions to support new organizations (in the U.S., for example, student organizations, worker centers, ethnic coalitions, cross-border initiatives, etc.) that promote innovation and revitalization of unions.

Whether these practices contribute to greater membership involvement and commitment is probably linked to the methods employed in their adoption. To the extent that members are consulted or at least informed about plans for expenditure of their dues money (the budget) and the rationale for the union’s planned activities (strategic planning), membership commitment should be enhanced. Our survey did not focus on the process of adoption and implementation, but survey respondents (as noted above) suggest that many unions both in the United States and the United Kingdom reach out to a broad spectrum of membership in evolving their strategic plan. The extent of involvement and its impact is a subject for further research, including case studies of major unions.

Conclusions

Longitudinal studies over a twenty year period show that national unions in the United States and the United Kingdom have modernized their administrative practices with respect to personnel and resource management. Long recommended by scholars on the basis of both successful applications in other types of organizations (business, government, and non-profit) and observed deficiencies in the management of unions, modernization is expected to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of labor unions in a time of declining membership and power. Reported changes in union practice include: (1) a shift from hiring full-time staff almost exclusively from within the membership to open searches for the most qualified candidates, notably from other unions, social justice organizations, and recent college graduates; (2) upgrades in financial practices that move unions from accounting for expenditures after the fact to modern budgeting by function; (3) strategic planning that involves assessing the environment and changes ad hoc responses to events and opportunities to more deliberate targeting of goals; and (4) recruitment of expert consultants, not only for functions traditionally outsourced (legal and IT) but for a wider range of functions which overlay with work performed by full time staff (organizational analysis, public relations, communications, corporate campaigns, organizing, and leadership training).

What are the implications of these administrative changes on important components of revitalization like staff and membership morale? Limited evidence suggests several positive gains. For example, widening of searches for staff vacancies gives greater weight to knowledge and skills and less to political and personal connections. In practice, the open search attracts staff with higher levels of education as well as idealistic, younger candidates and offers more opportunities for women in traditionally male dominated unions. On the

other hand, survey data (and other recent studies of unions) do not deal with the potential negative impact of hiring outsiders for jobs which have traditionally been filled from inside. Does this narrowing of opportunities for recognition and upward mobility through appointment to a full-time staff position undermine the incentive for members to spend countless hours as volunteers in union activities? What is the impact of using consultants for functions performed by staff (for which they might be trained) have on staff morale? These are questions for further research.

Adoption of budgeting and strategic planning is clearly essential to union revitalization, freeing resources for alternative and progressive programs. But what is missing from research results to date is evidence with respect to how these practices are introduced and administered. This would involve an assessment of leadership styles--top down versus consultative management.

Modern administrative practices are tools essential for modern organizations. For unions intent on revitalization, these tools are vitally important. But the key point is how the tools are used, the extent to which the implementation involves staff and membership. Further research, including in-depth case studies, will advance our understanding of the trend to modernize and its implications for revitalization.

List of References

AFL-CIO Committee on the Evolution of Work. 1985. *The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions*, Washington, D.C.: AFL-CIO.

Barbash, J. 1959. *Unions and Union Leadership, Their Human Meaning*. New York: Harper.

Barbash, J. 1968. *American Unionism: From Protest to Going Concern*, *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Mar., 1968).

Bok, D., & J. Dunlop. 1970. *Labor and the American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Bronfenbrenner, K. & R. Hickey. 2004. *Changing to Organize: A National Assessment of Union Organizing Strategies*. Cornell University ILR School, DigitalCommons@ILR, February 28, 2012, url at: **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Clark, P. 1989. "Organizing the Organizers: Professional Staff Unionism in the American Labor Movement," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 42, July, 564-599

Clark, P. 1992. Professional Staff in American Unions: Changes, Trends, Implications, *Journal of Labor Research*, Vol. 13, Fall, 381-392

Clark, P., & L. Gray. 1993. The Management of Human Resources in American Unions. *Proceedings of 44th Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association*, 414-423.

Clark, P., L. Gray, K. Gilbert, & N. Solomon. 1998. "Union Administrative Practices: A Comparative Analysis," *Journal of Labor Research*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, Winter, 149-161.

Clegg, H., Killick, H. and Adams, R., 1961, *Trade Union Officers*, Oxford Blackwell.

Commons, J. 1918. *History of Labour in the United States*. New York: MacMillan.

Craft, James A. 1991. "Unions, Bureaucracy, and Change: Old Dogs Learn New Tricks Very Slowly," *Journal of Labor Research*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Fall) p.. 393-405.

Delaney, J., P. Jarley & J. Fiorito, *Planning for Change: Determinants of Innovation in U.S. National Unions*, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (July 1996), pp. 597-614, Cornell University.

Delaney, J., J. Fiorito & P. Farley, 1991. *Union Innovation and Effectiveness: Results from the National Union Survey*, Working Paper 91-01, Industrial Relations Institute, University of Iowa.

Dunlop, J. 1990. *The Management of Labor Unions*. Lexington: Lexington Books.

Gall, Gregor, ed. 2009. *Union Revitalization in Advanced Economies*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gall, G. and J. Fiorito, What We Think We Know, Don't Know, and Need to Know: Survey Research on Unions in Britain and the United States, Proceedings of the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Labor and Employment Research Association (2011), 184-196..

Ganz, Marshall, and K. Voss, and G. Strauss, 2004, "Why Lead Labor?" Projects and Pathways in California unions, 1984-2991, Working Papers, Center for Public Leadership.

Gray, Lois, "Women in Union Leadership," 2001, Chapter 4, The American Woman 2000-2001, W. W. Norton.

Hoxie, R. 1926. *Trade Unionism in the United States*. New York: D. Appleton and Co.

IRRI, 1992, "The Changing Role of Trade Union Officers," Industrial Relations Review and Report 527.

Kelly, J. & E. Heery. 1994. *Working for the Union: British Trade Union Officers* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lester, R. 1958. *As Unions Mature; An Analysis of the Evolution of American Unions*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.

Margolies, Ken, 2011, *Human Resource Strategy for Labor Unions: Oxymoron, Chimera or Contributor to Revival*, DigitalCommons@ILR, Cornell University.

Mann, J. 2012. *Promoting Your Union: Six Strategies to Get More Organizing Leads and Union Members*. CreateSpace, Seattle WA.

Netherlands Trade Union Confederation (FNV). 2007. *Innovative Trade Union Strategies*. FNV: Amsterdam.

Piore, Michael, 1992, "Administrative Failure: A Hypothesis about the Decline of the U. S. Labor Movement in the 1980's," unpublished paper

Rau, Barbara L., 2012, "The Diffusion of HR Practices in Unions," Human Resource Management Review Vol. 22, (2012) 27-47

Roberts, B. 1956. *Trade Unions Government and Administration in Great Britain*, Bell and Sons, London

Rooks, Daisy, 2004, Chapter 7 in Rebuilding Labor: Organizing and Organizers in the New Labor Movement, ILR Press, Cornell University, Ithaca.

Stratton, K., and R. Brown. 1989. "Strategic Planning in U.S. Labor Unions." *Proceedings of the Forty-First Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association*. Madison, WI: IRRA, pp. 523-31.

Stratton, Kay, and Y. Reshef, *Private Sector Unions and Strategic Planning: A Research Agenda*, Relations Industrielle, Vol. 45, No. 1 (1990).

Turner, Lowell, Harry C. Katz, and Richard W. Hurd, eds. 2001. *Rekindling the Movement: Labor's Quest for Relevance in the 21st century*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.

USWA Proceedings, United Steelworkers of America, AFL-CIO/CLC, 26th Constitutional Convention, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, pp. 197-203 and 208-217.

Watson, D. 1988. *Managers of Discontent: Trade Union Officers and Industrial Relations Managers*. London: Routledge,

Webb, S. & B. Webb. 1918. *Industrial Democracy*. London: Longmans, Green.

Webb, S. & B. Webb. 1919. *The History of Trade Unionism, 1666-1920*. Printed by the authors.

Weil, D. 1994. *Turning the Tide: Strategic Planning for Unions*. Lexington: Lexington Books.

Weil, D. 2005. "A Strategic Choice Framework for Union Decision Making," *WorkingUSA* 8:327-347.

Wilensky, H. 1956. *Intellectuals in Labor Unions*. Glenco: Free Press.

Williams, L. 2011. One Day Longer, ILR Press, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

Willman, P., T. Morris, and B. Aston. 1993. *Union Business: Trade Union Organisation and Financial Reform in the Thatcher Years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.